

Laketon Township Planning Commission
August 9, 2023 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes – APPROVED 9/13/2023

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Bob Marine called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

ROLL CALL:

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Paul Hoppa moved to approve the minutes of 07/12/2023 as presented. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Monthly Permit Report/Zoning Report:** ZA H. Tice commented on permit activity, still pretty busy. She also noted there may be a potential site plan review coming soon as there is a property on Witham Drive that wants to upgrade to a paved parking lot for a new office business – still waiting on information from the applicant.

NEW BUSINESS: **NONE**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Park & Rec Plan –**
 - **Survey Results** – ZA H. Tice presented the results of the survey, noting there were a total of 171 responses, 39 via the online survey monkey and 132 handed in from the mailing. She highlighted some of the interesting results:
 - Top reasons for not using the parks were lack of lighting/feeling unsafe, poor maintenance and not knowing where the parks are located.
 - Top requested amenities – more walking/bike paths, pickleball courts and more play areas.
 - The question on supporting a parks and rec millage was a 95 yes to 62 no.

Discussion of these results centered around listening to the public opinion on maintenance – noting we should do a better job of maintaining the parks. Bob Marine noted the township only has 2 full time maintenance employees and funding is limited. Eric Anderson noted that with our population, number of parks and limited staff he feels we do fairly well with the resources we have. Suzanne Hayes wondered if perhaps closing a park would help concentrate the resources we do have on the remaining parks. Eric Anderson also commented that Lori Archer has done tons of work and been the de-facto parks director and the driving force behind all the playground equipment installs since 2016 when the Mullally playground went in, followed by the handicap accessible playground at Lange a few years later and then the ones at Horton Park & Green Creek Park in the last few years. He added he will discuss with the board a possible millage to support the parks as the Board of Trustees would have to approve any millage election. There was also discussion of better marketing of the parks and getting information to residents and the larger regional community as to the park offerings, possibly by the Reeths Puffer Rocket Review newspaper/newsletter, a PSA on the radio and more in the township newsletter as well. There was also discussion of the dirt driveway/parking area into the Lange Complex portion of the park and how it isn't very pleasing with no boundaries and just a sandy dirt path. Suzanne Hayes commented on adding natural landscaping to highlight the rural character of the community and exploring alternatives to paving that still provide better function than the current dirt drive/parking area. Paul Hoppa commented that it all comes down to funding and all options are on the table if there is enough money. He added the public responses show they are willing to pay a millage that is dedicated to parks and recreation and it is an important point from the survey that should be taken into consideration as we are currently restricted by limited resources. ZA H. Tice and

Laketon Township Planning Commission
August 9, 2023 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes – APPROVED 9/13/2023

Eric Anderson both commented on the need for a new sprinkling system in order to be able to do much of anything new and to maintain the sports fields we have now. Eric Anderson noted the Board of Trustees recently approved a bid to install a completely new irrigation system at a cost of \$25,000.

ZA H. Tice will incorporate the survey results and updated parks and rec capital improvement plan into the draft parks and rec plan for the next meeting for their review and hopefully approval to release to the public and scheduling a public hearing.

- **Temporary Structures:** ZA H. Tice informed the PC on enforcement of temporary structures, noting that they cannot be considered blight until they are falling apart. She also presented some extensive language to possibly consider at some future time, but noted the township attorney recommended simple language to be added to Section 3.18 stating “Temporary structures are allowed by written permit issued by the Township for a period up to 6 months within a 12 month period. The definition of a temporary structure can be found in Section 2.21.” There was brief discussion noting that at this point in time there are no enforceable regulations on temporary structures, only a definition of what one is. Suzanne Hayes moved to hold a public hearing on the language as proposed by the township attorney. Paul Hoppa supported the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.
ZA H. Tice will schedule the public hearing in conjunction with the September 13, 2023 regular meeting date and make sure the Notice of Public Hearing is submitted to the newspaper for publication in accordance with the ordinance requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: **NONE – no public present**

BOARD REPORTS:

- **Board of Trustees – Eric Anderson** – Nothing relevant to planning commission activities to report.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Suzanne Hayes** - No activity to report.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Dave Mieras moved to adjourn. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried and the adjournment occurred at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West
Recording Secretary