

**Colfax Township, Weldon Township and
Village of Thompsonville
Joint Planning Commission**

Meeting Minutes – January 5, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:33pm by Sue Meredith followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at roll call were Sue Meredith, Jack Richter, Shelley Greene, Peggy Minster, Debra Franke, Eugene Allen and Craig Meredith. Absent: Marty Lonn (excused), Bryan Matthews (excused) and Pat Workman (unexcused). Guest: Harry Burkholder.

Citizen Matters. None.

Minutes Approval. Sue asked for questions/comments. Peggy moved, seconded by Jack, to accept the December 1 minutes. Ayes: all; motion carried.

Master Plan Project Session. Harry provided a package of materials which included master plan adoption procedures, a sample Intent to Plan letter, Best Practice Principles, revised goals and objectives and a draft Action Plan with strategies. Harry reviewed the master plan adoption process as well as the Intent to Plan letter which explains that an electronic pdf file of the plan will be sent for review/comment unless a formal request is received for a hard copy. It was agreed to use www.colfaxtwp.org. Sue developed and provided a list of addressees; she will include Benzie County Central Schools and Manistee Area Public Schools as a courtesy. Businesses may also be included, if desired, as a courtesy. Sue and Shelley will work to get letters sent. The data checklist was reviewed next for open items. Harry has Lake Twp. and Village of Benzonia master plans and Thompsonville's zoning ordinance. The county and Weldon plans should be at LIAA's office. He will go online for the county zoning ordinance; Peggy said she would bring one to the next meeting. Harry felt he can get most digital data from the county. For existing and future land use maps, Peggy said she gave several maps to Heather. She has a hard copy of the land use map from the county and believes it is on the website. Harry will email Peggy if he needs maps; Shelley is to send him email addresses. Harry confirmed the Village water system info is still needed; Eugene will follow up with Pat. Craig will get Crystal Mountain's public water system info. They have municipal water, sewer, cable TV and sell propane. Harry said anything on that would be good. As far as photos, Shelley had no luck with neighbors but sent an email to Dean Rhodes. Peggy will make copies of some she has. Shelley will also contact the Benzie County Museum.

Harry reviewed the Best Practices Principles which are being used in Michigan and throughout the country as guiding principles when developing a framework for master plans. He said the Ten Tenets of Smart Growth provide aspiration for communities, although not all may apply especially in rural areas. Next were the Eight Assets identified as essential by the Michigan Municipal League, and then the MSU Land Policy Institute and People and Land Program's Six Pillars of Growth, Seven Pillars of the New Economy and Five Principles of Strategic Growth. Harry stressed the Regionalism principle. For example, what's good for our community is good for Benzie and Grand Traverse counties and northwest Michigan and vice versa. Harry said a regional context view is important and not everything has to be the same, but with a global economy and considering close ties of northern Michigan communities it's something to keep in mind. Revisions and additions to goals and objectives were reviewed next. The objective "Promote and provide for safe and efficient transportation that serves pedestrians and

bicyclists, especially in the downtown” that was added to goal #4 Transportation Choices addresses Complete Streets legislation adopted in the last year into the Planning Enabling Act. It states that communities should look at all modes of transportation. Referring to the earlier principle on regionalism, an eighth goal was added – Foster Greater Participation in Regional Economic and Community Development Efforts. Harry said NWMCOG has a long list of things they do to promote economic development in the region’s eight counties they support. He stressed the importance of supporting those efforts because they can have a lot of impact at the local level with federal grants and funding they pursue.

The next document reviewed was the Action Plan, formatted as it will appear in the master plan. Harry explained the legend which shows proposed timelines and responsibilities and how they will be applied to the strategies. He then went through the strategies added to the first two goals/objectives. Remaining strategies will be covered at the next meeting. Craig will find out about workforce housing at Crystal Mountain. Harry will bring the *New Designs for Growth* document to the next meeting. Created by NWMCOG, it covers what good planning would look like in developments or redeveloped communities and includes parking, accessibility and buffer zones. It talks about zoning techniques, and there’s a program where developers can take site plans to a board that helped design the document. They don’t validate or approve a plan but provide guidance on good planning practices. On the objectives to develop a unique identity for the downtown, Harry added a strategy of creating a micro-brewery. It has worked extremely well in other communities and serves as an “anchor.” Concerning marketing the community’s outdoor recreational resources, he suggested finding out usage (currently unknown) of the Betsie Valley Trail System and promoting it. Peggy suggested a sign-in log book. Another strategy suggests two new community events. Under objective “encourage civic engagement and volunteerism,” the incomplete strategy “work with the local school district to establish” was suggested by Peggy to read “a working relationship to promote youth involvement in the community.” Until the next meeting, Harry asked that we read, add to and edit the document.

Harry asked if any thought has been given to using one name to signify we are working together. Using all three names is a lot. He said other communities have faced the same issue and understands name identity can be sensitive. Shelley said the group is formally Community Joint Planning Commission in the ordinance body. Harry’s point is that the master plan will be titled with the name and used throughout the document and in publication. He asked that we think about it and discuss at the next meeting. Shelley suggested discussion at upcoming township/village meetings. Discussion followed about involving a school group to engage the youth and tap their creativity in developing a flag that could be an identifier throughout the community. For next steps, Harry will outline the remaining strategies and start writing the plan as much as possible. A public meeting the end of February or March will also be discussed.

Jack asked Harry on timing of bringing in an administrator. He said now would be good, but Jack explained we need to select one. Harry said it would help a ‘ton’ to have the person on board when drafting the zoning ordinance. Eugene asked about the goals/objectives timelines and responsibilities; the JPC will oversee their accomplishment and ongoing issues as they arise. Any existing planning/zoning groups would be disbanded. The issue of liability insurance for zoning matters was raised due to the formation of the JPC; this requires investigation. Harry will bring a ballpark figure for writing a zoning to the next meeting.

Unfinished Business

Legal Advisors. Issue remains open.

Survey. Issue remains open.

Training. Discussion was held on a sign workshop. Jack moved, seconded by Craig, anyone may attend with the cost covered by the JPC budget. Ayes: all; motion carried. Mileage will be reimbursed. Shelley will sign up for January 17 in Big Rapids. Sue also wants to attend. This may be why Susan at MSU Extension contacted Craig. Shelley will provide JPC members' addresses. On Citizen Planner training, Peggy went through her materials and it was decided to cover a brief overview of legal foundations of planning and zoning followed by roles and responsibilities of planning/chapter one. A workshop will be held Saturday, January 21 at the hall from 1-3pm.

Administrator. Discussion was held about publishing a notice. It was felt the position would be part time at this point; pay is TBD; a zoning administrator job description is needed. Sue will ask Harry for a description and email it to everyone for review. Details on publication will be covered at the February meeting.

New Business

Budget. Sue said we need to start on a new budget. Zoning will need to be included. Jack (chair), Gene and Craig were appointed to bring a proposed budget to the February meeting to prepare for presentation to the entities in March.

Wind Towers/Marijuana Collectives. Sue said Weldon extended the moratorium. The group will continue to discuss the issue as it relates to the master plan and zoning ordinance.

Adjournment. Peggy moved to adjourn, seconded by Shelley. Meeting was adjourned at 9:53pm. Next regular meeting is February 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Greene
Secretary

Minutes are proposed until approved at the next meeting.