

Milton Township Planning
Commission Unapproved
Meeting Minutes January 15,
2019

Members present: Chairman Hefferan, Cole, Merillat, Lefebvre, Murphy.

Members absent: Kopkau and Kingon.

Also present: Six audience members.

Hefferan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Approval of meeting minutes dated December 11, 2019:

Page 2: change “2. Short Term Rentals Subcommittee” to “2. Village Zone Land Use Subcommittee”

Page 3: insert “if” before “the rental ordinance does not...” in Dennis Fitzpatrick’s comment.

Motion by Lefebvre to approve the minutes as corrected. Seconded by Cole. **Motion carried.**

Township Board Report

Cole updated members on farmland preservation, which the conservancy is working toward for the ballot in August. Discussion of Maplehurst acquisition.

Agenda:

1. Short Term Rentals Subcommittee.
2. Outdoor lighting Subcommittee.
3. Event Barns Subcommittee.
4. Election of Officers.
5. Set agenda for February meeting.

Public Comment:

Fred Gulick said he did a survey of his neighborhood lights. He noticed there is a lot of light coming from Elk Rapids. The lights owned by Milton township are also very bright. Regarding the waterfront protection ordinance, you have one, but other townships around the lakes do not. The ordinance was placed on the internet and now people are becoming aware of it. On Torch River Drive, there are three new building sites going up but those building permits do not note the water frontage construction. He is concerned that there will be more harm done because people do not know about this.

Bob Ford said thank you to the subcommittee for their willingness to allow input on the process. They are year-round residents and they have submitted letters regarding their thoughts on the vacation rental ordinance changes. Six weeks with renters in our neighborhood is excessive in the summer. Once every four weeks is more reasonable and four weekly rentals a per year allows for a reasonable collection of dollars. The frequency of the rentals is our primary concern because we have such a short amount of time to enjoy during the summer months.

Sandra Lininger and Michael Lininger agree with Ford's statement.

Motion by Cole to approve the agenda. Seconded by Murphy. **Motion carried.**

1. Short Term Rentals Subcommittee:

There have been no meetings or changes. Draft version 6 dated December 20, 2018 has been distributed to the Commission for comment. We will meet as a subcommittee and consider the comments received. Hefferan and Cole discussed the history of rentals in the township.

Hefferan read some comments received. Discussion regarding deed restrictions on a property that is applying for a permit. If there are deed restrictions, they must be reviewed prior to the application being submitted.

Dennis Fitzpatrick commented regarding the timing allowed with six weeks being excessive.

Gregory Payne submitted a letter regarding the six weeks being excessive. He also has issues with enforcement.

Hefferan suggested talking to Elk Rapids about enforcement and online resources available to monitor rentals.

Murphy said the main issue here is enforcement. Hefferan asked what the cost for a permit is and how will we pay for the enforcement. There is no cost for a permit. If you raise the price of the permit, the less likely people will be to come in and get one.

Murphy said the problem renters are the minority, but the biggest issue is how are you going to enforce it. You can write this ordinance as extensive as you want, but if you cannot enforce it, it is worth nothing. Merrillat said it is our job to write it. It is up to the township board to determine how to enforce it.

Hefferan would like to know what it would cost to hire a company to monitor the weekly rentals in the township.

Brett Pharo sent comments and Hefferan will make sure the subcommittee has those as well.

Hefferan said he appreciates the rationale behind the six weeks. Six weeks is half of the summer and I hear what our residents are saying. We want to help people pay their taxes, but then we got overwhelmed by the big rental companies. If I had to decide today, I would say four weeks rather than six. The cost of permits should cover the cost of enforcement.

Cole said he does not have a problem with six weeks, but if you have a rental on both sides of you, your whole summer could be consumed if the rentals were staggered.

Lefebvre said enforcement is number one. We can set all sorts of parameters, but people may

find ways to circumvent them.

Lefebvre asked if it would be possible to jointly enforce with surrounding townships.

The subcommittee will set a date once Kingon returns from vacation. Weinzapfel will post the meeting.

2. Outdoor lighting Subcommittee:

The latest draft is version 3, dated November 13, 2018. We asked the township board for feedback and we did receive comments from Brett Pharo. Hefferan summarized his comments. He was not in favor of additional restrictions on people. No other comments were received. Cole asked if there is any overlap with the sign ordinance. Should that be reviewed? Hefferan believes the subcommittee will not meet again. His thought is for everyone to be attendance before calling for a public hearing. We will discuss this at the next meeting.

3. Event Barns Subcommittee:

The subcommittee did not meet last month. They will meet at 8:00am Tuesday January 22nd.

4. Election of Officers:

Election of Officers:

Nominations opened for Chair. Hefferan nominated for Chair.

Motion by Murphy to close nominations for Chair. Seconded by Merillat. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Murphy to approve Hefferan for Chair. Seconded by Lefebvre. **Motion carried.**

Nominations opened for Vice Chair. Lefebvre nominated for Vice Chair.

Motion by Murphy to close nominations for Vice Chair. Seconded by Merillat. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Hefferan to approve Lefebvre for Vice Chair. Seconded by Murphy. **Motion carried.**

Nominations opened for Secretary. Merillat nominated for Secretary.

Motion by Hefferan to close nominations for Secretary. Seconded by Murphy. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Hefferan to approve Merillat as Secretary. Seconded by Murphy. **Motion carried.**

5. Agenda for February:

1. Short Term Rentals Subcommittee.
2. Outdoor lighting Subcommittee.
3. Event Barns Subcommittee.
4. Set Agenda for March Meeting.

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Merillat