

Laketon Township Planning Commission
March 8, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 4/19/2023

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Bob Marine called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

ROLL CALL:

- Present: Chris Simpson, Eric Anderson, June Earhart, Suzanne Hayes and Bob Marine.
- Absent: Paul Hoppa and Dave Mieras, w/notice.
- Also present: Zoning Administrator Heidi Tice, Recording Secretary Veronica West, Twp. Supervisor Kim Arter and one citizen.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: June Earhart moved to approve the agenda as presented. Eric Anderson supported the motion and the motion carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Suzanne Hayes pointed out a couple of typographical/spelling error in the minutes and then moved to approve them with the corrections noted. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: **NONE**

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Monthly Permit Report:** provided for informational purposes.
- **Annual PC Activity Report/Summary:** Shared with Twp Board – provided for informational purposes.
- **Court/Citations Update:** ZA H. Tice informed the PC on the citation for an address on Peterson Rd must be re-issued as there were some errors made in writing the original citation (missing date) and she will keep the PC informed as the process continues.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Change April Monthly Meeting Date to April 19, 2023 –** ZA H. Tice informed the PC members that the recording secretary will be on vacation for the regular meeting date and would like to change the meeting date to April 19, 2023. Changing the date will also allow the Community Open House to be scheduled on the regular April 12, 2023 meeting date where the recording secretary is not required. Eric Anderson moved to reschedule the April monthly meeting date and have the meeting on Wednesday April 19, 2023 at 6:00 pm. Suzanne Hayes supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Capital Improvement Plan Update:** A copy of the plan adopted by the Township Board was provided for informational purposes.
- **Draft Solar Energy Ordinance:** ZA H. Tice provided an updated draft of the proposed language, including new language to address the utility scale size solar farms. Bob Marine commented he feels the applications section needs to include electrical permits as they are separate from building and zoning permits. There was discussion of the section regarding roof mounted setbacks seem vague, concern of piercing the ice and water shield membrane if allowed too close to the eave edges and direction given to the ZA. H. Tice to change the language to require setbacks to be beyond the edge of the ice and water shield. Eric Anderson commented on the section relating to minimum setbacks of the utility scale solar noting he would like to see the minimum 100 foot setbacks be firm, with no exceptions so he suggested striking the clause that would allow the PC to modify them in certain cases. He also added he would like the section regarding screening require screening to be mandatory. Suzanne Hayes agreed that it should be more definitive and less vague. Bob Marine expresses some concern on the corner lot exception language that would permit residential/small scale building mounted solar panels on home walls on the “side street”. ZA H. Tice explained the reasoning for adding this exception is because corner lots may have existing homes that are oriented in such a way that may be the only feasible wall space that would work and with the ability to request a variance and it is always better to write the ordinance in such a way as to address situations that could create ZBA cases if possible. There was some discussion of a few clerical errors/typographical errors to be corrected but consensus was that PC members present were comfortable with the language as presented with changes discusses. ZA H. Tice said she would make the changes discussed and then the next steps would be to submit to the Township Attorney, then make

Laketon Township Planning Commission
March 8, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 4/19/2023

any changes he requires for legal purposes and then bring back to the PC for acceptance and to set up a public hearing. Eric Anderson moved to submit this draft ordinance with changes discussed to the township attorney for his review and comment. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

- **Parks and Recreation Plan Update:**

- **Timeline:** ZA H. Tice provided the PC members a timeline of the work that needs to be done and when in order to get the plan update done and adopted by the February 1, 2024 due date. This due date must be met in order to apply for DNR grant funds. ZA H. Tice also stated she did some research and the law requires a public survey, a community open house and a public hearing be done as part of the update process. There was discussion of the open house process and ZA H. Tice suggested having posters of recreational amenities (pickle ball courts, dog parks and a blank one people could add their own ideas to etc) perhaps even having stickers for kids to put on the items they are interested in to get them involved as well. She asked the PC members to email her any suggestions they have for the poster boards to display at the open house. She also added that the comments gathered from the open house would help to develop a community survey. The idea is to create the survey and put it in the newsletter that gets mailed out with the July 1st property tax bills. ZA H. Tice also commented there could also be an option for Survey Monkey to be used for the survey. There was discussion of dog parks, and the many obstacles and negatives; lack of clean up, staffing needs, liability insurance, dog fights/disease and people already letting their dogs run loose in the township parks in violation of the leash requirements etc. Bob Marine commented that perhaps if there were a dog park where dogs can run and play off leash it would lessen those types of problems in the other parts of the parks. Suzanne Hayes agreed, commenting that much of the township is suburban and there seem to be a lot of people with dogs that would need that type of amenity. ZA H. Tice also noted the PC is required to notify surrounding municipalities of the intent to update the Parks and Rec plan and decide what method (paper mailing or electronic file availability) to provide the draft plan once it is updated. There was a brief discussion of electronic methods; email and posting of a link on the township website. After the discussion the following motions were made:
 - Suzanne Hayes moved to hold the Parks and Rec Plan Community Open House on Wednesday April 12, 2023 at 6:00 pm. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.
 - Eric Anderson moved to notify the surrounding municipalities of the Parks and Recreation Plan update. Chris Simpson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.
 - Eric Anderson moved to notify and provide the draft Parks and Recreation Plan via electronic methods. Suzanne Hayes supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Kim Arter, Laketon Twp. Supervisor:** Supervisor Arter had several points of comment:
 - She reiterated to the PC Members that the Zoom invite email that went out a week ago was a fraudulent email, noting our IT company is working on some computer issues and has reported seeing this type of issue with municipality computer systems all over the state.
 - She thanked the PC for working on the Park and Rec plan update, noting how important it is to be able to apply for grant funds and also reported she is the Admin for the township with the Michigan DNR.
 - She commented on applying for a Michigan Spark Grant, but the township did not win an award – there were 450 applicants and only 21 applicants received grant awards so it was a very competitive grant.
 - She commented on the topic of the State Uniform Building Code and the issue relating to the Zoning Ordinance amendment regarding swimming pools and the code that was not “liked” by the PC. She suggested that the PC may want to put together a letter to the Code Officials to voice their concerns, feelings, suggestions etc on the code.
 - She suggested the PC may want to invite the youth sports clubs that use the parks to the open house.
 - She distributed a copy of the PC by-laws to the members as there is a new member and it’s been some time since they were distributed and explained they mirror the zoning enabling act and give the chair authority and direction in running the meeting.

Chairperson Bob Marine opened the floor for Suzanne Hayes who wished to make a public comment.

Laketon Township Planning Commission
March 8, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 4/19/2023

- **Suzanne Hayes, PC Member:** Suzanne commented on reading a newspaper article on an area municipality that is being sued by a Solar Energy Company over a proposed solar farm and a moratorium being placed on the development. She provided copies to the members to read. There was a brief discussion with Eric Anderson noting he feels this is one reason to get reasonable regulations in place.
- **Chairperson Bob Marine:** Bob suggested that ZA H. Tice put together a letter to the Building Code officials expressing their disappointment and concerns over the swimming pool issues discussed at previous meetings. Eric Anderson added that he doesn't feel the covers allowed by code meet the safety of a fence. ZA H. Tice to draft a letter and bring to the next meeting for approval by the PC.

BOARD REPORTS:

- **Board of Trustees: Eric Anderson** reported the Township Board is working on the budget this month for the upcoming fiscal year and also on amending the previous budget.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Suzanne Hayes** - No activity to report.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Eric Anderson moved to adjourn. Chris Simpson supported the motion. The motion carried and the adjournment occurred at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West
Recording Secretary