

Laketon Township Planning Commission
October 13, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12/8/2021

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Bob Marine called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

- Present: Eric Anderson, DJ Hilson, June Earhart, Bob Marine
- Absent: Dave Mieras, Suzanne Lockwood-Hayes and Paul Hoppa.
- Also present: Zoning Administrator Theresa Naruszkiewicz-Maner, Recording Secretary Veronica West, 4 area citizens.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: June Earhart moved to approve the agenda with the addition of an item under correspondence for the Zoning Administrator to present updates on several zoning projects/issues. DJ Hilson supported the motion and the motion carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June Earhart moved to approve the minutes of 08/11/2021 as presented. DJ Hilson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS on AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: **NONE**

CORRESPONDENCE

- Planning & Zoning News: ZA Theresa Naruszkiewicz distributed the September/October Issues – She did also point out an interesting article relating to working from home and its benefits. No other discussion.
- Status Updates: ZA Theresa Naruszkiewicz gave brief updates on several zoning projects/issues.
 - ✓ Wesco project is now complete.
 - ✓ Group Day Care SLU at 1128 S. Robinhood is now operational and fully licensed by the State.
 - ✓ Laketon Bethel Church Construction – approval nearly expired, but the project is now well underway.
 - ✓ Expired Site Plan at 989 Witham – historical information/documents on an expired site plan for a project at 989 Witham was emailed to all PC members. The contingent approval (gained in June 2017) expired after one year without obtaining an approval from the Muskegon County Water Resources Commission (formerly known as the Muskegon County Drain Commission). Laketon Township never received an application from the applicant for an extension on the contingent approval and the contingent approval is expired.
 - ✓ RV Parking (Section 3.17) Resident Complaint/Request – A resident complained about a motorhome in his neighbor's side yard that extends into the front yard. The resident further asked for these rules to be looked and for possible change – he doesn't feel subdivisions should have RV parking allowed. ZA T. Naruszkiewicz noted letters have been sent to the motorhome owner and this is a work in progress to gain compliance with the existing ordinance rules.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Master Plan Process:** ZA T. Naruszkiewicz reported on the draft Master Plan being reviewed by the Township Board, and some changes requested by them. The draft, with those changes is now back in front of the PC for their review of those changes. She pointed to changes to the Census data now that the current 2020 data is available, additional pictures and references to features within Muskegon State Park and to the Bear Lake Lake Board. Eric Anderson commented on the Bear Lake Lake Board information and asked for some additional language be added noting that the Bear Lake Lake Board is a completely separate and independent board that is not part of Laketon Township. He also asked for some language that indicates Laketon Township and The City of North Muskegon each have a representative on the board, as required by the act the lake board is formed under. The other PC members agreed and wanted this information added. Other edits of grammar, punctuation, spelling etc were discussed and noted for correction. ZA T. Naruszkiewicz noted that once these changes and corrections are made and approved by the PC, it goes back to the Board for approval, then a 30 day

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review period for neighboring communities, then a public hearing (held by the PC), then back to the Board for final approval/adoption.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **New Business:** ZA T. Naruszkiewicz informed the PC that the former auto repair business at the SW corner of Whitehall Rd and W. River Rd closed a few months ago, but a new occupant of the building is working towards getting a new auto repair business up and running in that location. As there is no change of use, the PC will not have a site plan review on this project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Rich Young RE: 989 Witham Dr** – Mr. Young expressed complaints with the handling of his project at 989 Witham Rd, expressed frustration with the township and various staff and Brenda Moore, the Drain Commissioner (now known as the Water Resources Commissioner). He states he attended a meeting at Laketon Township with the Drain Commissioner, his architect Michael Belt, Theresa Naruszkiewicz, Kim Arter, Chris Hall and engineers with Westshore Consulting and he did ask for an extension and was told “no”. DJ Hilson interjected and explained to Mr. Young that the request for an extension has to come to the PC, it did not and the original contingent approval is now expired. Mr. Young stated he didn’t know he had to come to the PC for the extension and Mr. Hilson explained that his architect, Mr. Belt, has been involved in many projects in Laketon Township and should have been well aware of the procedure. Mr. Young continued to express frustration, reading a paragraph from a letter from Soils & Structures to Brenda Moore, citing a “hardship” in meeting the requirements of the drain code and recommending those requirements be waived. Eric Anderson interjected and reminded Mr. Young that the PC granted an approval with conditions, one of which was getting approval from the Drain Commission (now the Water Resources Commission). He further reminded Mr. Young that Laketon Township does not have any control over the Drain Commission/Brenda Moore, nor can Laketon Township grant waivers from the Drain Code. Mr. Anderson also outlined the options going forward: start over with a new submittal of plans for a commercial use and site plan review or apply for the property to be rezoned back to residential so he can remodel the home for residential use. Mr. Young expressed frustration over the township zoning the property commercial when it cannot meet commercial requirements, it’s a hardship for him and he expressed the need to be given an exemption. Mr. Anderson again reminded Mr. Young the PC has no authority to grant a hardship exemption. It was also noted the property was zone commercial in the 1976 ordinance. Bob Marine asked when Mr. Young purchased the property and Mr. Young stated he purchased the property around the year 2000. DJ Hilson informed Mr. Young the PC does not have the power or authority to do anything at this point, the approval expired. Mr. Hilson stated the PC is bound by and must follow the law and the Laketon Township Zoning Ordinance.

BOARD REPORTS:

- **Board of Trustees:** Eric Anderson noted there isn’t anything really Planning Commission related, but he did report on some recent meetings relating to the Bear Lake Lake Board (BLLB), noting that the Board Meetings were filled with residents upset about the BLLB and expressing a desire for a change to the Laketon Township representative that currently sits on the BLLB. He also noted a change was made as the current representative resigned and a new person was appointed. Mr. Anderson also reported on some staffing issues and addressing the need for the Township to do the best they can to keep up with increasing wages to retain existing staff.
- **ZBA:** ZA T. Naruszkiewicz noted the township has received a variance application and a hearing date has been set for 11/4/2021 on this application.

ADJOURNMENT:

- June Earhart moved to adjourn the meeting. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West
Recording Secretary