

**Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting  
Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission  
7:00 PM February 23, 2022  
Crystal Lake Township Hall**

1. CALL TO ORDER at 7:00 pm by Chairman Greg Wright

2. ROLL CALL AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Commission Secretary Dr. Northway called the roll:

Present: Commission Chairman Greg Wright  
Commissioner Bill Herd  
Commissioner Mike Pasche  
Commissioner Dr. William Northway

Also Present: Zoning Administrator Tom Kucera  
Recording Secretary Jeannette Feeheley

Visitors: Sarah Ross  
Brenda Mead

3. CALL FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None presented.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: Zoning Administrator reported receiving a communication from Dr. Walt Franke of Third Coast Dental expressing a concern about the height of a proposed storage facility at the RV Park that might impact the view from his dental office.

5a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 17, 2021  
**Pasche moved that the Minutes of the November 17, 2021 Regular Meeting be approved as written. Wright seconded. All ayes. Minutes approved.**

5b. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2022

The Draft Minutes of the gathering of January 26, 2022 were dismissed because Commissioners learned, after the fact, that the Jan. 26th meeting did not have a quorum as only two members were physically present and a third by telephone, which the Commissioners unintentionally did not realize at the time had been disallowed from previous COVID allowances. Pasche said Draft Minutes that were taken therefore do not officially exist, and all business transacted that night did not happen. Commissioners corrected these matters at the Feb. 23, 2022 meeting, and, out of courtesy for attendees and those involved, asked that one matter that did not involve any action taken, the discussion regarding the RV Park Special Land Use Application – be provided not as Official Minutes but as notes, and that such notes be provided the regular email distribution list.

5c. PLANNING COMMISSION 2022-23 MEETING SCHEDULE

As the Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> meeting did not occur, it was necessary to take up at this meeting the 2022/23 Meeting Schedule.

**Pasche moved that the 2022-23 Planning Commission meeting schedule be at 7 pm the following dates: In 2022: February 23, March 23, April 27, May 25, June 22, July 27, August 24, September 28, October 26, November 16, and in 2023, January 25. Herd seconded. All ayes. Motion passed.**

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**To correct that no business had been conducted on Jan. 26 regarding Solar Energy, Pasche moved that item 9c on that matter be moved from Unfinished Business to New Business and that the requisite Public Hearing on such be held, as previously announced as a continuation, at this meeting. Herd seconded. All ayes, motion approved.**

**Wright moved approval of the proposed Agenda as amended. Northway seconded. All ayes. Amended Agenda approved.**

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Sarah Ross asked and was granted permission to speak later when her issue of interest would be taken up. Brenda Mead asked that the January 26<sup>th</sup> Minutes be approved as there was much participation. Much discussion ensued, with results as recorded above under 5a, 5b, and 5c.

8. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

- A. Chair Report: Chairman Wright reported that the Benzie County Planning Commission has been officially disbanded. Discussion.
- B. Zoning Administrator Report: Zoning Administrator Kucera reported that only one permit has been approved year to date, par for the course this time of year, and that he is working on other projects.
- C. Zoning Board of Appeals: Zoning Administrator referred to the request from the RV Park owner for a variance related to the number and size of accessory buildings they desire. The Ordinance limits such, so the RV Park would need a variance to build out accessory buildings beyond the 2000 aggregate square footage allowed by the Ordinance. The current bath house is 1900 square feet and the owner wishes to add a second bath house plus a 5000 square foot storage facility. To achieve such would require a variance to be issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Another variance request will be for a sign to exceed the maximum size allowed as the current sign is not very visible and hard to see by those who need to find the property from the road. These variance requests are scheduled for a 6 pm, March 10, 2022 Zoning Board of Appeals hearing here at Township Hall.

9. SOLAR ENERGY ORDINANCE, PUBLIC HEARING AND PLANNING COMMISSION DELIBERATION

Wright opened the Public Hearing at 7:25 pm. He noted that at the previous non-meeting of Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>, no member of the public had spoken on this matter. No member of the public asked to speak or communicate in any way on this date as well. Wright closed the Public Hearing at 7:26 pm.

Deliberations ensued among Commissioners. Herd said one comment he had provided had been addressed. Pasche had many questions about the document provided, leading to a conclusion that it had inadvertently been an old version, as it had gone through many revisions over the past year or two. Changes were discussed and it was agreed that they would be incorporated into a new document and put on the agenda for the next meeting.

## 10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. RV Park Special Land Use Permit Application

Sarah Ross, Civil Engineer for the Project, gave a review and presented site plans on an easel for all to see. She spoke of all the permits she had obtained from the many and various public agencies involved. She said the documents filed for the variance have all the information requested about the accessory buildings. She has again revised the proposed entrance improvement, per comments she had received. The revision would be a tree boulevard entrance with fence posts with ropes, per a nautical theme, on either side. Such will be sent digitally to Zoning Administrator. She said in operations like this, the 127 envisaged lots would provide the capital structure needed to provide the improvement desired and will satisfy the Bank. Herd asked the timeline for growth and height of trees. Discussion of these matters and of utilities and water and sewer ensued. Brenda Mead said many campers and residents cannot see the current entry sign on M115, making it difficult for all. Kucera said MDOT has been approached about having the sign in their 200 foot right of way on M115 and MDOT wants to see the Zoning Board variance first. Discussion on these matters and others ensued. Sarah Ross offered to answer any further questions.

Herd said he wants to see a street view of the proposed entrance. Ross said it was difficult to get a landscape contractor to provide such at this time but she would be glad to provide an engineering sketch. Herd said this is a Rural Preservation Area, not a commercial zone and there are no exceptions except for agriculture and the RV Park is not agricultural. He said they'll have to wrestle with these matters as well as how RV storage is treated in the rest of the township, and to make sure these matters are consistent with the Township Master Plan. Discussion ensued whether the Zoning Board of Appeals has the authority to approve a variance for the storage facilities, and Zoning Administrator explained that any variance would be subject to the Planning Commission granting of a Special Land Use Permit, along with any conditions imposed. Discussion about a chicken and egg situation that he has discussed with the township attorney. He also said a lighted sign would also have to conform to the Dark Skies Ordinance. Pasche commented to Ms. Ross that his concern, and perhaps other Commissioners, has a lot to do with the fact that the RV Park sits within the Rural Preservation District in the Township's Master Plan, and that rural preservation is their goal – he does not want people driving on M-115 to be given the impression that they are in a commercialized zone. He said our goal is to keep the look rural, not commercial.

### B. J. Ferrel Pre-application meeting request

Wright said Mr. Ferrel had been invited to appear but did not appear. Zoning Administrator said the proposed project would lie along George Street and Michigan Avenue where a small structure currently sits. Owner wants to divide the land into three parcels, with the third parcel with six lots of 100 feet wide and 300 feet in length and turn it from RP2.5 to R1 zoning. The lots would be hooked to City of Frankfort water. Wright said he would rather see a plan that conforms to our zoning. Discussion ensued about authority involved in changing zoning.

11. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Discussion re: Capital Improvement Plan

Wright wants to know if it is reasonable to move this item towards a summer meeting when more residents will be here. He wants to bring a new element into using the Plan as a vehicle to bring forth ideas or projects. He said the Township Supervisor has asked residents to give ideas how to spend money coming from the federal government, and Wright would like to develop that more. Discussion of possible projects ensued, in particular the long-known issue of the township hall being inadequate and now possibly fixable, given the influx of money. Broadband inaccessibility within the township was also discussed as beyond the capability of a township to fix. Much discussion ensued.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

12. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

13. ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Wright adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeannette Feeheley, Recording Secretary

Meeting of Zoning Board of Appeals on variances requested for proposed RV Park expansion  
6 pm, Thursday, March 10, 2022, at Crystal Lake Township Hall

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Planning Commission:  
7 pm, Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at Crystal Lake Township Hall.

Attachments:

- Email received Jan. 24 from Commissioner Herd
- Email received Jan. 26 from Commissioner Northway
- Email dated Feb. 15 from Mr. Ferrel on George Street Project
- RV Park revised entrance plan submitted Feb. 23, 2022
- Communication of Feb. 16, 2022 from Dr. Franke on RV Park proposed structure height
- Notes on RV discussion held on January 26, 2022, at Township Hall