

October 12, 2021

Empire Township Board - Regular Meeting

Supervisor Noonan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Township Hall. Present were members Deegan, Carl Noonan, Casey Noonan, and Neiswonger. Late: Price. Motion-Deegan; support-Casey Noonan to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2021 regular meeting as written. All ayes.

Planning & Zoning Report: 1.) Zoning Administrator, Tim Cypher, issued the following permits in September: 1) Change of use to single family dwelling-Benzonia Trail 2) Generator-Benzonia Trail 3) Dwelling addition-Southpointe Rd 4) Accessory building-Dunns Farm Rd. 2.) Trustee Deegan reported that planning is continuing the Master Plan review.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Price joined the meeting at this time and reported on CDs and bank accounts as of 09-30-2021. Report received as read.

Supervisor Report: 1.) Regarding the proposed Glen Lake Watershed Overlay District in zoning, members of the public were present and the Board received a number of pro and con emails about the proposed amendments. Supervisor opened the discussion with comments from the audience. People in support of the district cited that the proposed regulations would help preserve the current water quality of Glen Lake and its' watershed. People opposed to the district questioned the legality of the Glen Lake Association (GLA) being involved in the creation of the district and noted concerns of the large amount of land area involved in the watershed, especially in relation to the small percentage of undeveloped land that still exists around the lake. Also mentioned were the steep slope regulations since zoning already addresses steep slopes and the more subjective flexibility given to the Zoning Administrator to enforce the regulations. Planning Chair, Richard Figura, noted that it was not unlawful for the GLA to be involved in preparing the proposed rules and Planning held a public hearing with notification sent to all properties within 300 feet of the district. Mr. Figura explained that they received County Planning's satisfactory remarks on the proposed regulations and regarding the subjective enforcement concerns, it was hoped there would be willing public compliance with the regulations. Township Board members expressed concerns with the large area involved and questioned if the district should be limited to a smaller area such as, 1000 feet within the shoreline. Members also noted concerns about the steep slopes rules and that the vast majority of the shoreline area was developed and exempted from the rules. Concerns were also raised about the discretionary aspects of enforcement. After further discussion, motion was made by Carl Noonan; support-Deegan to return the regulations to the Planning Commission for further review on the lakeshore and watershed area involved, the discretionary aspect of enforcement, and request that they remove the steep slope rules and review zoning's current steep slope regulations for possible update. All ayes.

Clerk Report: 1.) Motion-Deegan; support-Casey Noonan to pay the October 2021 monthly bills as presented and attached. All ayes.

Final Business: 1.) Supervisor Noonan thanked everyone for attending the meeting. It was mentioned that one of the largest threats to Glen Lake were poorly functioning septic systems, especially in light of older systems and increased high volume rental usage around Glen Lake. Rob Karner of GLA mentioned that it might be an appropriate time to see if more regular septic inspections could be required for rental properties around the lake. All business being concluded the meeting was adjourned by the Supervisor at 8:47 p.m.

Christine M. Neiswonger, Clerk