

SOLON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, September 5, 2023
Solon Township Hall
9191 South Kasson Street, Cedar, MI 49621

I. Call Meeting to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Morgan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Roll Call / Guest Sign-in

Present: Steve Morgan, Chair; Meg Paxton, Member; Samantha VanderVlucht, Member; Todd Yeomans, Vice Chair/ZBA Rep; and Steve Yoder, Township Board Rep

Staff Present: Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator; Allison Hubley-Patterson, Recording Secretary

Members of the public: In total, there were six (6) members of the public present at various times throughout the meeting.

III. Motion to Approve Minutes – August 1, 2023

Chairman Morgan asked for a motion to approve the August 1, 2023 minutes as presented. **YEOMANS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 1, 2023 MINUTES AS PRESENTED; PAXTON SECONDED. ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.**

IV. Agenda (additions/subtractions by PC)

Chairman Morgan asked for a motion to approve the September agenda. **VANDERVLUCHT MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA AS PRESENTED; YODER SECONDED. ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.**

V. Correspondence

Cypher stated that he will address correspondence received during his ZA report.

Chairman Morgan stated that he received an email message from Paxton requesting that the PC address two topics after the Master Plan and landscape ordinance are completed. Paxton would like to see the PC work on short-term rentals and mother-in-law/father-in-law apartments within Solon Township. Cypher commented that we expected the State of Michigan to

render a decision regarding short-term rentals for the past three to four years; however, at this point, there has been no further word on this matter.

VI. Conflicts of Interest - None

VII. Public Comment (three minutes per person unless extended by Chair)

Ms. Judy Janosik stated that she wanted to bring up the topic of short-term rentals, too.

Ms. Mary O'Neill added that the short-term rental legislation has stalled in the Michigan Senate. She hopes that there will be something on the books soon.

VIII. Reports

Township Board Rep:

Yoder reported that the Township Board held a Public Hearing in August on the Future Land Use Maps (FLUMs); there were approximately 50 people in attendance. Yoder stated that he believes the general consensus is that the maps need some additional work and that people do not care for the maps as presented. This topic will be on the agenda for the September Township Board meeting. VanderVlucht asked Yoder if he could see the maps coming back to the PC; he replied "No" and stated that the additional work on the maps will most likely be completed by the Township Board but the maps will not be sent back to the PC. He noted that one board member suggested turning the maps down altogether; however, Yoder believes this is not a good idea.

The Township Board is still working to obtain a quote for the aluminum bleachers that will replace the wooden bleachers. Mr. Ray Pleva has come forth and requested that a "Polkatober" event be held in October. The Township Board approved the Solon Township Planning Commission Bylaws.

Yoder stated that the topic of the Landscape Ordinance was also discussed at the August Township Board Meeting. He defended the work of the PC and noted that the PC is concerned that no suggestions have been offered by the Board as to what they would like to see changed. Yoder does not see the Landscape Ordinance going anywhere at this point. He believes it is best for the PC to continue to listen to the ideas submitted by members of the public.

ZBA: No report

ZA:

Cypher also addressed the August Township Board Meeting and stated that the PC and he received a vote of confidence from the Township Supervisor. With regard to the Landscape Ordinance, Cypher stated that he has heard the same

comments from the Board for over one year. He asked who the Board is protecting by not allowing a landscape ordinance that has “teeth” in it, especially since the PC has received a great deal of input from the public.

Cypher received an email message from Mr. Corey Flaska. Mr. Flaska spoke to the Township Supervisor and will be giving a presentation at the next Township Board meeting regarding the FLUMs.

During August, Cypher stated that he was busy with telephone calls but there has not been much production. Land use permits are down approximately 30% from this time in 2022; September and October were very busy months last year.

IX. Public Hearing – None

X. New Business – None

XI. Unfinished Business

A. Master Plan Rewrite – continue discussion / review completed work

Cypher reported that Hubley-Patterson recently distributed the most recent version of the Master Plan and addressed in an email message what information is still needed. This will be completed for the October meeting and it is possible that a Public Hearing could be scheduled for November. However, this will depend on whether or not the Township Board determines that the FLUMs must be reworked.

Yoder stated that several graphs and maps have been added and noted that the Master Plan is looking more complete. He believes the document looks great; it is more personal and easier to read.

Discussion ensued regarding concerns expressed by the Township Board as to the minutes from the July PC meeting. Yoder explained that the language in the landscape ordinance came from the public, who essentially helped write the ordinance, but he noted that the Township Board did not receive these same comments from the public.

Yoder noted that if some things are changed on the FLUMs, this will not really change the text of the Master Plan; however, if the maps are scrapped, this will make a difference. Yoder stated that the Master Plan could be approximately 100 pages in length once all outstanding information has been added to the document; Cypher confirmed that this is correct.

Chairman Morgan asked Yoder to please keep him informed as to how the next Township Board Meeting goes so he can adequately plan the October PC agenda.

Regarding the August Township Board Meeting, VanderVlucht stated that one board member was concerned about Solon Township ending up in the paper.

B. Landscape Ordinance – continue discussion

Paxton asked if it would be possible to have a joint meeting of the PC and the Township Board; Cypher replied, “Yes”.

Chairman Morgan asked Yoder if he believed the Board would be open to this idea. Yoder stated that the PC can go to the Board and ask what to do; Cypher replied, “Yes”.

Paxton asked if the PC should pick the top three things to work on but added that we are not necessarily aware of what these top issues would be. Cypher stated that anything can be waived, too.

Discussion ensued regarding a dollar store that is coming to Long Lake Township. VanderVlucht stated that it does not appear that the public had much opportunity to express their opposition to this project and it appears that it slid in under the radar. She inquired if a dollar store could go into a place such as Robinson Court. Cypher replied that a dollar store could go onto the vacant lot near Grumpy’s. VanderVlucht asked what steps Solon Township can take and Cypher replied that screening, buffering and landscape requirements must be very strict. Cypher added that a dollar store does not really fit in the B2 zoning district within Solon Township as this is more appropriate for an industrial park.

Cypher noted that the Long Lake Township population may be more conducive to the idea of a dollar store. This was tried in Kasson Township but was not successful. Yoder stated that he is not here to stop a project but added that he is here to ensure that the project looks good and protect the rights of residential neighbors.

Chairman Morgan asked the PC members how they wish to proceed. Chairman Morgan noted that a majority of the PC members do not wish to continue to work further on this project. Cypher stated that he will be at the Township Board Meeting on September 14th.

Cypher will send out information from the American Planning Association regarding accessory dwellings. Cypher stated that Leland Township allows accessory dwellings due to an outcry by the public. One restriction is that the accessory dwelling is only allowed if the property is owner-occupied. He stated that he advises people to give out their telephone number to neighbors if they plan to rent out their property. If there is a problem and neighbors call Cypher directly, this is classified as a complaint.

Yoder asked if there is language that the PC can start working on next month. Chairman Morgan asked if there is an example from another township that the PC could review regarding short-term rentals. Cypher stated that with a short-

term rental ordinance, this is similar to a police power ordinance because then nothing is grandfathered in. Townships that are going this route may have the PC do the leg work. Public hearings are not needed with police power ordinances. Cypher stated that accessory dwellings can go into the ordinance but should receive direction and guidance from the Board prior to proceeding down this path.

XII. Other Items – None

XIII. ZA / Planning Commission Comment

Yoder stated that the Leelanau County Planning Department will be holding a work session at the end of September on how to deal with large developers coming into the community. He added that it might be a good idea for all to attend this event.

XIV. Public Comment

Ms. Mary O'Neill stated that the fact that one board member did not want Solon Township to end up in the paper is precisely the reason why this should be in the paper. She stated that the Board needs to be reminded that an election is coming up and she further suggested that someone from the paper should attend a future meeting to do a story. Ms. O'Neill stated that the Board is shirking their duties as publicly-elected officials.

Ms. Karen Smith stated that she agrees with Paxton that if the PC does nothing, the topic will go nowhere. She asked if it was possible to hire a mediator to oversee a joint Township Board/PC meeting. Cypher stated this is not a court of law so a mediator is not necessary; most mediators are licensed attorneys.

Cypher stated that he read through the July minutes which the Township Board to exception with. He did not feel that there was anything offensive in the minutes. Ms. Smith suggested that both the Board and the PC sit down together to discuss this.

Mr. Charlie Smith stated that he attended the last Township Board Meeting and it became clear to him that the PC is a lightning rod. He is not sure that the Board is being totally honest with their motivations.

Ms. Judy Janosik thanked all PC members for their work.

Ms. O'Neill stated that the Township Supervisor should be reminded that the last time the Board went against the public, this resulted in a referendum and cost the township a couple of thousand dollars.

XV. Adjournment

There being no objection, Chairman Morgan adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Solon Township Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Hubley-Patterson, Recording Secretary

APPENDIX A: SOLON TOWNSHIP ZA'S MONTHLY PERMIT SUMMARY (AUGUST)

SOLON TOWNSHIP ZA'S MONTHLY PERMIT SUMMARY

PERIOD: AUGUST 2023

DATE	PERMIT #	NAME	USE	RECEIPT CK.#	AMOUNT
8/17/2023	LUP 23-25	BLARNEY CASTLE	LAND USE	202325	477401 \$ 250.00
010-359-0038004-00	5101 E. TRAVERSE HWY.	REPLACEMENT PROPANE TANK		603 S.F.	
8/18/2023	LUP 23-26	LARSON	LAND USE	202326	1237 \$ 50.00
010-023-019-10	6445 E. LINCOLN RD	NEW AG BUILDING		918 S.F.	
8/27/2023	LUP 23-27	LARACEY	LAND USE	202327	1339 \$ 50.00
010-011-026-05	9350 S. PARKER RD.	NEW INTERIOR WORKSHOP		504 S.F.	
8/27/2023	LUP 23-28	GALLIVAN	LAND USE	202328	5670 \$ 50.00
010-014-008-50	10801 S. WEISLER RD.	DECK POOL FENCE		1,234 S.F.	
8/3/2023	LUP 22-05	DOUCETTE	LAND USE RENEWAL	202205	33736 \$ 50.00
010-011-011-00	6879 E. BIRCH POINT RD.	RENEWAL & ADDED SWIMMING POOL		608 S.F.	

TOTAL \$ 450.00

SIGNED:

Timothy A. Cypher

DATE: 9/9/2023

TIMOTHY A. CYPHER
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