

**Clearwater Township**  
Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting of December 2, 2019  
As approved January 6, 2020

**Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance:**

Chair Backers called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call of Members and Recognition of Visitors:**

Commissioners present: Backers, Cassasa, Eldridge, Fields, Von See.  
Township officials: Deputy Clerk Moore  
Public: Tom Pierce, Carol Backers, Paula Lobb, Joe Lobb, Isabel Lobb.

**Approval of Agenda:**

**MOTION** by Von See, second by Casassa, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**Call for Disclosure of Conflicts of Interests:**

All commissioners declared no conflict.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION** by Casassa, second by Von See, to accept the minutes of November 4, 2019 as presented. Motion carried.

**Public Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda:**

Tom Pierce – expressed his concerns regarding overnight camping on Torch Lake and along Torch River. He suggested that a paragraph could be inserted in Clearwater Township Ordinance #20 prohibiting such overnight camping.

**Commissioner Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda:**

There was none.

**Old Business:**

The Commission wishes to express its gratitude for the consistent support provided by the township's legal counsel during the entire process of dealing with the matter of the Tillman telecommunications tower. Secretary Fields is tasked to craft and send an appropriate letter of thanks.

**Report of Planning Commission Chair:**

Chair Backers – reported that he has not had a recent alleyways committee meeting. He has requested permission to advertise for a proposal to resurvey the original Rankin plat, the one in which the township has vacated the unopened road and alleyways; and get the plat properly

redrawn. Once the Rankin plat has been done, it will serve as the model for the remaining five plats.

**Report of Township Representative:**

Clerk Eldridge – reported on the November 21, 2019 meeting of the Township Board.

- 1) The Old Iron Bridge: at present the bridge is closed to vehicular traffic because it is unsafe. The Board reviewed the report from Al Haverstein, OHM Advisors, on the estimated cost to repair the bridge and return it to its existing rating of three tons: \$55,000 with \$5,000 for construction oversight.
- 2) Residents approached the township to collect donations to update the holiday decorations for the streetlamps. The money is available. The Board approved.
- 3) The updated Master Plan as submitted by the Planning Commission has been approved by the Board and adopted.
- 4) The Board declined the text amendment to Ordinance #22, regarding minimum distance between telecommunications towers, submitted by the Planning Commission and initiated by Greg Hanlin.
- 5) The Board agreed with the Planning Commission’s recommendation to deny the special land use permit application from Mike Bieniek, agent for Tillman Infrastructure, to erect a 170’ telecommunications tower at 5378 Townline Road.

**Report of Zoning Administrator:**

Although the Zoning Administrator was not present at this meeting, his report for November 2019 was included in the meeting materials and is hereby incorporated into the record by reference. A copy of the report is attached to the permanent copy of these minutes as [Att A].

**New Business**

Jason Morrison – Petition to rezone a portion of his property at 6333 Rapid Road, from Recreational to Commercial. This session is to review the petition for completeness. Page 2 items that are blank need to be filled in, such as whether there are any deed restrictions, or any other entities with interest in the land, and whether the land has been platted. It is also necessary to determine which commercial designation he is seeking. Plan to hold the public hearing at the January 2020 regular meeting, contingent on these items being completed.

**MOTION** by Fields, second by Casassa, contingent on completion of the blanks in Jason Morrison’s application, we hold the public hearing on the application at our regular meeting on January 6, 2020.. Motion carried.

Roll call vote:

- Von See - yes
- Casassa - yes
- Eldridge - yes
- Backers - yes
- Fields - yes

At this point, Chair Backers reordered the agenda, without objection, to move discussion on possible combination of the Agricultural and Recreational zoning districts, to follow election of officers, appointment of representative to ZBA, and meeting dates for the calendar.

Election of officers for 2020 – The current officers are willing to serve again.

**MOTION** by Backers, second by Casassa, to retain the current officers for the year 2020, as follows: Chair – Tom Backers; Vice Chair – Len Von See; Secretary – Tina Fields. Motion carried.

Appoint representative to the ZBA for 2020 – Fields is stepping down from being the Planning Commission representative to the ZBA. Chair Backers asked Commissioner Casassa to consider accepting that appointment for the year 2020, and she agreed to the appointment.

Set regular meetings calendar – The Commission has already established the calendar for the first quarter of 2020, and will set the calendar through the first quarter of 2021.

**MOTION** by Fields, second by Von See, to set the calendar according to the following table:

January 6, 2020	February 3, 2020	March 2, 2020
April 6, 2020	May 4, 2020	June 1, 2020
July 6, 2020	August 3, 2020	September 14, 2020
October 5, 2020	November 2, 2020	December 7, 2020
January 4, 2021	February 1, 2021	March 1, 2021

Motion carried.

Potential Combination of Agricultural and Recreational Districts – Our strategy will be to review the permitted uses and dimensional requirements in both districts, to identify the similarities and differences. One possibility will be to craft the overall general zone with an overlay for the more sensitive areas. Commissioner Casassa has found that there are few areas of difference. The commissioners are assigned to evaluate individually and prepare suggested drafts for consideration at the January meeting.

We discussed plans to review the overall zoning strategy for the township and agreed to beginning this process as part of the New Business for the February meeting.

**Closing Public Comment:**

Paula Lobb – reported that her neighbor has recently built two pole barns and a gazebo in the backyard. She wondered whether this was allowed. Clerk Eldridge advised her to call the township office so that the Zoning Administrator can look into it.

Commissioner Von See – expressed concern about having to go through as many standards of review, as were required for the hearing on the telecommunications tower special use permit application. Chair Backers explained that there were three separate sections to that review.

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION** by Von, second by Casa, to adjourn. Adjournment at 8:04.

**Assignments:**

- Fields to draft letter of thanks to township attorneys for their support during the matter of the Tillman telecommunications tower.
- Fields to forward copies of the signed Master Plan to the members of the Planning Commission.
- Fields to contact Jason Morrison to complete the blanks in his application, then to prepare the notice for publication of the public hearing to be held at the January 6, 2020 meeting.
- All commissioners to study the Agricultural and Recreational zoning district requirements in Ordinance #22 and prepare suggested drafts for their potential combination.

**Next Meeting:** January 6, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., jointly with the ZBA, in the Clearwater Township Community Center (a.k.a. the Little Red Schoolhouse).

Respectfully submitted,



Tina Norris Fields  
Secretary

### Clearwater Township Zoning Administration Monthly Report

Month/Year NOV 2019

2 Land Use Permits Issued  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Garages, Sheds  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Residences  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Residences w/Attached Garage  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Pole Barns  
1 Resident Additions  
1 Decks, Porches, etc.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Miscellaneous, Other Buildings

43 Field Checks  
2 Attorney Contacts  
1 Planning Commission Meetings  
0 ZBA Meetings and/or Township Board Meetings  
10 Contacts with Public, Home or Land Owners  
0 Training Sessions

Date: 11-20-19

Signature:   
 Zoning Administrator