

Hope Township Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chair Norton at 6:30 pm at the Hope Township Hall, 5463 S. M-43, Hastings, MI 49058. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

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

Members absent: Junior Homister, with notification.

Others Present: Township Planner/Zoning Administrator Nathan Mehmed and approximately 14 members of the public.

Agenda: Motion by Pashby, supported by Jenkins, to approve the agenda with the elimination 6, b pertaining to the Master Plan. All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting minutes: Motion by Pashby, supported by McKelvey to approve the April 25, 2024 meeting minutes. All ayes. Motion carried.

General Public Comment:

Jill Steele, 4153 S Shore Dr: Jill shared that she has lived on Long Lake since 1996. She loves the neighborhood and the fact that it is preserved away from others and not as visible. A commercial business such as Joe's so near Long Lake could create issues and invite unwanted attention. The access to the neighborhood is on Ackers Point Drive and it is used by bikers and walkers. They would prefer to walk past residential and agricultural, not commercial with truck traffic. Jill indicated that she helped Joe find who owned the property because he wanted somewhere he could build a barn to store his personal equipment and belongings. Then Joe told everyone that he wanted to establish a business doing small equipment repair. Now that has expanded to selling large equipment. Zoning of the property is Agricultural and his business is not permitted there. Joe knows this and understood what his approval entailed. Any proposed change to the Zoning Ordinance allowing equipment sales would not be consistent with the Hope Township Master Plan or intent of the AG district.

Rick Steele, 4153 S Shore Dr: Rick explained that he has known Joe for many years but disagrees with Joe on his business endeavor for that property.

Jan Hawthorne, 4086 S Shore Dr: Jan is concerned about Joe's business. She is very supportive of small business as a real estate broker, but Joe's is not appropriate in that location. There are issues with enforcement in the Township and Joe keeps pushing. She follows the guidelines so he should too.

Carole Smith, 4040 S Shore Dr: Carol explained that Joe and MaryBeth are good neighbors and good people. Carol wants to protect Barry County, Long Lake, and the environment. Joe went beyond the rules and we should hold firm.

Eric Lindsley, 6873 S. M-43 Hwy: Eric indicated that he bought a zero-turn from Joe today, but he didn't know about this situation or the past. He is here for a different reason though. Eric working on an extensive remodel of the house he owns at 6873 S M-43, including a pool. His contractors were doing the design and indicated that he would not need a fence if he installed a safety pool cover, so he agreed. When the contractors applied for permits, they were told that he needed a fence because of the Zoning Ordinance. This is where the pool and spa code and zoning differ. He would like the Planning Commission to consider updating the Zoning Ordinance to align with the pool and spa code so he can have the cover instead of a fence.

Samantha Sharar, Head Rd: Samantha is concerned about gravel pits and has heard that there may be a gravel pit established near her home on Head Road after a property was purchased. She would like to know what permits are required. She is concerned about crushing, noise, dust, and environmental impacts.

Paul Bartzen, 4080 S Shore Dr: Paul suggested that Joe knew that this is where he would be all along. He was granted a Special Exception Use which he has expanded beyond what was approved. The bigger the business, the bigger the impacts. This needs to be addressed.

Additional written public comment received:

Eric Zuzga, 4169 S Shore Dr, dated May 16, 2024, pertaining to 7010 S M-43 Highway, Illegal Land Use/Zoning Violation.

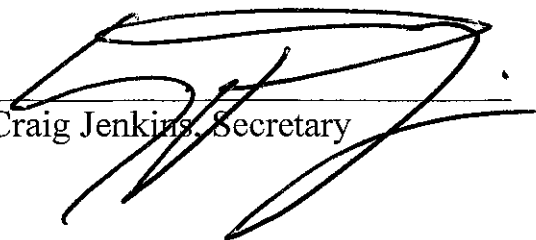
Zoning Administrator: Mehmed reminded the Planning Commission of their discussion regarding Joe Zalokar's business at the April meeting and the noncompliance with his Special Exception Use approval. He noted that the Planning Commission asked him to bring text amendment language that would allow farm supply stores as a special exception use in the AR,

Agricultural/Residential zoning district for discussion. He explained that the memo provided includes a modified definition, specific special exception use standards addressing some initial concerns, modifications to the use table, and modification to the AR district list of special exception uses. Mehmed noted that the Planning Commission should ensure that they are comfortable with the use in the AG district. If there are concerns, they can be addressed through specific standards, if they would like to accommodate it. Mehmed also explained that there are other non-residential and non-agricultural uses in the AG district, and that limited commercial uses, specifically related to agricultural support or other rural uses, is fairly common across rural townships in Michigan. Mehmed reminded the Planning Commission to consider the Master Plan in their evaluation.

The Planning Commission discussed the memo and generally liked what Mehmed provided. Norton noted that the M-43 restriction would prevent proliferation into areas of the Township that may be less suitable for this type of use. He also reminded the Planning Commission that while the impetus for this is Joe's property, the Planning Commission should focus on any applicant or property in AG on M-43. Jenkins and McKelvey asked about the term "rural living" in the definition, and asked if it could be modified to "maintenance of property." Norton agreed that those living on larger property, including farmers, need equipment to maintain it. That language seems to better reflect the intent. Mehmed stated that he would change that. Pashby asked about storage taller than 8 feet and noted that he has seen it stacked where it is not screened in other places. Mehmed indicated that he could modify the standard to restrict this. The Planning Commission agreed to the draft with the discussed changes and asked Mehmed to set a public hearing for the June Meeting.

Mehmed noted that planning and zoning activity is up. There will be two June variances. He also noted that he will have existing conditions updates to the Master Plan in June, along with new maps. The Planning Commission asked about utilities maps such as internet and electricity. Mehmed explained that he would look into it.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Pashby. Second by McKelvey. All Ayes. Motion carried. Meeting concluded at 8:00 p.m.


Craig Jenkins, Secretary

6.20.24
Date