

Milton Township
Planning Commission
Unapproved Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2021

Members present: Chairman Hefferan, Peters, Lefebvre, Cole, Renis, Ford, and Merillat.

Also present: Six audience members.

Members absent: None.

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

Public Comment:

Jim Brewer said every time we meet with you we will have a court recorder recording everything. As you know we have a lawsuit we filed because your lawyer was obligated to brief you. There is a settlement offer on the table that expires November 15th. The settlement offer is compliant and transparent. We realize it puts you in a bind, but we have lost two seasons of rental income and have incurred legal expenses. Put yourself in our position. You have destroyed millions of dollars of value. We are the biggest employer and biggest taxpayer. I appeal to you tonight to do the right thing and discuss the settlement offer on the table.

Sharon Hill of Torch River Road said previously there were 179 letters written about the RV Park. 178 were against. There have been five runoff events. There is a lawsuit pending. There was a rain event on August 10/11 and silt covered Torch River Road. It came down and went up the road signs and into the wetlands and into the Torch River. This resulted in a documented EGLE violation. Soil Erosion took another round of remediation. The current permit is for remediation and it expires a year from now. The site is not stable. Yesterday we heard from the fire chief about inadequate firefighters and this is critical. We should not add to the population. Deny this next application.

Mac Whitehouse of Wabigama Drive thanked the commission for the work they have done. Now you have to deal with a new site plan and a new application. This must be reviewed on its own merit. It is worth noting how the application arrived. The developer has taken you to circuit court and the case is pending. The site is unstable right now. In addition, stabilization methods requested were not used. Damage of adjacent property has happened and the developer has not accepted responsibility. They have been cited by EGLE and he has ignored court orders about the remediation plan. There are shortcomings of the plan that need to be requested. The greenbelt is addressed in 117 311. This application does not provide a greenbelt screen at all. I would hope you would evaluate this application as before. The community will live with your decision.

Andy Blodgett, Attorney for the RV Park applicant said regarding the meeting next Monday night. Please use Kopriva to communicate. There has been some erosion problems and we need to finish this project. We want you guys to drive this project. Let Sarah know what you want to hear from us so we can get good information to you. We are in the dark about what you want to know for Monday night. We want to address your concerns on this. Please have Sarah reach out.

Jim Brewer mentioned a settlement offer. It is not a closed door matter. It is the application that we delivered October 8, if you say yes, we will dismiss the lawsuit. It is entirely proper and legal. This is the best way to resolve it. You should consider this on Monday night.

John Peal, owner of Torch River Marine said he has been through numerous applications. The process has fallen apart on this one. The Master Plan says to keep commercial use in the village zone. You will eventually have to approve a RV park on that site. You should look at what we could develop on that site. Look at your tactics of stalling. What happened to the public hearing and making a decision? You need to add to the ordinance that you must approve or deny an application within 90 days. That prevents special interest from stalling a project like this. Why would anyone do business in Milton Township? The reason the court reporter is here is because there has been two slanders already in this room.

Approval of Agenda:

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

Approval of meeting minutes dated October 12, 2021:

Corrections: Add Ford as present. Kingon was absent, but excused.

First line, first paragraph, correct Sara spelling.

Motion by Ford to approve the minutes as corrected. Seconded by Renis. **Motion carried.**

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

None.

Reports:

Zoning Administration Office Report:

Hefferan said Kopriva left a handout from Whitewater Township for review and comment.

Township Board Report:

Cole discussed Michigan legislation regarding removing local control over short term rentals.

There was some discussion about grooming of the trails for cross country skiing at Maplehurst.

Zoning Board of Appeals Report:

Hefferan said they have a meeting Thursday. There is a request for a variance. Hefferan is now the planning commission representative on the ZBA.

We lost board member Kopkau last month and Kingon submitted his resignation a few weeks ago. We thank him for his 12 years of service to this board.

Board members introduced themselves to each other now that we have two new members, Noel Peters and Joe Renis.

Steep Slopes Subcommittee:

Cole reviewed meeting minutes from a subcommittee meeting held on November 3, 2021. They are reviewing other ordinances that could apply. Next meeting is in January and the date is yet to be determined.

Future Meeting Considerations:

A. Special meeting November 15, 2021 at 6:00pm:

Hefferan discussed this meeting in regards to the special land use application for the RV Park. You have been provided a binder of information. Questions or comments must go through Kopriva.

B. 2022 Meeting Dates:

Hefferan discussed canceling the December regular meeting since there will be no subcommittee reports. Members agreed.

Hefferan discussed possible meeting dates for next year to better accommodate Kopriva's schedule.

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 8:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Merillat