

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes of Regular Meeting June 17, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Roman at 7:01 P.M. via tele-conference.

2. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Roll call:	
Janet Chick	Present
Brad Cousino	Absent
Eamonn Dwyer	Present
Sam Iaquinto	Present
Cecilia Infante	Present
Larry Roman	Present
John Zarzecki	Present

Also present:
Building/Planning/Zoning Coordinator Mary Bird
Planning Consultant Paul Lippens, McKenna Associates
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the Community

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- **Motion:** Roman moved, Chick supported, to adopt the agenda as presented.
Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.

4. FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

David Gordon, Hellner Road, Chair of the Land Preservation Committee, commented on the importance of funding and preserving open space and parks, and asked about the date for the public hearing on marijuana permit applications.

5. CLARIFICATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Marihuana Facility Applications Update. Lippens reviewed highlights of his June 11th memo. In answer to a question he confirmed that a sixth application had been added to the list for public hearing, and in response to a request from Chick he said he would prepare a packet of materials for Commissioners about the applications as they currently stand.

8. REPORTS

8A. Board of Trustees

Chick reported that at meetings on May 26th and June 9th the Board voted to republish the intent to bond for the equalization basin, voted to sell 75 Barker Road, continued budget discussions, discussed the Building

Department deficit and possible solutions, and discussed and agreed that public hearings via tele-conference are appropriate.

8B. ZBA

Has not met since the last Planning Commission meeting.

8C. Staff Report

Nothing to report.

8D. Planning Consultant

Lippens said he anticipates getting feedback from the Board at their next meeting regarding potential changes to the marijuana ordinance.

8E. Parks and Recreation

Iaquinto reported the Committee will meet on Thursday, June 18th at 7:00 P.M. He noted there are plots still available in the Community Garden, and the Bark Park is open for public use.

8F. Downtown Planning Group

Infante reported the net meeting will be June 24th via Zoom.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9A. Discussion to Develop Zoom Public Hearings

Lippens noted the Township Board has indicated holding public hearings via tele-conference is appropriate in light of the continuing social distancing requirements due to the coronavirus pandemic. He recommended that tele-conference public hearings for the marijuana permit applications proceed given there are many more people who are interested in participating than could be accommodated in the meeting space. He said all applicants wish to move forward with the public hearings.

- **Motion #1:** Roman moved, Zarzecki supported, to rescind their June 3, 2020, motion, "that the public hearings noticed for June 18, 2020, be rescheduled at a later date when an open public meeting can be held and necessary public notice be given, based on the advice of the Township attorneys."

- **Motion #2:** Roman moved, Zarzecki supported, to have public meetings scheduled and to proceed via Zoom or regular meetings and reflect that in the public notice.

Chick reported that the Michigan Townships Association is gathering information from townships about their experience with tele-conferences to consider whether meeting should continue after the COVID-19 crisis either via tele-conference or in combination with in-person meetings.

**Northfield Township Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Held via tele-conference
June 17, 2020**

Iaquinto reported two citizens indicated to a Commissioner they would like to have public hearings held in person because of technical difficulties preventing them from participating via tele-conference. Dwyer noted that some residents do not have the ability to participate via tele-conference, and the Commission has regularly experienced technical difficulties with both audio and video. Infante said she it was good to hear applicants were willing to proceed via tele-conference, but she hopes the public do not feel they are being disadvantaged because hearings need to proceed, and the Township needs to be prepared to deal with those issues.

Roman said while there are minor technical difficulties, the Township Board has noted there have been more people participating in tele-conferences than at typical in-person meetings. He said people without tele-conferencing access can still contact Township officials by other means.

Zarzecki said these are unusual times, and while most people would prefer in-person meetings there is a need to proceed with the Township's business. Commissioners discussed ways to make sure the public can easily find the Zoom links to meetings, limiting the number of public hearings per meeting, and delaying deliberations to future meetings to allow the public to submit post-hearing comments.

Dwyer said while marijuana permit applications are being processed the needs of other businesses also must be given sufficient time and attention.

Motion #1 carried 6—0 on a roll call vote.

Motion #2 carried 6—0 on a roll call vote.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. MINUTES

- ▶ **Motion:** Roman moved, Infante supported, that the minutes of the June 3, 2020, regular meeting be approved as presented, and to dispense with the reading. **Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

12. SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Dawna Johns, 2009 Nollar Bend, asked what the capacity of participants is for tele-conferences and how the public can make comments. David Gordon asked about the timing of marijuana permit public hearings and Planning Commission action on the requests. Lippens and Commissioners provided that information.

13. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Dwyer said it is important to handle the public hearings right, not fast, and he does not feel any pressure to rush the process.

14. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

July 1, 2020, at 7:00 P.M. via tele-conference was announced as the next regular Commission meeting time and location.

15. ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Roman moved, Chick supported, that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

Prepared by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;

Wording added is underlined.

Adopted on _____, 2020.

Larry Roman, Chair

John Zarzecki, Secretary

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at <http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/>