

**Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission**  
**7:00 PM March 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: Brenda Mead  
Dave Wynne

3. CALL FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None presented.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: None reported as received.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 23, 2022  
**Wright noted that attendee Sarah Ross's name had been misspelled and that the Minutes should be amended with that correction. He then moved that the Minutes of the February 23, 2022 Regular Meeting be approved as amended. Pasche seconded. All ayes. Minutes approved.**

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Wright moved approval of the proposed Agenda. Pasche seconded. All ayes. Agenda approved.**

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Wright welcomed attendees Brenda Mead and Dave Wynne and asked if there were public comments at this time. None offered.

8. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

A. Chair Report: Wright stated that, due to misunderstandings about the terminology and roles of the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals that the Zoning Board of Appeals should never be referred to as the Zoning Board, only with its full name of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

B. Zoning Administrator Report: Zoning Administrator Kucera reported having received two permit applications. He had also received an email follow-up from a property owner wishing rezoning of property along George Street just east of Michigan Avenue. He said he talked with the party about possibly requesting a variance rather than requesting rezoning. The party wanted information on the process to request rezoning.

C. Zoning Board of Appeals:

Zoning Administrator reported the scheduled March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of Zoning Board of Appeals did not have a quorum due to illness of one of the Regular Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals. As it had been scheduled and posted, the one Regular Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the one Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals did hold a meeting out of courtesy to prospective attendees but did not make any decisions. The meeting is rescheduled for 6 pm April 7, 2022, at Crystal Lake Township. The purpose will be to address the request of the Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park for two variances.

Wright commented on the difficulty inherent on variances being sought before the proposed expansion is taken up by the Planning Commission and that he believed the processes put in place by the Zoning Administrator were correct. Herd questioned what grounds there are for a variance; that he does not think a variance is the way to go, and that it would be in the township's and the property owner's interest to use a different process. Zoning Administrator mentioned he had consulted the township attorney on this question. Much discussion ensued among Commissioners and the Zoning Administrator about various possible ways of handling the issues. After much more discussion, Herd offered to get together with the Zoning Administrator to see if they could agree on making the wording more accurate. He said they would report back jointly to the rest of the Commissioners.

9. A. SOLAR ENERGY ORDINANCE: FINAL REVIEW

Pasche had questions about some of the wording of the proposed solar energy ordinance. Also, there was discussion on whether "commercial" is inadvertently allowed or not, as the proposed Ordinance addresses only residential use. Wright said that if it is not in the Ordinance, it is not allowed, similar to wind farms. Zoning Administrator was asked the process. He answered that once the Planning Commission approves the proposed Ordinance, it goes to the township's attorney for legal review, then to the Crystal Lake Township Board of Trustees. The Zoning Administrator thought it not necessary to send to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners since that Board had dissolved their County Planning Commission but he would check on that to make sure.

**Herd moved that the proposed Solar Energy Ordinance be sent to the Crystal Lake Township Board of Trustees along with the recommendation of the Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission that the Crystal Lake Township Board of Trustees approve it. Northway seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion passed.**

B. RV PARK SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT APPLICATION: REVIEW

Zoning Administrator provided an 18-page packet of additional information that he had recently been provided by Practical Engineers, Inc., on behalf of the Applicant. The packet shows various views of the entryway and site and proposed landscaping. He also said that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has tentatively agreed to allow the sign in their Right of Way. He said the proposed sign is 50 square feet while the current sign is 36 square feet, and that the maximum currently allowed, without a variance, is 40 square feet.

Pasche asked for a timeline of the images presented in the packet and whether the proposed trees represent five or twenty-five years growth or what? He also asked if the trees rendered will match what they are asked to approve.

Attendee Brenda Mead said they have been in Cadillac to a tree farm there and that twelve and fourteen foot pines will go on the berm. She also said the sign light will be mounted on top of the sign and shine down rather than up so there will be no issue with the Dark Sky requirement, that all lighting will hit only the sign.

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners and Zoning Administrator on various issues involved.

10. NEW BUSINESS: None.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

12. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

13. ADJOURNMENT: Wright adjourned the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeannette Feeheley, Recording Secretary

Meeting of the Crystal Lake Township Zoning Board of Appeals on variances requested by the RV Park, variances which are different from but relative to a separate requested proposal for an RV Park expansion that involves a different process to be taken up at some point by the Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission: 6 pm, Thursday, April 7, 2022, at Crystal Lake Township Hall.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission: 7 pm, Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at Crystal Lake Township Hall.