

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2018**

Chairperson Mooradian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Baiardi, Gorman, Opfermann, Mooradian, Kennard, Wallin, Repasky.

Visitors: Jim Osetek, John Baker, Beverly Osetek, Randy Frykberg, Sue Matsko.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda: **Baiardi made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Wallin seconded the motion.**

Vote: All yes.

Public Comment: Jim Osetek read a letter that he had written regarding the new Zoning Ordinance and how it affected him and others in the Township in regards to livestock in the residential districts. He also turned over a letter from Joe Graham to the Planning Commission.

Approve Minutes: **Wallin made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 10, 2018 as presented. Opfermann seconded the motion.**

Vote: All yes.

Kennard wanted to make note of the fact that he made the motion last month to send the new Zoning Ordinance to the Township Board for their review, but he has some regret in proposing that.

OLD BUSINESS

Discuss the Final Draft of the New Zoning Ordinance: Repasky asked whether this Zoning Ordinance should be referred to as a “new” Zoning Ordinance. Mooradian explained that it is a new Zoning Ordinance because it has been reformatted, updated for certain reasons with the intention of not making substantial changes. Mooradian thinks that there should be discussion as to whether there should be Special Uses for certain livestock in residential districts. Frykberg explained that if someone was legal at the time of the new changes, they can continue to do what they were doing. However, if they were not legal at the time of the new changes, they would still not be legal. Repasky feels that the new Zoning Ordinance is the best that the Planning Commission could have done without making a lot of dramatic changes on the advice of communications with the Department of Agriculture and professionals who have done this before in making these changes. Frykberg pointed out that the intent of the new Zoning Ordinance was to try to keep it the way it was, to try and make it useable, and then you can correct it with possible changes. Once the Zoning Ordinance is approved, it can be reviewed and changes can be made. Baiardi stated that when the subject of livestock in residential districts was brought up in the discussions about the new Zoning Ordinance, it was very

specifically decided that the Planning Commission did not want to have any livestock in residential. The Planning Commission had to decide whether to take all farming and allow it, or not to allow it due to the Right to Farm Act. Mooradian thinks that the way to allow livestock is through the Special Use.

Mooradian said that he spoke with Denise Cline, the Planner who helped the township with the new Zoning ordinance. She told him that the process was unusual because it started with a small committee instead of the whole Planning Commission being in on the entire discussions. She said that it was hard not to change things as they went along and that there were many changes made. She did state that there was a huge effort made not to make it more restrictive. Baiardi pointed out that when the small committee was established, it was offered to all Planning Commission members to participate in the discussions at any time. Opfermann said he did not believe there was an intent to change the Zoning Ordinance outside of those sections that needed to be updated to conform with new legal statutes. The goal was to reformat and reorganize the existing ordinance to eliminate duplication and inconsistencies; to make it more interactive and user friendly including links and search capabilities. He did not think there were any intentions to make it more restrictive. At this point, he did not want to see the Planning Commission go backwards and was hopeful the new Zoning Ordinance gets passed by the Board. The Planning Commission could then deal with any issues that may need to be addressed one by one. There were multiple people who stated that the Zoning Ordinance was a living document and could be reviewed and changed as needed, it would never be perfect. Mooradian wants to know if the Planning Commission can continue some conversation to look at how to create a Special Use within the residential district to allow farming if they meet the criteria, not only of the Township Ordinance, but of the Michigan Right to Farm Act. It was agreed to look at the Special Use once Frykberg has information back from the State of Michigan on their opinion.

NEW BUSINESS

PC BY-LAWS/PROCEDURES-ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

The current PC By-Laws were last adopted on June 8, 2011. It was decided to review the by-laws to see if it is current or if any changes need to be made. It was decided to change the month, from April to January, when officers are elected. There was discussion about correspondence under the recording secretary. In the past, there have been questions regarding how and when the Planning Commissioners receive their correspondence for meetings. Mooradian pointed out that the Zoning Administrator & Planner should be communicating administrative and enforcement actions that have taken place. He pointed out that the recording secretary does not necessarily get all of the correspondence that should be sent to the Planning Commissioners. Mooradian thinks that there is more information that could be sent out to the Planning Commissioners before the meetings to help them to be more prepared. Kennard wanted to know if all communications received throughout the month could be given to the recording secretary and then forwarded to the Planning Commissioners in their regular monthly packet the week before the meeting. Mooradian wanted to know if information could be put on the township website, which would be password protected. Wallin wanted to know

why they couldn't just use email. Frykberg stated that he gets a lot of emails throughout the month and wanted to know if Mooradian expected him to forward everything to the recording secretary. He said that it would take up too much time and it should only address what is relevant to what will be brought up at the meetings. Baiardi stated that not all of Frykberg's information needs to be distributed. Wallin said that if the information is relevant to what is going to be at the next meeting, then the information should be received 7-10 days prior to the meeting and that would be fine. Mooradian feels that any information that comes in that is in any way related to the Planning Commission should be downloaded to the Township website. He thinks that it is important for the Planning Commissioners to have the information to help them make informed decisions. Frykberg was very upset because he thought that Mooradian wanted him to give him everything that he does and he won't do it. Frykberg left the meeting at this point. Mooradian apologized if he upset anybody, but said that he was just reading from the by-laws. Repasky said that possibly the way Mooradian was reading the by-laws was a suggestion that Frykberg was not doing his job. Repasky stated that he did not want to see everything, just whatever is relevant. He said that possibly some relevant information was not included in the past couple of meetings which could have better prepared the Planning Commissioners. Mooradian was trying to get clarification as to how the information is received in the office and forwarded on to the Planning Commission. It was agreed to table this discussion until the next meeting.

The rest of the By-Laws were reviewed with no major changes being made.

Conflicts of interest and how it pertains to the Planning Commissioners were discussed. Mooradian encouraged the Planning Commissioners to review The Township Guide to Planning & Zoning.

Building a Planning Team – Chapter 9 MTA Zoning Book: Mooradian briefly reviewed Chapter 9 which outlines the township zoning and planning responsibilities and how they interact together. Baiardi stated that she will be contacting MTA to add all Planning Commissioners as users to access their website.

Propose March Meeting Date Change: The March 14 meeting date needs to be changed because it falls on the same day as the Board of Review. It was agreed to move the meeting date to March 21, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Frykberg had presented his written report.

Township Board Representative Report: Baiardi stated that she had no report.

Planning Commissioner Comments: Wallin stated that he was very embarrassed with what happened with Randy Frykberg walking out of this meeting. He hopes that Mooradian will do everything in his power to get him to come back and to apologize. He said that if Frykberg doesn't come back, then he may not come back either. Mooradian said that he will definitely be calling Randy.

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Opfermann said that there was a note in Chapter 9 about providing some type of basic information for new Commissioners. He thinks there is a lot to learn and it would be a good idea for new Commissioners to be given pertinent information and possibly attend classes that are offered. He then mentioned the Michigan Citizen Planner Webinar program through MSU Extension as a good course that covers the fundamentals of planning and zoning.

Gorman said that he has been approached by people looking for affordable housing. He thinks that could be a discussion in the future in regards to the Zoning Ordinance.

Mooradian suggested possibly forming an IT committee of 1 or 2 persons who could look into ideas of how to share technology with the Planning Commission. Kennard said he will talk with Baiardi to see what is available through the Township. Mooradian said he will suggest to the Township Board that the Planning Commission is going to try to come up with some type of an IT proposal. He would like to be able to engage with the Township attorney, possibly have him at a meeting once or twice a year.

Public Comments: Osetek said that he feels better having been to this meeting and having had the Planning Commissioners listen to him. He thinks that the Commissioners will do what is best and fair for everyone in the community.

Adjourn: **Wallin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kennard seconded the motion.**

Vote: All yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be March 21, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Paul Opfermann, Secretary

Transcribed by:
Susan Matsko
Township Secretary

Proposed: February 8, 2018
Approved: March 21, 2018