

**Laketon Township Planning Commission**  
**April 14, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 07/14/2021**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Vice -Chairperson Paul Hoppa called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**ROLL CALL:**

- Present: Suzanne Lockwood-Hayes, DJ Hilson, Dave Mieras, Paul Hoppa, June Earhart, Eric Anderson
- Absent: Bob Marine
- Also present: Zoning Administrator Theresa Maner and Recording Secretary Veronica West

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** June Earhart moved to approve the agenda as presented. Eric Anderson supported the motion. Voice vote taken and the motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Eric Anderson moved to approve the minutes of 03/09/2021 as presented. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS on AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:**      **NONE** – no public present.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- Planning & Zoning News: ZA Theresa Maner distributed a couple of issues, with more to come that were missed during the last year due to COVID cancelled meetings or virtual/Zoom meetings. She did point out a couple articles of note, one on short term rentals and one on several new laws. DJ Hilson noted he was involved in some of the reform legislation that will definitely change the way things are done.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- **Capital Improvement Plan** – Zoning Administrator Theresa Maner noted everyone has a copy of the CIP draft plan that she compiled based on the joint work session meeting discussions. She did point out that there was one significant change on the dollar amount allotted to the Mullally basketball and pickleball courts in 2022 as quotes have started coming in and are quite a bit higher than anticipated. Eric Anderson commented that while the law puts the duty of creating the CIP in the hands of the Planning Commission, he feels that the PC has limited knowledge of the township budget and finances and therefore are not the best equipped body to do it. ZA T. Maner speculated that perhaps it is a transparency issue and the more times the PC works on it the more knowledge & experience they bring to the process. Paul Hoppa likened it to having more “filters” and more people being aware of what is happening in the community and Dave Mieras agreed, noting that more “eyes” on something often leads to better decisions. Suzanne Hayes asked about the Fenner Rd “washout”, the status of the repairs and funding. Discussion revealed that the project is still in the works and the MCRC has been considering a bridge rather than a culvert as the road crosses Green Creek and the State likes bridges more as they are more friendly to fish and other wildlife and a bridge may be less expensive that the culvert option in this instance. It is unknown at this point what portion of the costs will be passed on to Laketon Township. June Earhart moved to recommend approval of the CIP plan, as presented, to the Laketon Township Board of Trustees. Dave Mieras supported the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.
- **Master Plan (Review):** ZA Theresa Maner noted that each section of the document was assigned to a PC member for their review, critique and editing for structure and content. Paul Hoppa started the discussion by commenting generally on the poor grammar and sentence structure, at least in the portion he reviewed and also the references to the 2010 Census data that should now be updated to reference the 2020 Census data that should be available soon if not already. ZA T. Maner noted the 2020 data should be available in July of 2021. Paul Hoppa further commented that he feels a complete rewrite may be necessary and would be a good community service project for a high school English class. ZA T. Maner noted the master plan must be reviewed every 5 years, by state law and this review is a continuation of the 5-year review started last year that was put on hold due to all the COVID-19 Pandemic

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shut downs/meeting cancellations etc. Suzanne Hayes questioned a complete re-write if the content is good the grammar can be edited. Eric Anderson stated he is not in favor of a complete re-write at this time, but to get through the review with any necessary edits, corrections and/or updates

- Section 1 – Introduction: reviewed by June Earhart. June went through this section and pointed out an abundance of commas, grammatical and other punctuational corrections that need to be made. She also pointed out the phrase “frequently misunderstood” used a couple of times that seems unnecessary.
- Section 2 – Community Description: reviewed by Paul Hoppa. Paul pointed out the references to the 2010 Census data needing updating; leading to additional discussion on this topic and whether or not to update it with the 2020 census data now or wait until the next 5-year review. There was a consensus among the members to incorporate the most current data available now, rather than keep outdated information. Paul also found many run-on sentences and the need for typographical, grammatical and punctuational corrections, stating he feels it important to put out a quality document, since others will be reading it. He also noted that there are references to “North Muskegon State Park” but that the state parks name is simply Muskegon State Park and all references should be corrected. There was also reference to the West Michigan Strategic Alliance organization, which no longer exists that should be removed and references to the North Central Muskegon County Joint Planning Commission should include information that the group still exists but has not been active in a number of years. A sentence referring to the leveling off of growth over the last ten years, stood out as an assumption with no reference cited – it was discussed and the consensus was to remove this sentence since there was no source to back up the statement. In the public utilities section, reference should be included to the summer 2021 water line extension project from Weber Rd, west down Memorial Dr to Muskegon State Park. In the Public Safety section, the Muskegon Township Fire Department reference should be corrected to be the Muskegon Charter Township Fire Department and references should be corrected to identify the policing entity as Muskegon County Sheriff’s Office and include information on the PINS (Partners in Neighborhood Safety program).
- Section 3 – Natural Features – reviewed by Dave Mieras. Dave commented on notable landmarks and felt the one-room school house located on Buys Rd should be included as well. He commented on including information on the Muskegon State Park having a dedicated staff person to oversee the piping plover nesting site protections at the beach, correcting the references to the MDEQ, which is now EGLE (Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy). There was some discussion on the paragraph entitled “Wetlands and Woodlands”, regarding its length and flow and lack of any mention of any woodlands, it only talks about wetlands. Consensus was reached to re-write this paragraph; to maintain the content, but shorten and simplify it.
- Section 4 – Parks & Recreation – reviewed last year as a group/no discussion.
- Section 5 – Land Use & Development – reviewed by Eric Anderson. Eric noted feeling the content was accurate, but with the need for some typographical/grammatical and punctuational editing. He did suggest deleting a reference to a sewer plan map since it is not available, reportedly because of the potentially sensitive information such a map could contain.
- Section 6 – Goals & Objectives – reviewed by DJ Hilson. DJ noted again the need for grammatical and punctuational corrections and notes that references to the North Central Muskegon County Joint Planning Commission be updated to note the group still exists, but has been inactive for several years. He commented on a lack of knowledge on whether some of the goals had yet been accomplished (such as the non-motorized trail/Berry Junction Trail and safe routes to school sidewalks etc.) and suggested that township staff would have a better knowledge of that and should update those that have been accomplished. He suggested township staff review whether or not the Zoning Ordinances conform with the strategies of the master plan and if the reference 1998 Sewer Plan is the most current adopted plan in place and update that reference as needed. He also suggested edits to the formatting of bulleted items and better alignment of inserted photos and diagrams.
- Section 7 – Future Land Use – reviewed by Suzanne Hayes. Suzanne noted page numbering issues to be corrected, along with grammatical, typographical and punctuational corrections. Suzanne noted she felt there are conflicting lines of demarcation for the east and west portions of the township as some sections indicate Buys Rd is that dividing line and this section mentions that line being Green Creek Rd. After some discussion the consensus was all references to the dividing line between the eastern more developed part of the township and the western less densely developed portion of the township be Buys Rd for consistency and accuracy as Buys Rd is the dividing line between the R1 & R2 zones and the more dense R-3 and R-4 zones, with the exception of a small portion of R3 at the southern boundary of the township at the south end of

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Green Creek Rd along Memorial Dr. Suzanne also stated she felt some conflicts between some statements within this master plan suggesting letting development occur and then providing better services and some statements suggesting it is better to plan where water and sewer services will go to lead the development where it should be. Eric Anderson explained that the Zoning Ordinance addresses that by outlining different zoning districts and requiring larger parcels where there is high water or other natural features to be considered and allowing subdivisions and smaller parcel development where sewer and water utilities exist or can be easily extended or expanded which works quite well. He added he doesn't see it as a "split personality" or a conflict, but different strategies for different areas of the township. He also talked about the most recent proposed development, an expansion of Fenner Glen, and that progress has stalled because the developer wants the township to help pay for the expansion/extension of municipal utilities (ie sewer &/or water) but the Township hasn't been willing to do it.

PC Members gave ZA Theresa Maner their notes on their reviews/suggestions for the Master Plan document to be edited/updated. Once this work has been completed, the updated/edited document will be brought to the PC for their review/approval/recommendation to the Board of Trustees at a future meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- **May 1, 2021 Clean Up Day:** ZA T. Maner informed members of the is event, along with a couple others for tire collections and medication disposal. The flyers for these events are available on the township website. She also indicated the need for volunteer help at the May 1 Clean up day event and asked anyone interested in helping to let her know. She also provided information on the US31/M104 Bridge Construction project as it does have an affect on area residents commuting to Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Grand Rapids and other communities south of Laketon Township. No action required.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**                   **NONE** – no public present.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

- Board of Trustees: Eric Anderson reported the Board had approved the 2021/2022 fiscal budget. He also stated there was nothing to report on planning or zoning issues.
- ZBA: Suzanne Lockwood-Hayes stated there has been no ZBA activity to report on.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- Dave Mieras moved to adjourn the meeting. June Earhart supported the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West  
Recording Secretary