

Milton Township
Planning Commission
Unapproved Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2022

Members present: Chairman Hefferan, Warner, Renis, Ford, and Merillat.

Members absent: Cole and Peters.

Also present: 5 audience members.

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

Public Comment:

Chris Grobbel of Grobbel Environmental & Planning Associates has submitted a request for a zoning amendment. He was retained by residents of the township. This is not on the agenda tonight. The concept is taking a look at the future land use map and future uses to determine the best location for an RV park.

A citizen thanked the board for their accommodations during the RV park discussions.

A citizen complimented the patience of the board.

Kopriva said she received correspondence that Antrim County is updating their master plan.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Renis to approve the agenda. Seconded by Ford **Motion carried.**

Approval of special meeting minutes dated January 3, 2022:

Page 8, correct spelling of Hefferan and correct spelling of Vermetten throughout.

Motion by Warner to approve the special meeting minutes dated January 3, 2022 as corrected. Seconded by Renis. **Motion carried.**

Approval of regular meeting minutes dated January 12, 2022:

Motion by Renis to approve the meeting minutes dated January 12, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Warner. **Motion carried.**

Approval of special meeting minutes dated January 24, 2022:

Page 4, correct spelling of Barr and change “long” to “along.”

Correct spelling of Vermetten throughout.

Motion by Ford to approve the special meeting minutes dated January 24, 2022 as corrected. Seconded by Warner. **Motion carried.**

Approval of special meeting closed session dated January 24, 2022:

Correct spelling of Vermetten throughout.

Motion by Ford to approve special meeting closed session dated January 24, 2022 minutes as corrected. Seconded by Warner. **Motion carried.**

Old Business:

a). Bylaw Review:

Kopriva presented the changes to the bylaws that were previously discussed. Commission members discussed the time recommendations for public comment and what can be at the discretion of the chair. Discussion of removing the questions for informational purposes only during the public hearing since this is not a part of other planning commissions. Discussion of conflict of interest in the bylaws. Kopriva will update and present agreed upon changes next month.

New Business:

a). Master Plan Survey:

Kopriva introduced Erick from Beckett & Raeder. He is working on the master plan citizen survey. At this time we are looking for your reaction to the questions and if additional topics need to be added. Right now there are about 36 questions. This survey would go online and provide a link. The township would also send out post cards and hard copies would be available at the township office. Ford suggested dividing the 65+ bracket further. Kopriva said the reason it is this way is because this is how the census is broken up. Ford asked about the time ranges on the second question as well. Hefferan asked about #11 and asked who would not say yes to that question. Erick said the point was to see how many people would want to provide discussion around the topic. Hefferan said the question is everyone is concerned about something, but what are they willing to do about it? How far are they willing to go? Hefferan said many people are concerned about enforcement. We do not have a police department. How important is enforcement to the people in the township? Would it be important enough to warrant paying for an enforcement officer? Renis also asked for a spot to ask residents what they see needs to be added to the master plan, such as tiny homes. Merillat said questions 9, 10, and 11 will not tell us anything we do not already know. Some questions have a response of, "I would like to know more." Erick said it indicates they do not have information. Merillat suggested using the language like "Don't know". On question 20, regarding what should be allowed in the AG zone, we should not ask about uses that you must allow. You can might say, regulate, but the state decides if some uses are allowed. Hefferan asked about the definition of agri-tourism. If we do not know what it means, I am not sure how a resident would be interpreting it. Kopriva said it would be nice to have the survey go out in the July tax bill so we would want to get it finalized by June. Warner said we may want to expand questions relating to affordable housing in the survey. Kopriva and Erick will revise and bring it back next month.

b). Zoning Ordinance Amendments:

1. ZBA Membership:

Kopriva said the ZBA was having a hard time getting all seven members together. Quorum is out of the full membership not members present at the meeting. You have to have four members present to grant a variance and all would have to vote in favor. We were thinking about reducing the number to five and having two alternates available. We have two members who go south during the winter. We are required to have three, five or seven members and you can have two alternates. This is up for discussion.

Don Anderson, the chair of the ZBA said he likes the number of seven. He said it makes the board more diverse and you have more interesting mindsets. We do not have that many meetings and hardly any in the winter. We remind people requesting variances that if we only have a certain number of members what the status is for the votes. If we wanted to look into alternates, that would be a good idea. These are tax paying people who own these properties and we are making decisions on how they use their land and we should have a board that has a wide variety of opinions. Five would be too few.

Kopriva said Torch has five and two alternates on their ZBA and it is really an issue of finding people to serve. Kopriva said it was a discussion she had in the office regarding how to get a full ZBA. She said we could add in the idea that we can have two alternates. They may be appointed and that would give them the option to fill the seats if someone is gone. No complaints have been made but it is important to hear cases in a timely manner.

Anderson said we should have more meetings than we have been having so members can be better prepared for when we do have a meeting. After we have a variance request, within 30 days after a decision, we need to have a meeting to approve the minutes. Kopriva said we can keep it at seven and add in two alternates.

Kopriva discussed other suggested changes. Commission members agreed with the additional changes.

2. Escrow Policy:

Kopriva wanted to clear up the language since she used it recently and found it difficult. Commission members discussed the changes. The amount would be set based on anticipated costs. What if the applicant does not agree with the estimated costs? It should be worked out between reasonable people. The township board could intervene if necessary.

Motion by Ford to accept the draft language as presented with the change to 117.2201 remaining as 7 members and not making changes to 117.2203, and to schedule a public hearing at the next regular meeting. Seconded by Warner. **Motion carried.**

Reports:

Zoning Administration Office Report:

Kopriva said the commission is required to present an annual report to the township board. Erick has created a draft annual report for 2021. Changes suggested were to list Lefebvre as vice chair listed in the membership and to clarify that the asterisk after a meeting date indicates a special meeting.

Motion by Hefferan to accept the draft report with changes and forward on to the township board as updated. Seconded by Ford. **Motion carried.**

We are up to 29 permits already this year. 14 were all for storage buildings at Ancient Mariner Stage 3 and we have had three land divisions. We will have an amendment application on the April agenda and we will finish up the draft survey.

Township Board Report:
No report.

ZBA Report:
Hefferan said there has been no meeting. They will meet in April.

Planning Commission Updates:

A. Steep Slope Committee

Subcommittee met last week and will meet in two weeks on March 31 at 8:30 am to continue discussions.

Hefferan discussed meeting when we have things to discuss and not meeting when we do not. Kopriva said in the near future, while working on the master plan, there will be a need to meet and then zoning updates after that. Renis said he would prefer regular meetings since we have new members. Warner agreed. Hefferan said we have a lot of discretion when it comes to the master plan. He hopes we have the level of interest in the master plan that we did in the RV Park. How do we adequately engage people at the front end?

8. Future Meeting Considerations

We will have the proposed amendment introduced tonight, the public hearing on amendments to chapters 22 and 23, the draft survey and the bylaws update in April.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Merillat