

MINUTES

MONTCALM TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

MONTCALM TOWNSHIP HALL

May 2, 2018

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- Chairman Karnatz led the Pledge of Allegiance

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

- Chairman Karnatz called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m.

ROLL CALL

- Members present: Richard Karnatz (Chair), Jeff Dolphin (Vice-Chair) (arrived 7:32 p.m.), James Lantz (Secretary), Robert Hemmes (Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison), Amy Richards (Township Board Liaison)
- Members absent: None
- Guests/Others present:
Mike Nelson, Zoning Administrator
5 area citizens

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A motion to approve the agenda was made by James Lantz and seconded by Robert Hemmes. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A motion to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2018, meeting was made by James Lantz and seconded by Robert Hemmes. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMENT FROM ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

- Mike Nelson stated that he had been contacted by an individual who wishes to build a duplex in an area that is zoned R-1. The Planning Commission responded that the individual should apply for a variance.
- Mike stated that he had been looking at the issue of inoperable, unlicensed vehicles. He wondered if the Planning Commission should consider having different rules for different zoning districts, e.g., more liberal in Agricultural areas than in Residential areas. After some deliberation, the Planning Commission referred this topic to the Township Board for possible consideration under a police ordinance.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Amy Richards noted that, contrary to what was stated at the last meeting, Planning Commission members are not required to have four (4) hours of continuing education. She added, however, that there are many courses available to Planning Commission members, should they desire to pursue them.
- Chairman Karnatz thanked James Lantz for his service on the Planning Commission, and asked other members to think of possible replacements.

NEW BUSINESS:

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS:

- None

OLD BUSINESS:

- Short-term (Daily – weekly) rentals Ordinance Amendment
 - James Lantz asked if we had any idea of how the Township Board feels about this issue. Amy Richards indicated that, while there had not yet been any formal discussion, she had not heard any positive comments about allowing short-term rentals.

- Jeff Dolphin stated that he believes that an ordinance amendment could be crafted in such a manner so as to allow short-term rentals, while also addressing the concerns of the Board members and area residents. If short-term rentals were considered a Special Land Use, then each case could be considered individually and appropriate restrictions put in place. He feels that short-term rentals are part of the new economy and could be good for our Township.
- Chairman Karnatz noted that the ordinance adopted by Spring Lake could be a good starting point. He agreed that any short-term rentals should be subject to stringent rules. He then asked what each member thought should be a minimum rental:
 - Jeff Dolphin – one rental in a 5 day period
 - James Lantz – one rental in a 7 day period
 - Robert Hemmes – one rental in a 7 day period, but perhaps it should vary by density.
 - Amy Richards – one rental in a 7 day period.
 - Some further discussion resulted in some consensus around the concept of one rental in a 14 day period. All agreed that no watercraft, other than that provided by the owner, should be allowed.
- Chairman Karnatz raised the idea of each lake forming a lake association, which would then address the issue of short-term rentals for that lake.
- Amy Richards agreed to get more input from the Township Board.

- Master Plan Update
 - Jeff Dolphin will send some information to the members of the Planning Commission regarding alternative energy.

- Solar Panel Ordinance
 - All agreed that the language recently adopted by Eureka Township was excellent, and would only require minor revisions to meet our needs.

PUBLIC COMMENT CONCERNING OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

- Short-term rentals
 - Mr. Price feels that property owners, when originally purchasing their property, considered the fact that Montcalm Township does not allow short-term rentals. He does not feel that we should change that.
 - Mrs. Ellis wondered why we would consider rules regarding short-term rentals without also considering rules for long-term rentals. She feels that, as long as the property is being used as zoned (e.g., one family at a time in an R-1 district), there is no violation of the ordinance.
 - A citizen stated that, in his opinion, a dwelling is different than a rental.

ADJOURNMENT

- Amy Richards moved that the meeting be adjourned. Jeff Dolphin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Lantz, Secretary