

**HOPE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINTUES
May 18, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Norton at 6:32 pm at the Hope Township Hall, 5463 S M43 Hwy, Hastings, MI. Pledge of allegiance to the flag.

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

Members Absent: Junior Homister.

Others Present: Planning Consultant/Zoning Administrator Nathan Mehmed, Codie Burt, and Don Sklenka at the Township Hall.

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

Meeting Minutes: Motion by Pashby, support by McKelvey to approve the April 20, 2023 meeting minutes. All ayes. Motion carried.

General Public Comment:

Don Sklenka, 8345 Wilkinson Lake Dr.

Don explained that there was a supposed application submitted by StoneCo for a mining operation at the March Planning Commission meeting and it has been two months. The application still isn't complete despite the push to submit at that meeting. The project hasn't even started and there has already been a delay. They held the Township hostage for eight months last time. Don explained that he wants his comments to reflect this in the minutes.

Public Hearing: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Section 10.13 & 10.18:

- a. **Introductory comments.** Norton asked Mehmed to give a brief overview of the text amendment language. Mehmed explained that the amendment to Section 10.13, pertaining to accessory dwellings, would eliminate the standard prohibits accessory dwellings from having their own electric and gas meters. An employee from Consumers Energy notified Mehmed that the standard is in conflict with the gas code. Mehmed also explained that the inspectors from Professional Code Inspections (PCI) were also not okay with

running electrical long distances from one building to another. He mentioned that some minor reformatting was also done, but that no other text was changed.

Mehmed explained that the amendment to Section 10.18, pertaining to yard encroachments, would clarify that at-grade outdoor surfaces and structures of 24 inches or less, such as patios, drives, walkways, decks, and stairs, may project into a setback to a lot line. Further, the amendment would clarify that outdoor elevated stairways above 24 inches may project into a setback to the waterfront lot line, provided that they are not permitted within five feet of any non-waterfront lot line. Mehmed also explained that he added language specifically exempting railings and safety requirements from the enclosure standard.

- b. Acknowledge written comments received. Norton announced that there were no written comments received.
- c. Open public hearing to receive comments. Norton opened the public hearing at 6:43pm.

Don Sklenka, 8345 Wilkinson Lake Dr.

Don indicated that as a lakefront resident he supports the amendment.

- d. Close public hearing. Norton closed the public hearing at 6:45 pm.
- e. Deliberation and motion. Norton asked the Planning Commission if they were okay with the amendments as written. Jenkins indicated that he thinks it only makes sense given what is out there now. All agreed that this would fix several issues brought to the Planning Commission.

Motion by Jenkins, support by Pashby to recommend approval of the text amendment to Section 10.13 to the Township Board. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Pashby, support by Jenkins to recommend approval of the text amendment to Section 10.18 to the Township Board. All ayes. Motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Discussion: Norton asked Mehmed to explain the agenda item and introduce Codie Burt, who is representing Metrowest Development, the owners of the Guernsey Lake Mobile Home Park. Mehmed provided some history on the Guernsey Lake Mobile Home Park and reminded that

Planning Commission that they denied a rezoning request to expand the park in October 2021. He explained that the owners of the community would like to expand and have been discussing options with Mehmed and Kaufman for some time. During the last call, Mehmed, Kaufman, Supervisor Peck, and Trustee Homister discussed options with Burt, and determined it may be a good idea to continue the discussion with the Planning Commission since text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance would likely be necessary to make it happen. Mehmed introduced Burt and asked her to explain what they are looking to do.

Burt provided a survey drawing and explained that they have changed direction. They would like to put four single-family dwellings on the lakefront parcel. They would keep an area for the park residents to have lake access, but the rest of it would be sold. There would be no increase in size to the existing mobile home park. Burt clarified that they are looking to work with the Township on a solution. Mehmed noted that the biggest challenge with this proposal is due to the fact that the manufactured home park and the riparian access lot are nonconforming uses, so they cannot be expanded or modified such that the nonconformity would be increased. In particular, the lakefront parcel is considered a riparian access lot because it provides lake access to dwellings that are not on the lake. The current standards of Section 10.12, Riparian Lot Use Regulations, requires 50 feet of frontage for each dwelling unit. Burt confirmed that there were about 24 units. Norton noted that would require 1,200 feet of frontage, which is not in compliance now. Mehmed explained that removing any frontage would increase the nonconformity and that wouldn't be allowed. The Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended or the applicant would need to apply for a variance. Norton noted that he serves on the Zoning Board of Appeals and believes that proving a hardship would be difficult.

Norton indicated that the Planning Commission has in front of them an email from Kaufman with options. The Planning Commission proceeded to discuss the options, noting that the lakefront parcel is zoned MHP - Manufactured Housing Community and single-family dwellings are allowed on that parcel. The Planning Commission considered that a condominium or Planned Unit Development may be a reasonable option, but the Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended to allow it in MHP and reduce the minimum lot size. The Planning Commission also considered a conditional rezoning, noting that the conditions would have to be offered by the applicant. Mehmed clarified that conditions are used to make a rezoning more palatable or acceptable to a local government, not as a way to circumvent standards of the Zoning Ordinance. Mehmed mentioned that the Planning Commission could also modify the riparian access standards to allow for reduced frontage. The Planning Commission generally agreed that they were not willing to modify those

standards in fear of negatively impacting the lakes in the Township and inappropriately increasing use.

Jenkins expressed that he is in favor of putting single-family dwellings on that parcel, but isn't sure how exactly to make that happen given the zoning challenges. He suggested that the Planning Commission think about the options and come back to the next meeting to discuss. The Planning Commission generally agreed that single-family homes on that frontage would be agreeable.

Burt mentioned, and clarified that this was not a threat, that her team believes that the Township's Zoning Ordinance is exclusionary to mobile home parks since this is the only area where they are allowed, and it cannot be expanded. She noted that they do not want to file a lawsuit and would prefer to work with the Township, but doing so could be an option since this would allow negotiation that could result in an ideal compromise. McKelvey and Jenkins asked if Kaufman could be at the next Planning Commission meeting to discuss some of these options further. Mehmed noted that he would reach out to the Township and Kaufman to see if this could be authorized. The Planning Commission decided to wait to provide any additional direction until they further consider the options and speak with Kaufman.

Zoning Administrator/Planning Consultant Nathan Mehmed: Mehmed noted that there will likely be at least one site plan on the agenda for next month pertaining to Camp Michawana. There is a possibility of a few other applications upcoming as well. The application from StoneCo is still not complete.

Adjournment

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

Craig Jenkins, Secretary

Date