

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes of Regular Meeting February 17, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kenneth Dignan at 7:02 P.M. at 8350 Main Street.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Roll call:	
Janet Chick	Present
Marlene Chockley	Present
Brad Cousino	Present
Kenneth Dignan	Present
Sam Iaquinto	Present
Larry Roman	Present
Mark Stanalajczo	Absent with notice

Also present:
Township Manager Howard Fink
Assessing & Building Assistant Mary Bird
Planning Consultant Sally Hodges, McKenna Associates
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the Community

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Chick supported, that the agenda be adopted as presented
Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.

5. FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Dignan referred to correspondence in Commissioners' packets.

7. REPORTS

7A. Board of Trustees

Chick reported that on February 9th among other actions taken the Board adopted the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

7B. ZBA

Chockley reported that one of the four sign variances requested by Nowatzke Truck and Trailer was approved and the rest were denied.

7C. Staff Report

Nothing to report.

7D. Planning Consultant

Hodges introduced herself.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

9. OLD BUSINESS

9A. Lake Overlay Zoning.

Hodges reviewed the proposal prepared by Leah DuMouchel of Beckett & Raeder and recommended considering building code requirements and what is needed for safe parking on these small lots. The Board discussed other elements of the proposal including rear and side yard setbacks, setbacks from the lake, impervious surface, and the difference between lakefront areas and the Summer Homes subdivision.

9B. Consider the addition of churches as a conditional use in the General Commercial (GC) District.

Dignan and Iaquinto said during the last week they took on positions of responsibility within Living Water Church (which initiated this request) that have created a conflict of interest with this request, so they are recusing themselves. Dignan turned over conduct of the meeting to Chick for this portion of the agenda.

Regarding the question of whether churches should be permitted in the GC district, Hodges said the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Person Act (RLUIPA) does not exempt churches from zoning regulations, and she said they should be allowed in districts with similar uses where they are not currently allowed—LC, HC, GC, ES, and PSC.

Regarding whether the site under discussion should be rezoned to a WLD district, Hodges noted some major differences from GC including parking and building setbacks and dimensional requirements for new construction. As to what the boundaries of the WLD should be, she reviewed how such a zoning change would affect this site and other businesses nearby noting there would be pros and cons with each district.

The Board discussed the need to review the zoning ordinance and court rulings since RLUIPA was adopted to insure legal compliance and consistency, and expressed concern about unintentionally creating a burden on the owners of this property and others nearby by placing them in the VC district.

- **Motion:** Roman moved, Chockley supported, that the Planning Commission review all current zoning districts for compliance with the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Person Act (RLUIPA) and make any compliance determinations and adjustments. **Motion carried 4—0—2 on a roll call vote, Dignan and Iaquinto abstaining.**

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. MINUTES

February 3, 2016, Regular Meeting

Chockley made several minor corrections:

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Iaquinto supported, that the minutes of the February 3, 2016, regular meeting be approved as presented, and to dispense with the reading. **Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

12. POLICY REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

A. Goals and Objectives for 2016. Commissioners reviewed goals and actions from 2015 and stated preferences for items to work on in 2016.

- ▶ **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Chick supported, that Cobalt Research appear at the Commission's next meeting and present the survey they have prepared thus far.

Fink said he can review the Cobalt contract to see if that is supported by the financial arrangements in it. Iaquinto said he would like them to appear unless they have a scheduling conflict.

Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.

It was noted the sewer capacity study will be available in the next 2-3 months. Other areas of interest included:

- having the planning consultants review business-oriented zoning districts and make recommendations for changes
- creating a trail plan connecting to surrounding Townships
- studying other lake communities for ideas to implement here
- determining whether PDR and TDR programs would be useful for the Township
- surveying agricultural activity in the Township to determine its economic impact, and

- studying the effect 2.5 acre zoning would have on the AR district.

Dignan asked Commissioners to email him other topics to consider at future meetings.

13. SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Faith Wheeler, 371 Grove, commented on the GC zoning issue, raising the issues of potentially hazardous materials being taken through the Township by rail and FEMA changes to the floodplain designations in that area.

Craig Warburton, 450 W. Joy Road, commented on the proposed by-laws and the approval process for them, the Cobalt survey, comments made by Commissioner at the last meeting and in responses to his emails.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners welcomed Hodges, announced a Michigan Association of Planners educational opportunity, and reviewed at length how various types of items may come to be placed on an agenda.

15. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

March 2, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. at the Public Safety Building was announced as the next regular Commission meeting time and location. Dignan noted agenda items will include the Biltmore request under Old Business and continued discussion of how informal requests are handled by the Commission.

16. ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Roman supported, that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

Prepared by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;

Wording added is underlined.

Adopted on March 2, 2016.


Kenneth Dignan, Chair


Mark Stanalajczo, Secretary

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at <http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/>