

Clearwater Township
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of December 21, 2020
As approved January 18, 2021

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance:

Secretary Fields, serving as Chair, called the meeting to order via Zoom at 7:01 p.m., and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting is being held virtually, due to the MDHHS requirement that all township meetings remain virtual until January 15, 2021.

Roll Call of Members and Recognition of Visitors:

Commissioners present: Cassasa, Fields, Keyes, Leffew.

Commissioner absent: Len Von See

Township officials: Zoning Administrator Parzych was absent.

Public: Supervisor Backers.

[Note: As the meeting was beginning, Jeff West complained to the Supervisor via telephone, that the virtual meeting was discriminating against those who do not have Internet service. He was apparently unaware of the dial-in feature for Zoom meetings.]

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION by Casassa, second by Leffew, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Call for Disclosure of Conflicts of Interests:

Chair calls for commissioners to disclose any real or potential conflicts of interests.
There were none.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Casassa, second by Leffew to approve the revised minutes of September 14, 2020, as presented. Motion carried, by three “aye” votes and one abstention.

Public Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda:

There was none. Only wishing luck with Zoom meeting – repeated that MTA advised that all meetings have to be virtual

Commissioner Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda:

There was none.

Correspondence for Matters Not on the Agenda:

There was none.

Old Business:

The report sent to the Township Board, summarizing the activities of the Planning Commission during the year, was reviewed. The Commissioners did not offer any additions or corrections to the report.

Before beginning the report from the Township Board Representative, acting Chair Fields introduced the two new members of the Planning Commission.

- 1) Trustee Albert Keyes, known as Joe, is the new representative from the Township Board. His term on the Planning Commission runs with his elected term until November of 2024.
- 2) Jim Leffew, a resident of Clearwater Township is the second new member. Having been sworn in during the month of December 2020, his term runs until December of 2023.

Report of Township Representative:

Trustee Keyes had no report at this time.

Report of ZBA Representative:

Commissioner Casassa reported that the ZBA met only twice in 2020. They met with the Planning Commission in January. The planned meetings of April 13, July 13, and October 12, were canceled due to the COVID-19 restrictions. They held a special meeting on August 10 to consider a variance request for 6541 Crystal Beach Road concerning a 5-foot setback. The variance was granted. On October 10, Dave Lawicki resigned. On November 10, Robert Bergmann resigned. Since then, Dan Packer has been appointed to the ZBA. There remain two openings for the ZBA: one member and one alternate. The next planned meeting is the joint meeting with the Planning Commission on January 4, 2021.

Report of Zoning Administrator:

Zoning Administrator Parzych was absent. His reports for September and November of 2020 are attached to the permanent copy of these minutes at [Att A] and [Att B], respectively.

New Business

Election of officers for 2021 – In discussion, it was agreed that Trustee Keyes, being the representative on the Commission is ineligible to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair; Commissioner Casassa is already carrying the responsibility of being the Commission’s representative to the ZBA and is serving as the Secretary to that body; Commissioner Von See, who has been serving as the Vice-Chair of the Commission is willing to serve as its Chair; Commissioner Leffew is willing to serve as Vice Chair; and Commissioner Fields is willing to serve as Secretary.

MOTION by Keyes, second by Casassa, to elect Len Von See as Chair, Jim Leffew as Vice Chair, and Tina Fields as Secretary of the Clearwater Township Planning Commission for the year 2021. Motion carried.

Selection of meeting dates through March 2022 – The Commissioners established the following meeting schedule:

MOTION by Casassa, second by Leffew, to adopt the following dates for the regularly scheduled meetings of the Clearwater Township Planning Commission:

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| January 4, 2021 | February 1, 2021 | March 1, 2021 | April 5, 2021 |
| May 3, 2021 | June 7, 2021 | July 5, 2021 | August 2, 2021 |
| Sep 13, 2021 | October 4, 2021 | November 1, 2021 | December 6, 2021 |
| January 3, 2022 | February 7, 2022 | March 7, 2022 | |

The motion carried.

Closing Public Comment:

[Note: under the unusual conditions of this meeting, the Public Comment session became a conversation among the members of the Commission and the Township Supervisor.]

Supervisor Backers – recommended that the Commission postpone the scheduled January 4, 2021 meeting by two weeks, which would provide some time to find new ZBA members, and also to be past the current MDHHS directive (expiring January 15, 2021) requiring all township business meetings to be virtual. Further, he expressed the desire to find a policy solution to overcome the potential issues interfering with the ability of some members of the public to attend virtual meetings. Additionally, he advised that violations of the MDHHS decrees are handled by the Michigan State Police, and are not County Sheriff enforcement responsibilities.

Commissioner Leffew – interjected that Whitewater Township had recently held a public meeting regarding marijuana regulations. The Michigan State Police arrived and made the public leave the building. They did allow the meeting to continue.

Supervisor Backers – concurred, noting again that it is a State enforcement issue.

Trustee Keyes – suggested the Township find a way to put a computer in the Little Red Schoolhouse and make use of the TV monitor there to provide a method for members of the public to attend virtual meetings.

There was general agreement that implementing such a method to facilitate participation from the public is a good idea. Trustee Keyes agreed to bring the idea to the Township Board for action.

Supervisor Backers – agreed that there should be some policy of compromise to overcome the contentious issues, and suggested that there could be at least one official individual physically present in the meeting venue to operate the computer for virtual meetings.

Commissioner Leffew – inquired whether the Zoning Administrator is required to attend the Planning Commission meetings, noting that he has been absent from them for a long time.

Secretary Fields – responded that the Zoning Administrator is expected to attend Planning Commission meetings, and to advise us if he is unable. If he does not do that, the Township Board has the responsibility to review the matter with him.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Casassa, second by Leffew, to adjourn. Adjournment at 7:36 p.m.

Assignments:

- Casassa will advise the ZBA of the Planning Commission's intention to postpone the January 4, 2021 meeting to January 18, and will seek the ZBA's concurrence.
- Keyes will bring to the Township Board the idea of using a township computer and the TV monitor in the Little Red Schoolhouse to provide a venue for public participation in virtual meetings.

Next Meeting: January 18, 2021, 7:00 p.m., location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,



Tina Norris Fields
Secretary

Clearwater Township Zoning Administration Monthly Report

Month/Year SEPT 2020

| | |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| <u>9</u> | Land Use Permits Issued |
| <u>2</u> | Garages, Sheds |
| <u>2</u> | Residences |
| | Residences w/Attached Garage |
| <u>5</u> | Pole Barns |
| | Resident Additions |
| | Decks, Porches, etc. |
| | Miscellaneous, Other Buildings |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| <u>46</u> | Field Checks |
| <u>1</u> | Attorney Contacts |
| <u>1</u> | Planning Commission Meetings |
| <u>0</u> | ZBA Meetings and/or Township Board Meetings |
| <u>20</u> | Contacts with Public, Home or Land Owners |
| <u>0</u> | Training Sessions |

Date: 9-20-20

Signature: 
Zoning Administrator

Clearwater Township Zoning Administration Monthly Report

Month/Year Nov 2020

| | |
|-----------|---|
| <u>10</u> | Land Use Permits Issued |
| | <u>1</u> Garages, Sheds |
| | Residences |
| <u>11</u> | <u>2</u> Residences w/Attached Garage |
| <u>17</u> | <u>5</u> Pole Barns |
| | Resident Additions |
| | Decks, Porches, etc. |
| <u>11</u> | <u>2</u> Miscellaneous, Other Buildings |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <u>100.</u> | Field Checks |
| <u>0</u> | Attorney Contacts |
| <u>0</u> | Planning Commission Meetings |
| <u>0</u> | ZBA Meetings and/or Township Board Meetings |
| <u>0</u> | Contacts with Public, Home or Land Owners |
| <u>0</u> | Training Sessions |

Date: 11-17-20.

Signature: 
Zoning Administrator