

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2018**

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

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

Visitors: John Baker, Dave White, Joe Lavender.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda: **Baiardi made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of c. Letter from Baker. Gorman seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Public Comment: Dave White was introduced as the new Zoning Administrator.

Approve Minutes: **Baiardi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 11, 2018 as presented with a correction to the address for Schlehuber on Page 2 to 3473 Quick Rd. Opfermann seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

OLD BUSINESS

Zoning Amendments Discussion: Mooradian said that Dave White, Denise Cline and himself will be having a meeting in the near future to discuss the possibility of some amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The subject of storm water for development plans was brought up. Repasky said that a ten year storm is the typical, reasonable storm event that things like storm pipes, storm catch basins and retention basins are designed around. Mooradian feels that they need to come up with a model that is appropriate for West Traverse Township. Joe Lavender discussed the subject of signs and the fact that recently Little Traverse Conservancy has put up signs on new Conservancy properties that are not within the limits of the sign ordinance. He feels that there should be an exemption for non-profits with the size of their signs. Kristi Hollingsworth had brought up the subject of parking requirements at the last Planning Commission meeting. It was agreed that this should be reviewed again. There seem to be some problems in the Commercial and Industrial districts with parking. Mooradian summarized that the following should be areas of the Zoning Ordinance that should be reviewed for possible amendments: storm water, signs, landscaping, parking requirements, and accessory structures. Gorman brought up the subject of landscaping, stating that he did not feel that he was qualified to determine how many trees, etc. should be on a plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed: September 12, 2018

Approved: October 10, 2018 with corrections on Page 2 in italics; *spending, handle, as well as parentheses around Wallin & Kennard comments.*

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Zoning Administrator Change/Update: Joe Lavender has resigned as the Zoning Administrator. Dave White is taking over as the Zoning Administrator at this time.

Discussion of MTA Seminar: Mooradian presented a print out of the MTA seminar material that was from the MTA seminar in July. Mooradian reviewed the different topics that were covered. He learned that if all agriculture is removed from the residential district that it does not automatically prevent farming in the residential district. If the site selection meets the GAAMPS and it is in an R-1 district that is prohibiting all agricultural uses, it can be agricultural. Besides the RFTA, wind and solar energy were also addressed and might be something that the Planning Commission would want to review. The Planning Commission will begin to update its Master Plan next year and these are some of the things that they might want to learn about and understand.

Letter from Baker: John Baker had presented a letter to the Township Board regarding the possibility of moving all zoning to the County. He thought it would be important to maintain a Planning Committee to oversee the zoning questions reviewed by the County Planning Commission. The Committee would only be an advisory committee. Baker said that he thought that since the County has staff in the office full time, it would be more effective than what the Township offers. He thinks that it is very difficult for the Planning Commissioners to be subjective when they are talking about their neighbors during Site Plan Reviews, etc. Gorman agreed that it would be more efficient to be able to have access to answers for zoning questions on more of a daily basis.

Mooradian talked to Wallin and Kennard earlier today to see what their views were on this subject.

“Wallin stated that he did not want to give up local control. He believes that the Planning Commissioners have a better understanding of the citizen’s wants and needs that live in West Traverse Township than the County does. He also said that the Planning Commission just finished *spending* a lot of time and effort updating the Zoning Ordinance to make it easier for the citizens to access it as being more user friendly and understandable.” “Kennard stated that West Traverse Township is a unique township and it is one of the more wealthy townships from a tax base standpoint. He cited the cities and townships in the area that are comparable to West Traverse. He said that the County does an amazing job, but Kennard’s point was that we are different and we should be in control and he also thought that West Traverse Township should be in control of issuing permits. Kennard also said that instead of shedding our responsibilities, we should be adding resources to *handle* our responsibilities here. We should be stepping up our program; we should be the leader of the County in progression.” Mooradian thought that more education on the part of the Commissioners would be a good thing and to be compensated for it.

Gorman said that he can see both sides of the argument. He liked what Kennard had to say.

Opfermann said that he could sense where people would want to maintain that control because of the unique nature of this township. Mooradian stated that there are four townships, including West Traverse, in Emmet County that have their own zoning. Opfermann said that he could also see the arguments on all sides. He also thinks that the Planning Commission is dependent on the quality of volunteers who sign up to do this job. He thinks that in some cases, the quality of volunteers on the

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Planning Commission are higher than some of the people who would be hired at the County, they could be more skilled and experienced than the people who are working full time in the staff positions at the County. The County has a nine member Planning Commission. Baker did say that losing local control is something that he has worried about. Repasky agreed with what Mooradian had said and also thought about how the Township could better itself without losing control. He said that we are very fortunate to have a good, talented Planning that we can rely on for assistance and the people on the Planning Commission. He pointed out that people come and go, so having our own controls is important. He said that there were good examples in Baker's letter that would be good to talk about at future meetings. Mooradian stated that he now has the authority to engage the Planner. Repasky thought it would be a good idea to have scenarios that would show how the Township is deficient in its planning, to show how the Township could be better served by the County. He asked if there was a cost to the Township to have the County process the Township's zoning. Repasky said that the Township has a lot of great resources. He used the Tunnel of Trees as an example, which if the zoning was handed over to the County, it would be more restrictive than what the Township has now. Baiardi felt that it was important for the Township to maintain their own zoning. This subject will be discussed again at the next meeting.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Joe Lavender presented his written report.

Township Board Representative: No report.

Planning Commissioner Comments: Mooradian reminded the members that the Planning Commission will begin working on the Master Plan in January, 2019. Baiardi stated that there is a provision to pay PC members when they attend seminars.

Public Comments: None.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by:

Paul Opfermann, Secretary

Transcribed by:  
Susan Matsko  
Township Secretary

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