

Schoolcraft Township Planning Commission

Minutes for: Monday, November 6, 2023

Commissioners:

Name	Present	Absent
Barry Visel (Chairman)	x	
David Aubry (Vice Chairman)	x	
Rich Bailey		x
Eric Jasiak	x	
Tamra Stafford	x	
Jim Jastifer	x	
Nathan Miersma	x	

Also present:

Name	Description
Don Ulsh	Township Supervisor
Brian Pittelko	Consultant, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

Call to order

Chairman Visel opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of agenda

Commissioner Stafford moved to approve agenda, supported by Commissioner Aubry. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Commissioner Jasiak motioned to approve the minutes of October 2, 2023 as presented. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Aubry. Motion carried 6-0.

Public comments / citizen time:

A citizen voiced concern over the ratio of non-conforming lakefront lots, highlighting the results of his personal research that almost no lakefront lots are 20,000 square feet or have 100' of frontage (minimum lot requirements per Article 20 of Schoolcraft Township zoning book). He stated that his research concluded that 106 of 240 properties with this zoning are lakefront properties, of which approximately 16% come close to zoning requirements by his estimations. As a result of their pre-existing condition as non-conforming properties, this results in approximately 45% of all property owners being required to pay \$2500 fees and submit any requests for changes to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The citizen stated that he doesn't believe this fee exists to be a source of income for the township. The same citizen highlighted that a "lake frontage zoning classification" appears to have existed for a period of time before being vacated as a result of planning commissions decisions in the past and requested that this topic be reconsidered for the reasons he outlined during the meeting.

Commissioner Visel and other planning commission members suggested that lakeside property should be a discussion topic for a future planning commission meeting, to specifically include zoning code considerations to reduce non-conforming properties and split-zone lots.

New business**1. Master Plan Update**

Schoolcraft Township demographics and projections were reviewed, including the key takeaway that Schoolcraft Township has grown at a faster rate than the county. This growth rate is projected to continue for the next decade or beyond.

W.E. Upjohn institute representative Brian Pittelko highlighted that, based on our demographics today and evidence suggesting that citizens prefer to stay in Schoolcraft Township even as grow older, increased senior living options should be considered in order to allow residents to continue to live in the community if/after they cannot remain in their homes.

The planning commission reaffirmed the primary goals for the Master Plan, including reiterating that existing goals and policies remain well aligned with the future goals of the township as represented by township survey results and the planning commission members.

Large-format Current and Future Land Use will be prepared and available during the next Planning Commission meeting to facilitate master plan discussions.

Old business:

None

Report from the Township Board

Commissioner Stafford provided a summary report of township board activities:

- The historical society requested funds for the underground railroad house, and the Township Board approved a \$10,000 grant with additional funding to be considered in 2024.
- The board approved an IT contract, an intergovernmental agreement with Kalamazoo County
- Schoolcraft library appointed a new library board member
- Vicksburg rocket football will be holding events at Swan Park in future seasons
- The board continued their discussion of appropriate/desired use of ARPA funds
- A new electronic sign will be placed in front of the township office

Report from the Zoning Board of Appeals:

None

Adjournment

Commissioner Visel adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at 6:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nate Miersma', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nate Miersma