

**Laketon Township Planning Commission**  
**September 13, 2023 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes–APPROVED 11/8/23**

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

**ROLL CALL:**

- Present: Paul Hoppa, Eric Anderson, Suzanne Hayes, Dave Mieras, Chris Simpson, June Earhart and Bob Marine.
- Absent: None.
- Also present: Zoning Administrator Heidi Tice, Recording Secretary Veronica West

**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 moved to approve the minutes of 8/9/2023 as presented. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

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

Chairperson Bob Marine recessed the regular meeting at 6:03 pm to conduct the public hearing.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- **Open Public Hearing:** June Earhart moved to open the public hearing. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried and the public hearing opened at 6:04 pm.
- **Public Hearing Notice:** Secretary Dave Mieras read the published public hearing notice aloud and noted the notice was published in the Muskegon Chronicle on Sunday 8/27/2023.
- **Introduction:** ZA H. Tice gave a brief introduction, noting that there was a municipal civil infraction ticket issued to a resident regarding a temporary structure and the ticket was dismissed by the judge because the zoning ordinance only referenced a temporary structure definition, but there was not actual regulation language. Therefore, the township attorney suggested the following language be inserted into Section 3.18 of the Zoning Ordinance to create an enforceable regulation consistent with the existing definition. "Temporary structures are allowed by written permit issued by the Township for a period up to 6 months within a 12 month period."
- **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- **Close Public Hearing:** Paul Hoppa moved to close the public comment portion of the hearing. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.
- **Deliberation/Decision:** Members felt this item had been fully discussed at prior meetings and no further deliberations were necessary. Paul Hoppa moved to recommend to the Laketon Township Board, adoption of the proposed amendment to Zoning Ordinance Section 3.18 that reads "Temporary structures are allowed by written permit issued by the Township for a period up to 6 months within a 12 month period." June Earhart supported the motion. A roll call vote was taken.  
**Yes Votes:** June Earhart, Suzanne Hayes, Chris Simpson, Dave Mieras, Eric Anderson, Paul Hoppa and Bob Marine.  
**No Votes:** None  
**MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairperson Bob Marine reconvened the regular meeting at 6:09 pm.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- **Monthly Permit Report/Zoning Report:** ZA H. Tice commented on permit activity, still pretty busy with accessory buildings and asked the PC if they would like to have discussions at a future meeting to review accessory building regulations as she still gets many requests for more or larger buildings. Chris Simpson responded he would like to discuss it and Eric Anderson also agreed that he has always felt the regulations on sizes were too strict. Dave Mieras commented he thinks it would be better to have enough storage indoors rather than things all over the yard. ZA H. Tice will put this item on an agenda in the spring for discussion.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**– APPROVED 11/8/23**

- **Zoning Map:** ZA H. Tice informed the PC that it was discovered that it appears as though the zoning map was never officially approved years ago as all office copies were marked as draft. There were also several errors and changes that needed to be made for expired PUD's that were never built, new PUD's that came to be after the map was originally created as well as the new mixed use zoning district that was created recently and a parcel that was in a conservation easement that wasn't noted on the map. The map has been updated with these corrections/changes by the county GIS department. There was a general discussion of the critical dune and floodplain overlays. There was also concern expressed that the overlay districts make it very difficult to discern district boundaries and labels in certain areas, especially in the Dykstra Rd/Witham Rd area where the new mixed use district was recently created. ZA H. Tice and other staff noted it is easier to see on the large map on the wall and the PDF/digital copy of the map, the zoom feature can make those areas larger and easy to see where the district boundaries are. Suzanne Hayes moved to recommend the updated/corrected draft zoning map be scheduled for a public hearing to be held in conjunction with the public hearing for the Parks and Recreation Plan. Eric Anderson supported the motion. Paul Hoppa expressed concerned about accuracy or read the very small copies to be able to discern some of the district boundaries. It was explained by ZA H. Tice, the maps are accurate but the 11 x 17 size copies she provided to the PC for reference are just too small to see some things, the large copy on the wall is much easier to see as well as the PDF/digital file can be zoomed in on to see the districts boundaries and overlays in the smaller areas where there is a lot going on. Paul Hoppa asked for the PDF to be on the township website for the public in the spirit of accuracy, which ZA H. Tice noted would be done. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- **Park & Rec Plan:** ZA H. Tice stated the next step in the update/review process is to release the draft document to the public and township board for a 30 day review period prior to holding a public hearing. There was discussion of grammatical, spelling and punctuation edits that were needed as well as some formatting issues for consistency. With regard to Green Creek Park, Bob Marine questioned calling out the Northside Lions as building the playground. It was explained that the Northside Lions were a large part of the community build volunteer labor as well as providing breakfast to the volunteer labor for not only the Green Creek Park playground, but also the Mullally Playground and the Lange Complex Playgrounds. Paul Hoppa, who disclosed he is a member of the Muskegon Northside Lions, stated the group has also provided letters of support to Laketon Township on several grant applications. ZA H. Tice, who disclosed she is a member of the Fruitport Lions, also noted that volunteer labor is counted towards the municipality matching funds on a grant project and approving bodies look favorably at grant applications that include partnerships with groups within the community. Eric Anderson suggested including a sentence calling out the support and partnership Laketon Township has with the Muskegon Northside Lions Club in the Section "Recreation Administration" rather than just on the Green Creek Park playground as the club has been involved in so many of the parks projects. Dave Mieras moved to release the Draft Parks and Rec Plan, with the minor edits and changes discussed, to the Township Board and public for the required 30 day public review period. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.
- **Park and Rec Capital Improvement Plan:** Dave Mieras moved to release the Capital Improvement Plan to the Township Board and public for the required 30 day public review period. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.
- **Public Hearing Date:** After some brief discussion of potential dates Suzanne Hayes moved to hold a public hearing for the draft Parks and Rec Plan and the draft Park and Rec Capital Improvement Plan on the same date as the regular October PC Meeting, October 11, 2023. After some looking at the calendar and publication requirements, it was discovered that date will not allow enough time for the 30 day review. The motion was withdrawn. After additional discussion, Suzanne Hayes moved to hold the public hearing for the draft Parks and Rec Plan and the draft Park and Rec Capital Improvement Plan on Wednesday November 8, 2023 in conjunction with the regular monthly Planning Commission meeting. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote. Eric Anderson moved to schedule the public hearing for the draft Zoning Map on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote. Staff will create and have published the notice of public hearing for these three items and submit to the Muskegon Chronicle for publication on Sunday September 24, 2023, which will accommodate the 30 day required review period.

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**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Suzanne Hayes commented on an interesting article regarding a planning commission that was sued over a bad decision regarding a big box store they turned down. ZA H. Tice noted that a community must address an issue with ordinance regulations, without any written regulations on something, it must be allowed. She also commented on the use of a moratorium on an issue that could be used to prevent certain things until regulations can be adopted and even putting issues on a ballot for the voting public to decide on in lieu of ordinance regulations. Suzanne Hayes asked ZA H. Tice if the township has any insurance protections for members of the PC from lawsuits. ZA H. Tice will inquire with the Township Supervisor on that issue.

Eric Anderson moved to close public comment. Chris Simpson supported the motion. The motion carried.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

- **Board of Trustees – Eric Anderson** – Update on the sprinkling system work at Mullally park: the work was done on the east side field, however it turns out the quote was somewhat vague, the board assumed it was for both the east side and the west side fields, but it wasn't. The west side field will be an additional cost the board must approve. He also noted the Board discussed at a recent work session the possibility of a parks and rec millage, but no one has yet stepped up to spearhead such a project.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Suzanne Hayes** - No activity to report.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- Dave Mieras moved to adjourn. Chris Simpson supported the motion. The motion carried and the adjournment occurred at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West  
Recording Secretary

