

Colfax Township, Weldon Township and Village of Thompsonville
Community Joint Planning Commission
14731 Thompson Avenue, Thompsonville, MI 49683
Minutes – March 2, 2017 Regular Meeting - Corrected

Peg Minster opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at roll call: Commissioners Peg Minster, Shelley Greene, Irene Dunham Thayer, Sally Bobek, Chris Bobek, Rob Aldrich, Debra Franke, Eugene Allen and Gene Houghton; and Zoning Administrator Craig Meredith. Absent: Don Suchocki (excused).

Guests: Ron Evitts, Becky Sharp, Bruce Sharp, Catherine Frugé, Mike Frugé, Rich Smith, Hope Clifton, Luke Reynolds, Kym Reynolds, Norm Ling, Charles Kraus, Judith Kraus.

Agenda Additions/Corrections: Motion/second by Debra/Irene to approve as presented; motion carried.
Approval of Minutes: Motion/second by Sally/Debra to approve the February regular meeting minutes as presented; motion carried.

Public Comment: Rich Smith was surprised not to see anything on the agenda about Weldon Township's status on exiting the planning commission. Sally said she would cover it as part of her township report.

Unfinished Business and Reports

A. 2017-2018 Budget: Colfax approved the proposed budget; the Village did not. Discussion was held on the reason for denial; it did not follow the Joint Ordinance percentages. Shelley noted the second year budget did not follow it. Sally said Weldon felt charges for planning/zoning and legal fees should be for the applicant and understands certain ones are for the JPC. Peg felt it may be worthwhile to explore a fee schedule with the consultant for site plans. Eugene noted that wages are the highest line item. Discussion on skipping meetings; however, that could delay an applicant's opportunity to address the JPC. A reduction to two members from each entity does not meet the required odd number. Included in wages are fees for services by the clerk, secretary and chair, taxes and special meetings. Peg commented on what it takes to function and the uncompensated work that takes place outside meetings. It was felt the Joint Ordinance should be revisited. Budget will be revised to follow the percentages. Motion/second by Shelley/Sally to resubmit the JPC budget to the government entities according to the original percentages; motion carried.

B. Risk Meeting Results: Peg and Shelley met with the risk field representative. The report was read stating operations were within the guidelines.

C. Training: Peg noted Don would replace Kathy at the March 22 Planning and Zoning Essentials workshop and said to make sure to get to a workshop. Give consideration to the Citizen Planner course. The best way is online. The classroom setting is more difficult; classes are three hours long over seven weeks. MTA and Networks Northwest workshops are a good experience in a classroom setting which allows for interaction. Shelley will register Eugene for March 22. She will periodically forward emails on planning and zoning topics that may be of interest; hard copies will be provided if requested.

D. Zoning Amendments Petition: There was agreement to Peg's suggestion to schedule the 6:00 P.M. April 6 public hearing as part of the regular meeting. Motion/second by Irene/Sally to rescind the 6:00 P.M. public hearing on April 6. Motion/second by Shelley/Sally to schedule the public hearing for 7:00 P.M. on April 6; motion carried. Ad will be published in the Record Patriot.

E. Mountain Valley Lodge: Peg reviewed the public hearing comments which supported the project. She said the application and site plan were sent to the JPC planning consultant Mark Eidelson; his summary was forwarded to the Reynolds' engineer Sarah Ross. She read Ms. Ross's letter which responded to the planner's recommendations to avoid cross-referencing both documents and welcomed comments. It was identified as Addendum A. After reading Part Two A.9, Rob said if everything is up to code, he felt the level of detail was very intricate. He cited the trash location and asked how it could

be precisely determined. Peg responded that the explanation answered the comment, and it has been her experience with other site plans that truck access to a trash location can be problematic which satisfied Rob's question. Concerning C.2 tree screening, Shelley was unsure the hardwoods would provide an adequate buffer from headlights within the campground facing oncoming M-115 traffic but did not feel it was a showstopper. Mr. Reynolds felt the elevation would take care of it, and Mrs. Reynolds said the brush fills in during the summer. Rob felt it could be addressed later if screening was needed; Irene said it could be revisited if there were complaints. Mrs. Reynolds also noted MDOT controls the highway. Eugene suggested going to through just the highlighted comments; Peg was fine with that if everyone was totally clear with the document. Concerning other permit requirements, Rob asked if permits need to come back to us. Shelley said yes, they are kept by the Zoning Administrator; final plans are also required upon completion of construction. Craig sent notices to the fire and EMS groups to set up a review date but there has been no response. Eugene will follow up. Peg did not see it as an issue to hold up the application. Craig was not sure who issues a soil and erosion permit – drain commissioner? Peg felt it would be covered by either that person or the county.

The next step was to develop a findings of fact statement noted in Mr. Eidelson's summary as required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the JZO. The statement was developed as follows:

The JPC finds that the proposed project for this Special Land Use permit is consistent with the Greater Thompsonville Area Master Plan and meets all requirements per the JZO based on planning consultant Mark Eidelson's review/recommendations and responses provided by the applicant and Practical Engineers, Inc. The JPC has exercised its option to waive certain requirements per the planning consultant's report as referenced in Addendum A dated March 2, 2017.

- Motion/second by Rob/Sally to call the Practical Engineers, Inc. document Addendum A dated March 2, 2017; motion carried.
- Motion/second by Sally/Gene to approve the findings of fact statement; motion carried.
- Motion/second by Shelley/Chris to give final approval to Mountain Valley Lodge's site plan pending receipt of approval by Thompsonville emergency services and other permitting agencies per Addendum A and the Joint Zoning Ordinance; motion carried.
- Motion/second by Sally/Gene to approve the application with conditions pending receipt of approval by Thompsonville emergency services and other permitting agencies per Addendum A and the Joint Zoning Ordinance; motion carried. Craig noted the permit number as SUP030117.

F. Zoning Administrator Report: Written and oral reports were provided. Craig is waiting for the Archers to provide written permission from property owners where their signs are located. He provided portions of the JZO to a prospect for the Betsie River Campground. A DNR public hearing is scheduled for March 14 for the Pellegrino property. Craig awaits the Webber Group pole barn application.

G. Village/Township Reports: Shelley said Colfax discussed capital improvements; the municipal civil infraction (MCI) and amended blight ordinances were adopted. Sally reported that Weldon adopted the MCI ordinance; the board is looking for an assessor as well as people to serve at Board of Review and elections; and the JPC budget was reviewed. As far as the JPC, the Weldon board held a public hearing and decided they wanted to give JPC members a chance to come to their next meeting to address their concerns. One of the issues is money and another is can we get along or is this a giant wrestling match. She felt things went well tonight and will go a long way to making them happier. Sally hopes several can attend to answer their questions. She acknowledged the JPC questioning why do they want to leave and felt it would go a long way if we can ask them and try to get an answer. Peg feels if they can't verbalize it, we can provide some direction and reassurance that Shelley, Mark and I worked hard on the campground. Sally said the issue is it takes too long to do anything and they can do it much faster and happier than it's being done here. Peg said we have to follow the rules; the best we can do is provide reassurance and the facts. If attending meetings would help and be open, Peg said that could be done. They get reports but maybe need to hear from us. Becky Sharp met with Crystal residents and Kirk Davison who said it used to be pretty easy getting something approved. She asked what happened to the zoning board and was informed the JPC took its place due to a change in the law. Peg said in years past

many governments didn't follow rules but this board will which is not to say Weldon didn't. We follow legal and professional planning advice. Mrs. Sharp agreed and is all for Weldon remaining. She said the board talks outside the meeting how long it takes and the amount of legal fees. Mrs. Sharp said we may want a different approach and listen to each other's sides. Rich Smith said the intent is to find out what's broke and fix it. Catherine Frugé said the way it has been approached by them and the JPC isn't working...find another door. Rob felt everyone should stop talking about Crystal Mountain as something different and treat it like everyone else. Peg said this will be an evolution and cited what happened in the county. It wasn't that the townships didn't want county zoning; the county let the townships down. Through perseverance, a planning commission developed a new master plan but three townships are still not supportive. Mike Frugé said we have some great people who can fix these things if they have the tools and money. Rich Smith felt we should talk about two things: it's not working and what are you doing to fix that; the other is money and was not sure if the allocations can be changed but we can talk about what's being done to minimize costs. Mike Frugé asked Sally if she could comment on the public comments in numbers. She didn't have exact numbers but the vast majority of written comments, about 30, were positive to stay in the JPC. Chris noted the majority at the meeting spoke in support of staying.

Eugene asked what changed and how the JPC came to be. Shelley said the laws changed, specifically, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. A township with a zoning board needed to form a planning commission by July 2011. ~~This affected Weldon.~~ Weldon approached Colfax and the Village in 2010, and representatives from each entity met often with the attorney to craft the Joint Ordinance. Eugene felt this story needs to be told to reeducate them. The fair way to fund it was based on State Equalized Values of properties. He felt it's logical and makes sense to develop the community and this is the result. We are learning as we go; nobody is trying to be a bad guy/gal. Mr. Smith felt it's been five years and seems like we're still looking at procedural issues. Eugene said it took a long time to put it together working first on the Master Plan followed by the JZO. Shelley said every official was kept updated and received copies of each draft JZO submittal from the planning consultant. Mr. Smith felt they should be reminded of this. Craig said under general township law, Weldon and Colfax has to have a planning commission. A village council can be their planning commission, but Thompsonville had not updated their ordinance so they needed a fresh one. Chris said the campground was a lot of work. Whether Weldon belonged to the township or not, all these things need to be followed because they're laws...how a building is set, the grades, drainage...we'd have to go through every bit of that. His perception is how this board talks to the prospective builder; we need to be more personable and sugar everything. Chris wanted to talk about money the township pays and gave a big thank to Crystal Mountain for the money that comes in. Weldon Township has plenty of money to spend that percentage on this board. Mrs. Sharp feels the township will say this costs too much money and wants out. Chris said she and others need to say they want it. He feels the JPC is a wonderful thing and can do some things to make it easier at least in attitude because we still have to abide by the laws. We're learning as we go.

Debra reported the Village fire department had four retirements, gained two back and started countywide training; Frankfort gave the airport a pickup truck which can be used by the Village; parks will be upgraded including fire rings and grills in the camping section; budget hearing will be held next meeting followed by regular meeting; Chris Bobek is the new blight officer; and the MCI ordinance was adopted.

H. Budget/Compensation Authorization: Bills were presented covering Mark Eidelson's invoice, public hearing ad, Shelley's expense report and Craig's expenses along with the comp authorization for this meeting and January 12, an oversight. Motion/second by Debra/Sally to pay as presented. Aye: Debra Franke, Eugene Allen, Gene Houghton, Sally Bobek, Chris Bobek, Rob Aldrich, Peg Minster, Shelley Greene, Irene Dunham Thayer; nay: none; motion carried.

New Business

A. Professional Fees: Peg said at a future meeting we need to talk about a fee schedule for site plans because it is beyond our skill set. We received a professional opinion on the campground and got a lot out of it as a commission. It was an education for us and an assurance for the applicant and the public. She feels we need to talk with Mark Eidelson for guidance how this is handled with other clients. The JZO addresses fees for services deemed necessary by the JPC and are the applicant's responsibility. Craig will inform the potential prospect for the other campground.

Correspondence: Letter received from Sarah Lucas, Networks Northwest, to correct county meeting dates.

Public Comment: Rich Smith commented to consider placing applicants on the agenda prior to administrative items. Mr. Smith asked about costs to Weldon to withdraw. He was told by Weldon it would be approximately what they are spending now in a year. Peg said quotes for the county master plan were \$18,000-\$25,000; Networks Northwest's discounted quote was \$14,000. The county, JPC and the entities did the work to keep costs down. Shelley said the JPC received a master plan grant and paid \$5,000. The master plan is too interwoven to salvage it. Peg said the JZO cost approximately \$18,000. Weldon would bear the costs to the remaining entities to make them whole according to the Joint Ordinance. Eugene said Weldon needs to do their due diligence. If they're going to make an informed decision, they need to find out what it will cost to stay or leave and present that at a meeting. Mr. Smith requested a copy of the budget. Charles Kraus commented on the Community Assets map; he can't locate some assets and felt others should be included such as the Crystal Mountain ski area and Underground Railroad. He felt the accuracy was wanting. Peg said when it is updated it will be a public event and his participation would be welcome. Ron Evitts said there has been talk about cutting meetings but there are some who have not attended minimal training. He also said the Weldon board has changed since the JPC was formed but was reminded that Sue Meredith and Gary Stevens are still on the board. He did acknowledge Gary participated for Weldon in the Joint Ordinance development meetings.

Adjournment: Motion/second by Irene/Rob to adjourn at 9:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Greene
Secretary

Minutes are proposed until approved at the next meeting