

Clearwater Township
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of March 1, 2021
Held via Zoom
As approved April 5, 2021

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance:

Chair Von See called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m., and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Members and Recognition of Visitors:

Commissioners present: Cassasa, Fields, Keyes, Leffew, Von See (all were attending virtually from within Kalkaska County).

Public: Margaret Spann

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 conflicts of interests with any item on the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Casassa, second by Keyes, to accept the minutes of February 1, 2021, as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda:

There was none.

Commissioner Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda:

Commission Leffew - reported that AAA is offering \$15,000 grants to communities to purchase equipment and develop plans to improve traffic flow and safety. He commented that this township could definitely use a couple of the portable speed zone signs. The grant application period closes on March 31, 2021. Discussion ensued on how to proceed. Leffew will forward to the commissioners a link to the grant information. We will determine whether we can meet the grant application requirements and if we can, figure out how to proceed.

Correspondence for Matters Not on the Agenda:

There was none.

Old Business:

Terms Expiring:

Secretary Fields – reported that there are two terms expiring soon: Commissioner Casassa’s

term expires in April and Commissioner Fields' term expires in June. Chair Von See asked each commissioner if she was willing to serve another term. Both commissioners responded in the affirmative. Secretary Fields will transmit the information to the Township Board for action.

Update on Marijuana Ordinance work:

Trustee Keyes – reported that Attorney Corcoran did suggest a fee of \$5,000 for assisting the township in crafting the relevant ordinance. The Township Board found the fee to be too high. Work is proceeding on planning a forum for community input on the future of marijuana in this township. Discussion ensued on several areas of concern: 1) whether the public forum should be held by the Planning Commission or by the Township Board; 2) when the public forum could be held; 3) crafting the ordinance so that people can understand it; 4) securing copies of ordinances that are working well in other municipalities to assist us in our work.

- 1) Consensus of the Planning Commission is that the forum should be held by the Township Board, to show the commitment of the township government to hear from the people and to avoid any appearance of the Commission acting autonomously.
- 2) Notice of the public meeting must be published in a newspaper of local circulation at least 14 days prior to the meeting. Therefore, the earliest the meeting can be held, if it is to coincide with a Township Board meeting, is in April.
- 3) Whether we write the ordinance ourselves or enlist the assistance of Attorney Corcoran, per our policy that any law people must abide by has to be a law people can understand, the language of the law must be clear and plain.
- 4) Commissioners will share with one another any examples they find of ordinances from municipalities that have successfully implemented marijuana regulations.

There was also discussion on the sequence to use in repealing the existing ordinance and enacting the new one, being careful not to generate a potentially dangerous vacuum in the law. Keyes asked for commitment from the commissioners to attend the public forum; the commissioners concurred.

Report of Planning Commission Chair:

No report.

Report of Township Representative:

Trustee Keyes – reported 1) that the township has made a change of legal counsel. Smith & Johnson, of Traverse City is the firm; their phone number is 231-946-0700; and our representative is Bradley D. Wierda. 2) The Kalkaska Public Schools bonding proposition will be on the May 4, 2021 ballot. It does not represent an increase in millage. There are informational brochures at the Township Hall, explaining the purpose of the proposal, which includes funding for a new boiler for our Rapid City Elementary School. 3) The Board of Review is meeting on March 2 at noon, March 8 and 9 from 9-3. 4) The next Township Board meeting is March 18, at 7 p.m. He did not know whether the organizational meeting had yet been held.

Report of ZBA Representative:

Commissioner Casassa – reported that the ZBA will meet on April 12. She also reported that the Michigan Association of Planners (MAP) has some excellent training events. In particular, she lifted up the one called *Planning and Zoning Essentials*, being offered on March 3-4 and again on March 23-24. This is an excellent program for new members of the Commission, as well as a useful refresher for those who have served for years. The Planning Commission has a budget for these training seminars. We are all encouraged to register and attend. Traditionally, we have made our request through the Township Clerk; check to see if that is still the system.

Report of Zoning Administrator:

No report.

New Business**Zoning Map:**

Trustee Keyes – reported that the Township Board would like to have an updated official zoning map that can be relied upon. Although there appear to be several maps, we really do not have an official zoning map that has been approved by the Township Board and signed by the Township Supervisor. The closest one we have is the color coded document distributed to the members of the Planning Commission. Discussion ensued about how to move ahead. There was general agreement that ideally the township would have an interactive GIS map on the website that identifies each parcel, its zoning district as well as other pertinent public information. Having the official zoning map on the township website, as an interactive document that could be easily accessed by users to look up any parcels and obtain the pertinent public information, and that could be easily updated when changes are made, would be of clear value to our township. We do have the personnel and the open-source software to accomplish this project, which will take about six months to accomplish, if the Township Board approves it. In the meantime, an *ad hoc* subcommittee of the Planning Commission can review the zoning district boundaries as laid out in the zoning ordinance and its amendments, compare those definitions to the existing color-coded document, and find and remedy any discrepancies, to provide the Township Board with an accurate map to use until the proposed interactive GIS project is completed.

Chair Von See appointed Fields and Keyes as the *ad hoc* subcommittee to compare the color-coded map with the zoning district boundaries in the ordinance and its amendments, and report back to the Planning Commission at the April 5, 2021 meeting.

All commissioners expressed interest in being kept up-to-date on the progress of the hoped for interactive map project. Commissioners Leffew and Casassa offered their help. Interested members of the public could also be recruited to work on it.

[Post-meeting note: Margaret Spann, whose university major was Geography, has volunteered to join the interactive map work group once it is established.]

Closing Public Comment:

Margaret Spann – commented that the March 2 meeting of the Board of Review is an organizational meeting and Assessor Kuhns will be there. She also noted that Michigan LARA notices come through to the township’s office, many with information on marijuana. She will forward these notices to the Planning Commission Secretary for distribution to all commissioners. *[Post-meeting note: The new email arrangements that are being implemented will make it simple to forward items to planning@clearwatertwp.com, which will automatically forward them on to the members of the Planning Commission.]*

In closing, the members of the Planning Commission thanked Margaret for her continued service to the township as its Deputy Clerk.

Adjournment:

Prior to adjournment, Secretary Fields reported that the quarterly attendance record would be timely sent to the Township Clerk. This report includes the gross pay due each member for the quarter. Payment had already been made to some commissioners for the January meeting, and note would be made in the report to adjust the quarterly payment for the actual amount still due.

MOTION by Fields, second by Keyes, to adjourn. Adjournment at 8:16 p.m.

Assignments:

- Commissioners to find and share marijuana ordinance materials for all to review.
- Fields to notify the Township Board of the terms expiring soon, and the willingness of Commissioner Casassa and Commissioner Fields to serve another term.
- Fields to write up the proposed zoning map project for Keyes to share with the Board.
- Leffew to query Attorney Corcoran about ordinance work done for a municipality smaller than Cadillac, to assist us in our review.
- Leffew to forward to all commissioners the link to the AAA traffic safety grant info.

Next Meeting: April 5, 2021

Respectfully submitted,



Tina Norris Fields
Secretary