

**HOPE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINTUES**  
**September 16, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Norton at 6:30 pm at the Hope Township Hall, 5463 S M43 Hwy, Hastings, MI. Pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**Members Present:** Bob Norton, Roger Pashby, Craig Jenkins, Jim McKelvey

**Members Absent:** Junior Homister

**Others Present:** Planning Consultant/Zoning Administrator Nathan Mehmed and approximately 15 individuals at the Township Hall.

**Agenda:** Motion by Pashby, second by McKelvey to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Pashby, support by McKelvey to approve August 19, 2021 meeting minutes. All ayes. Motion carried.

**General Public Comment:** Norton opened up the floor for public comment. He requested that comments be limited to three minutes.

Don Sklenka, 8445 Wilkinson Lake

Don referenced the June Planning Commission meeting and indicated that the Planning Commission brought up the value and need topic in the sense that value was already established. Don indicated that the last time that value and need was deliberated was in October. He explained that Catherine stopped the decision from being made, then we got two new Planning Commission members who have not been able to establish value and need. Don reiterated that value and need was never established and indicted that McKelvey asked about this during the meeting. He is not entirely sure of the procedure. Don is also concerned regarding traffic and the traffic information provided that does not look at truck traffic. There will be a significant quantity of trucks added to a road that has blind corners and turns. He explained that a traffic study should be completed that includes trucks.

Nyla Stevens, Dogwood Drive, Long Lake

Nyla expressed passion for Long Lake and has been around Long Lake for a long time. She indicated that she is against campgrounds, tiny homes, etc.

Chris Lapins, 6760 Lake Drive

Chris noted that a lot of people are at the meeting from Long Lake. He explained that certain zoning allows certain things. The folks on Long Lake want to maintain the status quo and want to protect the lake from pressure.

Ken Chandler, 6853 Woodland, Long Lake

Ken explained that his father built their cabin on Long Lake in 1955. He noted that a lot of changes have occurred on Long Lake since then, but believes that the lake is maxed out now.

Dave Brown, 260 Long Lake Dr.

Dave indicated that he has been on Long Lake for 10 years. He noted that the lake is peaceful and that he doesn't want any campgrounds or tiny houses.

Cynthia Schmitz, 4797 Lakefront Dr.

Cynthia thanked the Planning Commission for having them tonight. She is very opposed to having more RVs on the lake like Camp Mishawana. The use is already accounted for on the lake between Mishawana and Aker's Point. She indicated that she wasn't sure if there was a formula for use. She explained that the large property they are concerned about should be zoned RL and not AR, and that it is against the neighborhood. She noted that certain things go in certain places and she wants the lake community respected.

Jim Bradley, 3838 S Shore

Jim purchased his property about 3.5-4 years ago. He explained that he grew up going to Long Lake at Aker's Point, during which he fell in love with Long Lake. He tore down a trailer so that he could build a house. He indicated that he and his wife will be permanent residents. He would like Long Lake to stay the same, and doesn't see the benefit to the community if there is a change in zoning. He noted that there is too much pressure on the lake already.

Becky Brown, 260 Long Lake

Becky asked if there was a need for more RV/cabin-type rentals. She explained that they live on the north end and the waterfront is natural. She would like to keep it that way without disturbing habitat. She noted that the roads around the lake are private and cannot handle increased use.

Jennifer Nunnally, 4757 Lakefront Dr

Jennifer stated that she shares the concerns regarding what everyone else has said. She chose Long Lake based on its quaintness, year-round residents, and non-rental properties. She shared that she believes that they have enough of those and the access allows for very few non-resident boaters. She explained that Aker's Point has the same renters every year. Jennifer also made a case for property values and indicated that they may be impacted.

**Temporary Use of RVs on vacant lots proposed ordinance amendment; tiny homes and resorts discussion:** Norton stated that they would pick back up where they left off at the last meeting. Mehmed explained that he provided draft language for consideration and discussion by the Planning Commission regarding temporary use of RVs. Mehmed clarified that this would be an amendment to Section 10.25 and would expand on the existing language that allows for temporary residential uses. Mehmed pointed out a typo in the existing Zoning Ordinance language with the location of a "the" and the structure of the sentence. The Planning Commission directed Mehmed to fix the typo.

Mehmed explained that the proposed amendment follows the framework of the Barry County Zoning Ordinance with the exception of some modifications that were discussed at the last meeting. He noted that he spoke with Jim McManus regarding the Barry-Eaton Health Department water and sewer disposal. McManus explained that this isn't typically an issue since most are lakefront lots with sewer available. Mehmed explained that he anticipates most of the seasonal requests in Hope Township would follow this same pattern. The Planning Commission agreed that this would be an important requirement, and wouldn't apply to very temporary arrangements where this could become an issue or become difficult to enforce.

Jenkins asked Mehmed about subsection g, which offers different standards for owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied property. He indicated that he didn't care about who owned the property, as long as the rules are followed and a permit granted. Norton, McKelvey, and Pashby agreed. Jenkins explained that he has let a friend utilize his property with his RV on weekends or seasonally in the past, and assumes that many may do this on vacant land that they own. Mehmed explained that this was a carryover from the Barry County Zoning Ordinance and that it can be removed, with a single limit of 6 months. Jenkins asked about the amount of time between each 6-month period. Mehmed indicated that he interpreted that to be within a calendar year. The Planning Commission had a lengthy discussion regarding when this may apply and if there should be a period of time required between each 6-month period. Mehmed indicated that if the intent is to discourage or prohibit people

from living in an RV year-round, the standard should reflect that. The Planning Commission decided on a 3-month period between each 6-month period to allow for flexibility with arrival and departure.

The Planning Commission also discussed subsection e, which requires a clear and unoccupied space of at least 7 feet on all sides. Mehmed explained that this is another standard from Barry County and that his interpretation is that this is to provide space around the RV or travel trailer to prevent fire hazards and allow for emergency access. The Planning Commission determined that this should be specified. Mehmed noted that this could also mean decks and vegetation such as trees. The Planning Commission determined that this should only be measured from dwellings, accessory buildings, and sheds, since many may want to build an at-grade deck or locate near a tree. Mehmed indicated that he would make that change.

Norton directed Mehmed to make the changes and come back to the next meeting with an updated draft for discussion. He indicated that the Planning Commission could set a public hearing at that point if there are not additional changes.

Norton asked the Planning Commission if they had any additional thoughts about tiny homes. Mehmed reminded the Planning Commission that he provided a primer article from the American Planning Association regarding tiny homes for review. A brief discussion was had between the Planning Commission members about minimum square footage requirements and building code issues. The Planning Commission asked Mehmed if he has seen any good models for this type of housing. Mehmed indicated that many communities get to this same point, and some will reduce their square footage, allow for accessory dwelling units, or permit temporary use of RVs, which is what you are currently doing. Mehmed explained that the Township already allows for accessory dwelling units with a special exception use permit and that the Township could go smaller with the minimum square footage. He also indicated that a township near St. Joseph was working on creating a new sustainable district that would allow for them. Jenkins indicated that this sounded like the tiny home community in Detroit. The Planning Commission decided that it may make sense to wait another month so that Homister could weigh in since he is interested in tiny homes.

Norton inquired with the Planning Commission about resorts. Mehmed recapped the discussion at the last meeting with the Planning Commission. He noted that several property owners have expressed interest in doing a resort-type use in the past few years, including on Long Lake and a lavender farm. Mehmed explained that the Zoning Ordinance currently only allows public and private campgrounds as well as

hotels/motels. Norton explained that they are still very early on in the process, so there is much to consider. The Planning Commission discussed several standards found in the examples submitted by Mehmed, particularly minimum lot area and lake access. The Planning Commission determined that additional examples may be necessary and that they would continue their discussion at the next meeting.

**Zoning Administrator/Planning Consultant Nathan Mehmed**

Mehmed noted that a rezoning request to expand the Guernsey Lake Mobile Home Park has been submitted and will be on the October Planning Commission agenda. The current owner is upgrading the development and is looking to expand onto an adjacent property that used to be the community's septic system. Jenkins asked about conflicts of interest since he lives nearby. Norton explained that he didn't think it would be an issue since Jenkins doesn't have any monetary interest in the property, however, Attorney Kaufman could be asked.


Mehmed indicated that another variance request will be on the October Zoning Board of Appeals agenda. This request is for the home that burned down on Wall Lake. Mehmed explained that the property is very small and the applicant is asking for multiple dimensional setback variances.

Norton asked about the Otis Lake/Osgood pit and Trevor Smith's progress. Mehmed explained that Trevor didn't have the fix completed so he hasn't stopped out at the property yet. He will follow up with Trevor next week so that he can go back out there and hopefully close the project out. Mehmed clarified that they are still waiting on requirements from EGLE as well. Regarding the Miller Road application, Mehmed indicated that he hasn't received any updates and that he doesn't know where Smith is headed with the project.

Mehmed explained that the permit requests have cooled off as they typically do at the end of summer, but that he is still getting a lot of calls about future projects.

**Adjournment**

Pashby moved to adjourn meeting, support by Jenkins. All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

  
Craig Jenkins, Secretary

09.27.21  
DATE