

HOPE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINTUES
October 20, 2022

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, Junior Homister, Jim McKelvey.

Members Absent: Craig Jenkins, Roger Pashby.

Secretary Pro Tem: Norton explained that with the absence of Jenkins, the Planning Commission would need a secretary pro tem. Homister volunteered to be secretary for the meeting. Motion by Norton, support by McKelvey to nominate Homister as secretary pro tem for the meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

Others Present: Planning Consultant/Zoning Administrator Nathan Mehmed and approximately 10 people at the Township Hall.

Agenda: Motion by McKelvey, support by Homister to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting Minutes: Motion by Homister, support by McKelvey to approve September 1, 2022 meeting minutes. All ayes. Motion carried.

Land Use Plan: Norton reminded the Planning Commission that it is their duty to review the Hope Township Master Plan at least every five years to determine if the plan is in need of updating. He asked if the Planning Commission had a chance to review and what they wanted to talk about. Homister indicated that he read the Plan and noticed a few things that needed updating. He noted that much of it was small things like DEQ being changed to EGLE, but there are others with more relevance such as the number of gravel mining operations. Norton mentioned that the population and demographic statistics are out of date, the 2010 Census data could be updated with 2020 information. He also explained that much of his list is housekeeping updates such as references that have changed in the last ten years. Mehmed noted that some of the maps could use updating, such as the sewer map. Norton stated that exploring the potential for trails in the Township would be a nice thing to add, particularly along the CKS rail right-of-way. He also mentioned that the zoning plan could include C-1 and C-3 as potentially compatible districts with industrial since they are less intense than industrial. Norton asked Mehmed if this

would be enough to open the Plan up and update. Mehmed explained that it is really up to the Township, but most communities will at a minimum update their Plan when there is new Census information to keep it relevant. He noted that it sounds like there is more than just those items and it would be an opportunity to review the whole thing, so it may be prudent to do so this time around.

Motion by Homister, support by McKelvey to recommend to the Township Board that the Land Use Plan be updated and to determine a budget to do so. All ayes, Motion carried.

Zoning Administrator/Planning Consultant Nathan Mehmed

Mehmed explained that he has been keeping a list of potential zoning ordinance text amendments for the Planning Commission to consider when time allows. The first potential amendment includes a review of nonconforming lots of record standards in Section 8.4, particularly: “A structure to be located on the lot shall be no closer to any roadway or lakeshore than a straight line connecting the nearest building (other than a boathouse) on each side of the lot.” The variance request next week is related to this standard, and there has been pushback and conflict regarding the street side standard on a recurring basis. Mehmed suggested that at a minimum, the language should be clarified, since building, structure, and principal building are not used consistently in this Section. Norton wondered why they would align both the street side and waterfront side with neighboring buildings, and agreed that this could perhaps unreasonably limit buildable area. It may make more sense for the 50% nonconforming standard to apply on the street side given how close most existing garages are. The Planning Commission agreed that Mehmed should come back with potential options for edits to clear up the standard, and remove the additional restriction on the street side.

Mehmed explained that the second edit pertains to decks and other yard encroachments in Section 10.18. He noted the need for clarification regarding elevated stair sets that lead down to the various lakes in the Township. Ground level patios, walkways, and similar structures are allowed to project to the property line, but anything elevated is only permitted to project eight feet into a setback. This becomes difficult when a property owner submits an application for a wood stair set with deck landings. The Planning Commission agreed that this should be addressed and directed Mehmed to come back with language.

Mehmed suggested that the Planning Commission start with these and then address additional amendments later. The Planning Commission agreed. Mehmed noted that

the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute reached out regarding the Cedar Creek Watershed Plan. They would like to come in and talk to the Planning Commission. Norton noted that he received the email and would reach out.

General Public Comment: Norton opened up the floor for public comment.

Larry Heslinga, 8202 Nadell Street

Larry expressed that he likes that the Township is looking at the Master Plan and other Zoning Ordinance standards. He would also like to encourage the Township to look at the mining operation standards in the special exception use chapter. There are things that could be done to streamline the process and improve the standards. The Healthy Waters Alliance has looked at many ordinances and there are some good ideas out there. A zoning ordinance can require studies up front instead of asking for it later so that they have their work done before the file the application. An ordinance could also put some time limits on how long an inactive application sits out there, and clarify who the applicant is. Why not put the Zoning Enabling Act requirements into the Hope Township Zoning Ordinance so that everyone better understands the process? He explained that he is happy to interact with the process in one way or another if needed. Thank you again for all of your hard work.

Don Sklenka, 8345 Wilkinson Lake Dr.

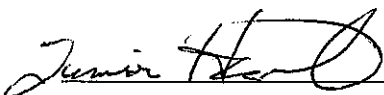
Don noted that he was at basically every Planning Commission meeting with the exception of August. He thanked the Planning Commission for going through the process. He is thankful the process activated the community. People are now interested in planning and zoning that might have otherwise not interacted with the Planning Commission. Water is a significant asset to the Township and it should be properly addressed in the Master Plan. Make sure that it is more prominent. You have an activated community, use it and be proactive to the challenges coming. Thank you.

Norton announced that the following written comments were received.

1. Larry Heslinga email 10-17-22

Adjournment

McKelvey moved to adjourn meeting, support by Homister. All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.



Junior Homister, Secretary Pro Tem