

Minutes

Watersmeet Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

June 10, 2009

Meeting called to order at 7 pm by Chairperson Dudley Pierce.

Present: Alan Piel, Martin Schutte, Fred Reimer, Chuck Horn, Dudley Pierce, Bonnie Peacock, Bill Neumann. Absent: Tara Traudt, Rich Henriksen. Public Present: Eight.

Minutes: Motion to approve the Minutes of the May 2009 regular meeting by Fred Reimer, seconded by Bill Neumann, motion carried by voice vote.

Public Comments: none.

Reports: Chairperson Dudley Pierce has nothing to report at this time.

Zoning Administrator: Dave Neumann reported four certificates have been issued since the last meeting. Five investigations are underway regarding complaints brought to him. There has been a fence constructed on Highway 2 east of town that is being investigated to determine if it is for collection of junk cars, etc. The owner previously stated an intent to collect and haul scrap metal, but the Township has not received information regarding this from the owner. Dave also mentioned he was working on the removal of the large 'public auction' sign along Highway 45. This may be gone as of today.

Zoning Board of Appeals: Chuck Horn reported that litigation is ongoing with the Hammer/Bucci situation. The ZBA has heard a request for a larger sq. ft. home to be constructed, with three stories, and a three year time frame for completion. A written plan has been requested by the ZBA, but the property owners have not submitted one, and there are no permits in place.

Public Comments: Dick Caudill would like to have the Planning Commission hear his request for support as there is an opportunity to apply for a grant to construct new firestations in the Township.

Agenda Changes: A motion to amend the agenda to include Dick Caudills request, and to table the discussion on proposed zoning ordinance rewrite until the July regular meeting by Alan Piel, seconded by Martin Schutte, motion carried by voice vote.

Old Business: Revisions to Section 5.04C – Discussion was held regarding the public comments received and how the Commission could incorporate them for a better Dock Ordinance. Motion to approve the revisions to Section 5.04C, as presented at this meeting, and forward to the Township Board for action by Bill Neumann, seconded by Chuck Horn. Roll call vote: Bill Neumann, no; Alan Piel, no; Martin Schutte, yes; Fred Reimer, no; Chuck Horn, no; Dudley Pierce, no; Bonnie Peacock, no. Motion failed.

Motion by Fred Reimer to add the wording regarding angles of construction and maximum width walkway to read as follows: "The Permanent or Temporary Dock may not extend further than forty (40) feet into the lake from the Ordinary High Water Mark. The maximum width walkway is to be six (6) feet, and the maximum width of a Permanent or Temporary Dock shall not exceed twenty-two (22) feet as measured parallel to the shoreline at point of dock contact", seconded by Chuck Horn, motion carried by voice vote.

Motion by Alan Piel to retain the fifty (50) foot setback from the property line for Permanent or Temporary Docks, seconded by Fred Reimer, motion carried by voice vote.

Motion by Fred Reimer to hold a Public Hearing regarding the proposed changes to the Dock Ordinance at 6:30 on July 8, 2009, seconded by Alan Piel. Roll call vote: Bill Neumann, yes; Alan Piel, yes; Martin Schutte, yes; Fred Reimer, yes; Chuck Horn, yes; Dudley Pierce, no; Bonnie Peacock, yes. Motion carried.

Tower Ordinance Discussion: Chuck Horn and Alan Piel have prepared suggested language for the addition of an ordinance regarding towers, focusing on wind and solar power. The recommendation is to add Zoning Ordinance 7.14 Wind Turbines and Solar Panels: All wind turbine and solar panel installations require a special use permit with the exception of roof mounted solar panels that conform to the profile of the respective roof.

Motion by Fred Reimer to add Section 7.14 to the Zoning Ordinance, seconded by Martin Schutte. Roll call vote: Bill Neumann, yes; Alan Piel, yes; Martin Schutte, yes; Fred Reimer, yes; Chuck Horn, yes; Dudley Pierce, yes; Bonnie Peacock, yes. Motion carried.

New Business: Motion to revise new business agenda to hear from Dick Caudill prior to the Master Plan Discussion by Bill Neumann, seconded by Alan Piel, motion carried by voice vote.

Dick Caudill provided information on grants that will be given to Michigan towns/cities for constructing firestations based on need. The Watersmeet Township Master Plan has identified the need for satellite firestations and the Planning Commission feels this would be a great benefit. Watersmeet Township has the greatest tax base in Gogebic County, and most of the high valued properties are located remotely around lakes. This creates a time problem in responding to fire calls. If one or two satellite stations could be strategically located, it would be a valuable asset to the residents and property owners of Watersmeet Township.

Whereas grant funding has become available for new firestation construction, and whereas fire protection is a primary objective identified in the Watersmeet Township Master Plan, and whereas the construction of satellite firestations would benefit the taxpayers and residents of Watersmeet Township, be it resolved that the Watersmeet Township Planning Commission does support the submission of the ARRA assistance to firefighters firestation construction grants, offered by Dudley Pierce, seconded by Bill Neumann. Roll call vote: Bill Neumann, yes; Alan Piel, yes; Martin Schutte, yes; Fred Reimer, yes; Chuck Horn, yes; Dudley Pierce, yes; Bonnie Peacock, yes. Resolution supported unanimously.

Master Plan Discussion/updates: Fred Reimer has researched potential sources for suitable gravel for ballpark infields. A proper field is needed for sanctioned events to be held. Fred is waiting for responses from some potential sources – work is ongoing. Dudley Pierce stated the existing basketball court needs resurfacing and fencing. Alan Piel stated progress is being made with the bike trail, with a fund raising event to be held July 25, 2009 at Stateline with tours and a band. The Natural Resources Trust Fund group has invited them to do a presentation in St. Ignace, and that is a possible source of funding. They have also applied for a grant from “Bikes Belong”. They attended a meeting with WUPPDR (Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development for Recreation) in Bessemer and there is a possibility of connecting with a trail from the west. Dudley Pierce stated there will be an ATV rally June 20,2009 with a raffle. The funds are to go to the Randy Scott Hall Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Other Matters: Bill Neumann and others attended a MDNR meeting in White Pine and learned of the closing of six (6) state parks in the eastern UP, and six (6) in the northern LP. However there are more ORV trails being opened up, and there is an increase in use and interest of those.

Information on the Fourth of July celebration: Parade will be at 2pm, and activities will follow at the Township Pavilion. Fireworks will be at dusk.

Martin Schutte stated the Planning Commission Board is to be complemented on a job well done.

Motion to adjourn by Fred Reimer, seconded by Martin Schutte, motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Bonnie Peacock