

ESCANABA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 2, 2023

7:30 pm ESCANABA TOWNSHIP HALL 4618 COUNTY 416 20TH RD GLADSTONE MI 49837

www.escanabatownshipmi.gov 906-786-6200

Chairperson Nate Neumeier called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Verbal Roll call. Present Chair Nathan Neumeier. Secretary DJ Dean. Theresa Chenier. Scott Mitchell. Mitch Gagnon. Mitch Bunno. All members are present along with Attorney Laura Genovich via zoom meeting.

Motion to approve September 5, 2023 minutes as written made by M. Bunno. Second by S.Mitchell. All in favor. Motion passed.

Public Participation. NONE

Motion to approve agenda as amended made by T.Chenier. Second by M. Bunno. All in favor. Motion passed. (added Larry Wescott {not present} and election of vice-chair)

T. Chenier presented the Board Liaison report.

- Matt Rian resigned as the Fire Chief. Zach Denome will fill in the duties until they hold their election. Approved tires for the Ladder truck to be paid for through the Besse Fund. 5 SCBA hydro bottles were sent out to be filled. The Pumper truck repairs are proceeding using ARPA funds as approved. The ladder truck attended the homecoming reception for the Honor Flight.
- The audit is continuing. Additional information was requested for years 2019 and 2021.
- Blight complaints are being looked into by Trustee Fleury.
- Renovation bids for the township hall, blacktopping for parking lot and gutters on hall are being looked into.
- Township Road plowing concerns were discussed.
- A fire department grant of \$10,000 was approved and expenses submitted for safety items.
- The state audit discovered that street lights in the Lake Bluff community needs a special assessment completed.
- The township fire signs are still in progress. Cost could be \$60,000. Continued research into available grants is being done.
- A tire scrap grant was discussed and decided to have this managed at the county level.
- Barbie Clairmont resigned from the Planning Commission. A new member is needed.
- Clerk Chenier has been working with the county for the upcoming new 9 day voting procedures and location.
- The zoning ordinance is in need of updating.

Chair Nate Neumeier opened a public hearing for zoning change request by Barron Farms at 7:43pm with motion made be DJ Dean. Second by M. Gagnon. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Bob Barron addressed the Planning Commission stating himself and Tom Barron are owners of Barron Farms. There are 195 acres he would like to have all re-zoned as Resource Production.

Public Comments: **Sherry Anderson** expressed concerns that Mr. Barron manipulates situations to better himself. He is one resident. She added we are willing to fight for our rights too. **Maradee Luft** said for years there is always a new issue and asked Mr. Barron to just please stop. **Collin Gross** voiced concerns that RP could allow such development of landfill, store explosives and surface mining. Member comments: Clerk Chenier said there was also a letter received from Zoning Administrator of City of Escanaba, **Tyler Anderson**. S. Mitchell the land on the river is all R2 now on the strips of land that touch the river. M.Bunno stated that he understands the concerns and would like to see the community grow but not through the detriment of the people. T.Chenier stated they need to look at the Future Land Use map and the 2019 Master Plan as a guide to zoning. Zoning stays with the land and doesn't change with the owner of the land. Other concerns were the permitted principle uses are not defined in the Zoning Ordinance definitions such as; campgrounds, day camps, parks, race tracks, stables, winter sports facilities,

trails, seasonal dwellings. DJ Dean feels the change would go against the Master Plan and Resource Production (RP) leaves it so wide open it could open other issues down the road. Attorney Genovich advised the decision should be consistent with the character of the area and the Master Plan should be referred to. **Mr. Bob Barron** addressed the Commission's statements by adding he feels his properties are currently spot zoned. There are four zones that are there now that are not viable. **Frank Shepeck**, resident on N.7 Lane river frontage for 40 years and wants consideration to the possibilities of what the change would effect and how open-endedness could create issues. **Motion was made at 8:25 pm by T. Chenier to close public comments. Second by M. Gagnon. All in favor. Motion passed.**

Chairperson Neumeier asked for deliberation by the Planning Commission. Chenier-Planning and Zoning must be consistent with goals of the Future Land Use map and the Master Plan. RP change does not follow that. Mitchell-The river frontage should be R2 all along the river. Bunno-No comment. Gagnon- RP designation does not go along with the Master Plan. Dean- would like uses to stay as were originally intended. Neumeier- Has always stood behind liberty & justice for all. Having an open- end book feeling doesn't go along with the Master Plan. He understands there is frustration with the issue.

M.Bunno made a motion to recommend to the Township Board to deny the zoning request change made by Barron Farms due to the fact that the request does not fit with the Escanaba Township Master Plan and Future Land Use map. Second by T. Chenier. Roll Call vote= Chenier YES. S. Mitchell YES. N.Neumeier YES. M. Bunno YES. M. Gagnon YES. DJ.Dean Yes. Motion passed. All members in favor of denial.

Public hearing closed at 8:36 pm.

Motion to table the Review of the Blight and Dangerous Building Ordinance, as requested by the township Board, was made by M.Gagnon. Second by DJ Dean. All in favor. Motion passed.

M.Gagnon made a motion to appoint M. Bunno as vice-chair of Planning Commission. Second by DJ Dean. All in favor. Motion passed.

T.Chenier made a motion for the sub-committee to move forward to amend the Zoning Ordinance of 14 parcels found to require corrections Second by S. Mitchell. All in favor. Motion passed.

There were no ZBA meetings held in September 2023.

Public Comments. Ilsa Minor. John Miron. Fred Minor. Theresa Pietsch.

Motion to adjourn made by T. Chenier at 8:53 pm. Second by DJ Dean. All in favor. Motion passed.

The next scheduled meeting of the Escanaba Township Planning Commission is November 6, 2023 at 7:30 pm Escanaba Township Hall 4618 County 416 20th Rd Gladstone MI 49837. Please contact 906-786-6200 if require assistance to attend a meeting.