

Laketon Township Planning Commission
November 13, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 02/12/2025

CALL TO ORDER: Vice-Chairperson June Earhart called the meeting to order at precisely 6:00 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

- Present: Suzanne Hayes, Paul Hoppa, Eric Anderson, Chris Simpson, Dave Mieras and June Earhart.
- Absent: Bob Marine, w/notice.
- Also present: Zoning Administrator Heidi Tice, Recording Secretary Veronica West, Twp Supervisor Kim Arter, and a representative from Muskegon County/Pioneer Park – Park Superintendent Jeff Hiddema and a representative from Westshore Consulting (name not obtained).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Eric Anderson moved to approve the agenda with the addition of a new business item; 2025 PC Meeting Dates and the correction of the old business item; Discussion of minimum dwelling size, not minimum parcel size. Paul Hoppa supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Suzanne Hayes moved to approve the minutes of 8/14/2024 as presented. Eric Anderson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Staff Report – Informational Updates:** ZA H. Tice updated the PC Members on the progress of the parking lot project at 992 Witham; noting the paving is complete, the swale is finished but the dumpster has yet to be installed and parking space line spacing needs to be re-done as the lines currently painted are of the appropriate number, but not of the appropriate width. She also updated members on the home under renovation at 989 Witham Dr; noting the original building permit expired, even after being granted a 6-month extension and a new permit was required – it was issued 04/25/2024 and will expire 04/25/2025. Building Inspector Chris Hall is keeping an eye on this project and work done to date is up to code.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Site Plan Review – 1563 Scenic Dr (PP# 61-09-006-400-0001-00)/Muskegon County Pioneer Park:**
 - ZA H Tice had the drawings up on the board and presented an overview of the project; noting it involves the removal of old bathhouse buildings and construction of a new, modern ADA compliant bathhouse building, new paved parking area, paved walking paths and lighting. It was also noted the old bathhouse buildings will be kept until the new one is operational. She noted that Zoning Ordinance Section 15 and 16 requirements have been reviewed and this plan meets the ordinance requirements. Eric Anderson discussed for clarification – this site plan is just covering the area of the park being modified and the township does not have a full site plan for this County Park. It was noted that is correct, but because the park is an existing facility ZA H Tice only required the site plan to include the areas being disturbed. Paul Hoppa asked the estimated timeline. It was noted the project is to be started asap with plans for it to be operation in time for the next camping season – spring 2025.
 - Muskegon County Park Superintendent Jeff Hiddema added that this new, modern bathhouse will be completely ADA compliant and is to replace old buildings, constructed in approximately 1950 and 1984 respectively that are not ADA compliant. There is one other bathhouse building constructed in 1992 that is ADA compliant and that building will also remain. He also added that even though 2 buildings are being removed and only one being constructed, they will remain compliant with their state campground license about the required number of fixtures. He further added that this project has been desired for many years and now with the funds coming from a Michigan DNR Trust Fund Grant and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) it is finally happening. ZA H. Tice asked when they plan to submit plans/application for the building permit and it was noted the plans are due to be submitted to the township on Monday (11/18/2024) with the intent of breaking ground as soon as possible.
 - Discussion: no further questions, but several members commented on visiting the site and noting how beautiful it is.

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- Motion: Paul Hoppa moved to approve the site plan as submitted. Chris Simpson supported the motion. A roll call vote was taken; those voting in favor of the motion: Paul Hoppa, Chris Simpson, Eric Anderson, Dave Mieras, Suzanne Hayes, and June Earhart. No votes in opposition. The motion carried.
- **Yard Sale Ordinance Discussion:** ZA H Tice informed the members there have been recent resident complaints/issues with excessive yard sales, primarily at a couple locations on busier streets like W. Giles Rd. She added that the Zoning Ordinance prior to 2006 required residents to obtain a yard sale permit (no cost to this permit) from the Township prior to having a yard sale, and they were limited to two 3-day sales or one 4-day sale per calendar year. When the new Zoning Ordinance was re-written and adopted in 2006, this regulation was not included. She also added that the complaints are primarily about the parking/traffic safety issues but with some complaints being about excessive yard sales with items left outside between sales. There was discussion about how many yard sales would be considered excessive and how many constitute a business activity where a special land use for an open-air business would be necessary. Eric Anderson commented he is not a fan of more regulation just to have regulation and suggested it may be possible just to have a definition of yard sale that includes a limit and anything above that number would be considered a business activity. Paul Hoppa agreed he would like some sort of limit. Chris Simpson commented that yard sale season is typically Memorial Day to Labor Day and he thought a limit of 1 per month would be adequate, but not excessive. There was also discussion of possibly enforcing for items/stuff laying around in yards by way of the Anti-Blight Ordinance. After a bit of back and forth on ways to address this issue, it was suggested that ZA H Tice get the attorney's advice before proceeding any further.
- **Accessible Definition:** ZA H Tice informed members she attended a recent land division training and one subject that was covered several times, was that of parcel accessibility as it is illegal in Michigan to create a parcel that is "land locked" or has no access. All parcels MUST have access via a legal road, street, or easement. She added that she does not see anywhere in our ordinance a definition of parcel access/accessible with regards to ingress and egress. Then the question becomes is it enough to have the legal easement or right of way or does there have to be cleared easement, driveway or road with the proper base and surface material. There was also discussion of existing situations where many homes are using a two-track or dirt drive and many of these are inaccessible for fire trucks or other large emergency vehicles. Discussion only, no action taken at this time.
- **2025 Regular Monthly Planning Commission Meeting Dates:** ZA H Tice presented everyone with a list of meeting dates for 2025 for approval. Dave Mieras moved to approve the 2025 meeting dates as presented. Paul Hoppa supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Minimum Dwelling Size Discussion:** Eric Anderson began the discussion by stating that years ago, families grew up in 800 or 900 square foot homes and they were perfectly happy, there are a good number of homes in Laketon Township and North Muskegon that are below the current 1200 square foot minimum we require that could not be built today and they are not "cracker boxes" but nice modest homes. He added that with the skyrocketing costs of building materials, people wanting to be more efficient or simply not wanting a large home he asks the question why the township should mandate they build something larger than they want. He added he is not advocating the 600 square foot minimums like the City of Muskegon or even "tiny homes" but something less than 1200 square feet. ZA H Tice commented that rolling back the minimum now could result in homes being "under built" for certain neighborhoods. She added that it is possible to have different minimums for the different zoning districts; ex. larger lots, larger minimum home size, small lots, smaller minimum home sizes etc. There was discussion of tiny homes, some communities have allowed them as PUD's where they can control the upkeep and management of them so they do not become run-down. There was discussion of "accessory dwelling units" so there would be more than one home on a parcel – ZA H Tice stated our current zoning rules only allow for one dwelling per parcel. Eric Anderson commented that nationwide accessory dwelling units are a growing trend due to addressing affordable housing needs. Chris Simpson asked about guest houses and ZA H Tice stated things like that or a "mother in law's suite" need to be connected to/part of the dwelling, not a separate structure. Suzanne Hayes commented that having one resident come to a meeting and address the PC for smaller lot sized or home sizes does not constitute a "movement" in her opinion. Paul Hoppa commented that there are many communities in Muskegon County that all have different regulations and some have smaller minimums than Laketon Township does and they can choose to build in a location that allows what they want to do. Dave Mieras commented he is comfortable with the 1200 sq ft minimum. The consensus was to make no changes. No action taken.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Kim Arter, Laketon Township Supervisor updated the members on several items:**
 - New smart TV here in the board room to replace outdated/nonfunctional equipment for presentations and training.
 - Holiday Giving Project 2024 – township staff has identified several senior citizen households again this year – in process of contacting them to see if they are accepting of our “adoption” – more info to come.
 - Mullally Courts – The new pickleball, tennis, basketball courts are complete and in use.
 - Pioneer Park – she is happy to see the new bathhouse project get approved; she has written letters of support for grant funding for this project many times and is glad to see it finally get funded.
 - Horton Park – still a work in progress, waiting on Army Corps of Engineers permit approval, waiting on County Soil & Erosion Permit, cannot put the project out for bids until all permits are in place. Was originally awarded the DNR Trust Fund grant for the project in 2016 – getting very good at requesting extensions.
 - N. Weber Rd – the “dead end” portion north of W Giles Rd was recently paved after residents got together and all agreed to split the cost of the special assessment equally. The project cost was way down from a few years ago, the MCRC also contributed 25% of the cost. The residents did chalk art on the cul-de-sac dead end to thank the road commission and the township; photos of it will be in the upcoming newsletter.

BOARD REPORTS:

- **Board of Trustees** – Eric Anderson thanked Kim for her update and also added that staff and elected officials do a lot of work day to day; this year Mullally got new drives and parking areas in addition to the new courts, fencing was repaired, the bathroom building was re-roofed, the cemetery got a new columbarium project completed, including landscaping and the cemetery maintenance building got some much needed repair work.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Suzanne Hayes** – No activity to report.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Dave Mieras moved to adjourn. Chris Simpson supported the motion. The motion carried and the adjournment occurred at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West
Recording Secretary