

Laketon Township Planning Commission
May 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 06/14/2023

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

ROLL CALL:

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Suzanne Hayes noted a few typographical/spelling errors in the minutes and then moved to approve them with the corrections as noted. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: NONE

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Monthly Permit Report:** provided for informational purposes, with ZA H. Tice noting 4 new house permit applications were received just this week as well as an uptick in complaints/enforcements regarding RVs in the front yard and the parking of vehicles in the grass of front yards.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Draft Public Rec Survey Questions –** ZA H. Tice provided a draft of the survey, six questions/one page or less, noting she removed obsolete questions discussed last meeting and added one yes or no question asking if people would support a parks and recreation millage. Comments included adding “yearly” as a response to how often parks are used or visited, revamping the question to rate the activities to just checking any or all activities respondents participated in within the parks, rewording the question about activities they would like to see in the parks and opted for using a table in the question regarding why a respondent might not use the parks – so that it could be discerned which parks had issues needing to be addressed that keep people from using them. It was also discussed to have a short introduction to explain why the survey is being put out and why it is important, including being able to apply for grant funding, as well as explaining how and when to return the survey and explaining the option to take the survey online using the QR code. There was also discussion of when the newsletters will go out that contain the survey, noting it must be submitted to the printer by 6/16/2023 just 2 days after the June PC meeting. Eric Anderson said he felt comfortable approving the survey changes based on tonight’s discussion and moved to approve the draft survey with changes discussed. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.
- **Draft Letter to State Building Code Officials –** ZA H. Tice presented a draft letter to the members regarding their request that the state building code officials consider making changes to the building code to require a pool barrier (fence) even when a code approved type of cover is also used. She noted she has asked Building Inspector to obtain the correct contact person and address. Dave Mieras suggested also sending it to state legislators. She asked everyone to review the letter and bring back any comments next meeting to finalize the letter.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Draft Solar Energy Ordinance: ZA H. Tice provided the members with a revised draft copy including changes made by the township attorney. ZA H. Tice noted the biggest changes from the attorney were to;

- add language the same as in the accessory buildings section for exceptions to front yard placement – including the property being at least 2.5 acres, minimum of 200’ of road frontage and having to be at least 65 feet from the road
- edit the section referencing permit requirements to include all permits required under the “building code and all appendages” rather than just listing out all the permits that might be required since when the Township adopts the Building Code, it includes all appendages for electrical, mechanical, plumbing etc.

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- delete language in the section that had building wall setbacks to keep from puncturing the ice and water shield on the roof, because this is included in the Building Code
- move all the language for the utility scale solar collectors to Chapter 17 Special Land Uses since a utility scale installation is a special land use in all districts. Therefore, when the public hearing is held and the amendments are approved it will result in amendments to Chapter 3 General Provisions for the small-scale solar collectors and Chapter 17 Special Land Uses. ZA H. Tice noted the attorney made no changes to the language submitted to him, other than to move it to Chapter 17.

There was discussion regarding the building code language added by the attorney, with Eric Anderson feeling the phrasing was awkward and ultimately a rewording suggestion was made so that Section “3.33.B(a).1.a” would read: “Applications: A zoning permit, building permit and permits for all appropriate appendages, are required before installation of any type of solar energy system.” Everyone agreed on that wording. Eric Anderson moved to send the Solar Energy Ordinance language, with all changes discussed to the Laketon Township Board for approval. Suzanne Hayes supported the motion.

It was then noted that a public hearing must be held first, prior to sending zoning ordinance amendments to the Board.

Eric Anderson rescinded his first motion and moved to schedule a public hearing for Wednesday June 14, 2023. Suzanne Hayes supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Parks and Recreation Plan Draft CIP: ZA H. Tice provided a draft of the CIP for the Parks and Rec Plan. Dave Mieras questioned the line item in 2024 for Scenic Drive Safe Streets Initiative and \$6 million and the same line item in 2025 but for \$9 million, wondering if this is a two-phase project for a total of \$15 million or an accidental duplication. Twp. Supervisor Kim Arter was in the audience and clarified it is a one phase project for approx. \$6 million. ZA H. Tice will make the correction to the draft plan by removing it from the 2024 year and keeping it in the 2025 year at \$6 million and adjust all yearly totals accordingly. Members present noted consensus that they are satisfied with this CIP draft for inclusion in the Draft Parks and Recreation Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Kim Arter, 170 S Bear Lake Rd, Laketon Twp. Supervisor:** Supervisor Arter had several items to update the members:
 - Scenic Drive Safe Streets Initiative – Kim stated the engineers are in process of conducting a feasibility study for this project, and she hopes to have the completed study in the next week or so.
 - MDNR Spark Grant – Kim noted the MDNR has release another SPARK grant, which will be the final round of this grant. It is a \$1 million dollar grant with no matching funds required. She talked about where the township application lost points in the last round when we applied for a project that included pickleball, basketball and tennis facilities at Mullally Park – she felt the biggest point loss was because it was a project just for Laketon Township and the State likes to see projects that connect communities, so this time the Board is looking to apply for the grant to extend the bike trail on Dykstra Rd to the Berry Junction Trail on Whitehall Rd as it is a regional trail system.
 - Columbarium construction at the cemetery has started with footing excavation – hoping to have the structures installed in early June.
 - New sprinkler system for Mullally Park (soccer area) as the old system is obsolete and parts are no longer available for repairs. Currently waiting on bids for this project.

BOARD REPORTS:

- **Board of Trustees: Eric Anderson** – He asked Kim Arter to update the members on the pickleball/basketball/tennis project and the Horton Park project. Kim stated the township has ARPA funds left to spend and the project can probably be scaled back from the scope they applied for in the SPARK Grant by reducing the number of pickleball courts from 6 to 4, eliminating the walking path and covered building to get it down in the \$400,000 range and be able to use the ARPA funds. She commented on the fact that grant funds that go unused must be returned to the federal government. She also noted that MDNR grant funds awarded but not used must also be returned to the state government and if that were to occur, the township would not be allowed to apply for any grants for 10 years. Kim stated an issue has developed at Horton Park, involving a Frontier fiber optic cable that was installed on an emergency basis years ago before she was in office. The cable runs right through the boat launch area and is sitting on the lake bottom – not buried four feet deep as it was supposed to have been. Frontier refuses to move it or do anything to assist. The engineers are working on a revised plan to scale back to boat launch area – including a kayak launcher, canoes, jet skis and small boats as well as a designated swim area to protect

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swimmers from having motor boats coming to close. New bid documents are being drafted for the changes and hopefully will have bids for this fall. She added that the grant coordinator has approved some of the smaller purchases; a muskie fish bike rack, trash cans and tables for the pavilion area. She also added that the MDNR originally awarded the grant in 2016, so it will be a good day when this project is finished and the required ribbon cutting ceremony can be held. She will keep everyone updated as the project moves along.

- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Suzanne Hayes** - No activity to report.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Dave Mieras moved to adjourn. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried and the adjournment occurred at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West
Recording Secretary