

PRAIRIEVILLE TOWNSHIP JOINT MEETING
Prairieville Township Board; Zoning Board of Appeals;
Planning and Zoning Commission
Wednesday, April 17, 2013, 6:00 PM; Prairieville Township Hall.

PRESENT:

- **Township Board: Jim Stoneburner (Supervisor), Kasandra McGuire (Treasurer), Ted DeVries (Clerk), Jim Grundy (Trustee and ZBA Member), and Rod Goebel (Trustee and P&Z Member);**
- **Zoning Board of Appeals: Dale Grimes (Chairman), Jaki Dalke, David Mitchell, Myron Kokx (also P&Z Member);**
- **Planning and Zoning: Ken Eddy (Chairman), Dave Federinko, Gary Munson, Charles Sage, Richard VanNiman.**

ABSENT: Jack Kennedy of Zoning Board of Appeals.

ALSO PRESENT: Rebecca Harvey, Township Planning Consultant.

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Stoneburner called the joint meeting to order at 6:02 PM. He requested we add “Public Comment” prior to the “Communications” topic of the agenda. Agreed and done.

MOVED by Ted DeVries: To allow one set of “Minutes” as the individual record for each of the 3 Board groups attending the meeting. SECONDED by Myron Kokx. The motion carried unanimously.

MOVED by Myron Kokx: To accept the Joint Meeting Agenda as revised. SECONDED by Dave Federinko. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

a) 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION’S ANNUAL REPORT:

Rebecca Harvey examined the P&Z Annual Report as a result of its January progress review. She presented a summary of 10 Special Land Use and Text Amendment projects completed in 2012 and discussed other issues that came up during the year.

Supervisor Stoneburner expressed sincere appreciation of the P&Z work product as well as its work ethic. He takes pride in the range of skills brought to the table as well as the balance of representation in the community. “It (P&Z) serves the Township well”.

b) 2013 PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PLAN:

Ms. Harvey explained the 2013 P&Z Work Plan provides the guidelines of planned activities and the designation of importance for each project. Rating of each project is dependent upon its urgency of need or the desires of the Twp. Board.

c) DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. 5 Year Master Plan: Ms. Harvey detailed the importance of the Master Plan's 5 year review. The review was made in 2012. Some changes were made and some were set aside until certain aspects of the issues were resolved. Amendments were approved, some revolved around the 2010 Census Profile. The "Mission Statement" of the Four-Township Water Resources Council was adopted, incorporated into our Master Plan and agreed that it should apply to all lakes in Prairieville Twp.

The "Mission Statement" expresses the desires of lake front property owners of Prairieville, Ross, Richland and Barry Twp's to standardize voluntary acceptance of lake-front property owners to conform to the "common vision" of shoreline conditions. A guidebook of the suggested "common visions" is being developed that all Township residents can work with as desired.

The P&Z also adopted the regulations suggested for public roads and streets that end at the shores of a lake, as in the case found at Gull Lake.

Ms. Harvey continued with an explanation of the amendment process. This included the presentation of the P&Z work product to the Twp. Board while adhering to the 45 day requirement for Public Hearings and other regulations. This being done after an in-depth review of the issues and the measurement of its compliance with our ordinances.

2. Stormwater Management Standards: Until now the P&Z had no standard to address potential changes in rainwater run-off resulting from land and property development. Ms. Harvey met with Barry County Planning Director, Jim McManus, to review the regulations of the State and County on this subject. A P&Z suggested standard has resulted and will soon appear as a proposal for the Twp. Board's review.

3. Wind and Solar Energy: P&Z Chairman, Ken Eddy, discussed the information he had researched and experienced with regard to wind and solar energy. Experts brought their presentation to a P&Z meeting where we learned that Prairieville Twp. is not really a viable location for wind generated power. Ken expanded his knowledge of this "green" technology by obtaining a detailed production analysis and cost estimate for wind or solar

generation on his farm. The anticipated fiscal return from either system did not seem to be cost beneficial.

4. Section 4.41 – Dimensional Standards: Ms. Harvey recognized the ZBA desire for a revisit of these standards. This is an important section of our ordinances that is critical and often controversial. It also needs to accurately correspond with our Master Plan.

Dale Grimes indicated building heights was one issue and the square footage of living space was another. It is important that proper dimensions accompany each proposal, to provide the needed information for decision making, especially on situations involving these standards.

5. Nonconforming Waterfront Lots: Jim Grundy indicated some times we need a P&Z member to come forward to explain decisions that may be convoluted. The Twp. Board's discussion about the 35' set-back from the "high water-mark" was a difficult issue and may have been well served with additional P&Z input.

Richard VanNiman expressed concern over the inconsistency of the "high water-mark" and how that dimension is determined. The water level on many lakes can rise and fall from one day to the next. Ms. Harvey indicated the "mark" should be an established consistent dimension, unrelated to the rise and fall of the lake. She will address this issue with the appropriate parties.

6. Fracking and Jake Brakes': Jim Stoneburner indicated that Orangeville Township recently had a meeting on "fracking" and he will make contact and glean information of their findings. Apparently Orangeville decided to take a different approach to controlling the "fracking" activities by way of limiting truck traffic and road use associated with the drilling operations.

Supervisor Stoneburner indicated a separate "fracking" meeting is scheduled by Four-Township Water Resources Council, Inc. Folks can come to learn but it is not an open forum for debate.

The meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2013, 7:00 PM at the Stack Building Auditorium Kellogg Biological Station, 3700 East Gull Lake Drive. The speaker will be Hal Fitch...Michigan Dept. Of Environmental Quality on "Hydraulic Fracturing in Southwest Michigan: Geology, Practices, and Regulations".

An additional speaker, Nicholas Schroeck...Executive Director of Great Lakes Environmental Law Center will address the "Legal Issues and Fracking: The Feds, the States, the Locals, and the Leases".

There will be an opportunity for questions and comments, but please note this is not a debate.

d) PUBLIC COMMENT: No public present, no comment.

MICHIGAN PLACEMAKING INITIATIVE:

Ken Eddy related a recent state-wide initiative sponsored through the Michigan Municipal League, in which Ms. Harvey has become actively involved in as a “train the trainer” participant.

Ms. Harvey explained the initiative as a change in thinking relative to residential longevity of individuals in a community. Instead of following the current standard to attract knowledge, skill or business to a specific city, town or township, today’s demographic trends toward the modern day worker’s desire to live in the community they want and commute to their workplace. Some may be working out of their home but all prefer the desired environment for themselves and their families as opposed to locating near their employment.

Combining like-communities into regions to attract those seeking a safe environment, with recreational qualities and open spaces, may cross township or county and state borders.

Michigan Governor Snyder is promoting this concept with available funds in forming such a regional base. Regions so inclined may qualify for funding with appropriate documentation and cost effective evaluations.

Some discussion was exchanged relative to what Prairieville could qualify for, one being the North America trail going through the township and another on potential bike trails that could connect with Yankee Springs, Orangeville and other communities.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Township Board Members: Ted DeVries indicated Eric of PCI has been helpful in getting folks going to the proper township Board for whatever they are seeking to resolve.

2. Planning Commission Members: Supervisor Stoneburner express his appreciation for the return of Dave Federinko to the P&Z Commission. He also wanted to thank Joe Tobin for his years of service on the P&Z Commission. His input was greatly appreciated.

Ken Eddy indicated this has already been an interesting year and the issues are just as interesting.

Supervisor Stoneburner suggested that next joint meeting should include the Parks Board. The joint group agreed.

Ms. Harvey shared a story of one of her students at Western Michigan University who attended one of the Prairieville Twp. Board meetings as a class assignment. The student's comments were very complimentary of the actions and business demeanor of the Board. It was a delight to see such a positive independent review, especially coming from one of her students.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Myron Kokx and supported by Rod Goebel to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. 7:08 PM.