

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

Chairperson Mooradian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Repasky, Varner, Uutinen, Mooradian, Baiardi, Wallin

Absent: Moore

Visitors: Annie Mooradian, Kristi Hollingsworth

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda as presented or with additions: **Agenda approved by consensus.**

Public Comments: Mooradian introduced the new Zoning Administrator Ken Lane from Beckett & Rader.

Approval of July 13, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented or with corrections:
Mooradian added “by” on page 2 to read “by consensus”. **Wallin made a motion to approve with corrections. Repasky seconds the motion. All yes.**

New Business:

Other:

- a. Planning Commission Work List/Discussion – The board reviewed and discussed the work list.
- b. Zoning Administrator Report – Mooradian updated the board on Pond Hill, Harbor Point, Bosker storage units, and Franklin Park
- c. Township Board Representative Report – Baiardi turned in her resignation letter to the Board and asked it be part of the Minutes:
“Effective September 15, 2022, I am resigning as the Board Representative to the Planning Commission. Nine years ago, when I agreed to sit on the PC, I had a general idea of what a Planning Commission did. The real learning came from taking classes and reading everything I could get my hands about how Planning Commissions are supposed to function and their role in the Township as it pertains to land use. Most important was learning the Zoning Ordinance and how it is applied. EVERY decision should follow the Ordinance. If it doesn’t, chances are you are allowing something that shouldn’t be allowed. Adherence to the Ordinance is what it is all about. Our fiduciary responsibility is to the WHOLE community and not one person or entity. Despite how long it may take, all questions should be answered to the satisfaction of the PC or ZBA before the project moves along. That is the only way to ensure that all constituents are being treated fairly

and equally under the Ordinance. Friendships and perceived importance of the applicant should never be a consideration.

In 2015, Nancy Sarowski and I spent considerable time working with the Planner, Denise Cline, to completely edit and change the format of the Zoning Ordinance. Many hours were spent on the phone in discussion and in between calls we proofed work Denise was sending us and made sure everything was picked up in the new interactive Ordinance or eliminated if no longer relevant. The result is what we have today. Nancy and I were both proud of the finished product.

Over the years I have tried to become as knowledgeable as possible about Planning and Zoning and where to look for answers or who to ask for answers. I take my position on the PC very seriously and have always tried to honor the oath I took. By far, the best Planning Commission I have worked with is the one that is in place now and I regret that I am not able to continue to work with them. It is a very diverse group with expertise in many different areas and they come to meetings prepared to discuss whatever case we have before us. Several of them have sat on the PC for many years and despite that, earlier in the year ALL of us took the time for continuing education and training workshops as a group and we benefited not only from that education and training but the discussion that followed. During case reviews our members bring forward important questions that need to be answered by the applicant, many times something the applicant never thought of and as frustrating as this can be, answers to these questions are what is required if we are following the Ordinance.

I found it very troubling this year when Board Members attended one or two meetings after PHF had put the call out to all their groupies to attend the meeting and voice their support for PHF and whine about PHF needing to follow the Ordinance with their application process. Apparently PHF was under the mistaken impression that since they had been expanding and operating without Township approval for the last seventeen years, what they wanted to do now should not need approval. Unfortunately, some on our Board agreed – since PHF was “special” and “everyone loved them” they could just continue to do what they chose. To this day PHF is not in compliance but still operating, yet somehow, the PC had to be excoriated by certain Board members during a Public Meeting when those Board Members lacked any facts to back up their assertions and certainly hadn’t attended two plus years of meetings, discussion, and frustration with PHF. It was obvious an effort was underway to gain favor with the audience members in attendance that evening. These situations are in part why I need to resign. We all took an oath to uphold the “laws” but if only some actually do, there isn’t much reason to be a part of that kind of system. I hope in the future our Board, along with the PC and ZBA, all understand their fiduciary role is to make decisions based on the Ordinance and not what makes them popular. We need to respect the time and efforts of our Commissions and Boards.”

d. Correspondence: none

Planning Commissioner Comments: none

Public Comments: none

Next Regular Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday October 12, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Wallin made a motion to adjourn at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Dawson Moore, Secretary

Transcribed by:
Paige Fisher