

**APPROVED
EMPIRE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

February 20, 2024

The Empire Township Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2024. The meeting was held at the Empire Township Hall.

CALL TO ORDER: Duane Shugart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Duane Shugart, Larry Krawczak, Tom Petersen, Dale DeJager, Micah Deegan

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator; Dana Boomer, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The PC briefly discussed the agenda. **Motion by Deegan, second by DeJager to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The PC briefly discussed the minutes of the January 16, 2024 regular meeting. **Motion by Deegan, second by Krawczak to approve the January 16, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

COMMUNICATIONS: Deegan was contacted by Bob Chase for the full results of the Community Survey, as the village is considering a short term rental ordinance; he passed this along to Boomer and she has sent Chase the requested information. Cypher has been in contact with the Glen Lake Manor, which continues to be a pending matter.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Cypher had previously distributed his monthly reports for January 2024. Cypher reported on complaints and enforcement action in the township in January. **Motion by Petersen, second by Deegan to acknowledge receipt of the January 2024 written reports. All in favor, motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Master Plan Update from Board** – The Master Plan has been published and is in effect. It is available on the website and in electronic form. Boomer is working with Neiswonger to get the final printed copies for distribution to the Township Board, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.
- **Zoning Ordinance Review** – DeJager asked about the new Zoning Map and how zoning designations are changed. The PC and staff discussed how the zoning map can be changed through the same process as changes to the Zoning Ordinance. DeJager asked if there is adequate land designated as Residential to allow for appropriate amounts of future construction on smaller lot sizes. The PC agreed this was a good subject for future discussion.

Boomer will contact Equalization to attempt to gather additional information on the number of improved and unimproved lots in the various zoning districts.

The PC continued the discussion of the Zoning Ordinance, beginning with Article 4. Extensive discussion was had on the definitions of lot lines and setbacks – minor changes were made, and Cypher will conduct additional research. Extensive discussion was had on lake access/keyholing – minor changes were made and it is possible that this topic may be revisited. Landscaping and outdoor lighting were extensively discussed, and the discussion will be continued at the next meeting after additional research has been conducted by Shugart (landscaping) and Cypher (lighting). Other changes were made after discussion. Changes made:

- Add language regarding waterfront setbacks to Section 4.1
- Add “Emergency communications towers as regulated by the Federal Communications Commission and Michigan Public Service Commission are considered essential services.” to definition of Essential Services
- Remove “Neither Communication towers nor wind energy systems are considered essential services.”
- Section 4.7.B.1 changed to “On a lot zoned for single family residential use, the owner(s) of the lot or the residents of the dwelling on the lot may allow the use of said lot for lake access for any non-commercial water related activity, including, ~~without limitation~~, swimming...” This may be revisited.
- Section 4.9, add “seasonal”

For the next meeting, the Planning Commission will continue the discussion of Section 4.8 and 4.9, then move forward through Section 4 and into Section 5, depending on available time.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Pleasure of the Board** – None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BOARD COMMENT: Shugart and Deegan will not be present on the 19th. The PC had consensus to move the meeting to March 26th. Shugart and Cypher will not be present for that date. It is possible the Manor will be on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT: **Motion** by Krawczak to adjourn at 9:11 pm, Petersen seconded. With no objection, Shugart adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary