

Minutes of Monthly Meeting
Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission
7:00 PM May 22, 2024
Crystal Lake Township Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER at 7:01 pm by Chair Greg Wright

2. ROLL CALL AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Planning Commission Secretary Dr. Bill Northway called the roll:

Present: Commission Chair Greg Wright
Commissioner Lee Ewing
Commissioner Bill Herd
Commissioner David Spragens
Commissioner Bill Northway

Also present: Zoning Administrator Tom Kucera
Recording Secretary Jeannette Feeheley

Chairman Wright welcomed a room full of visitors. The following signed the sign-up sheet:

Roger Mix
Brenda Mead
James Eggli
Mark Eggli
Mike Heitzleman
Doug Mansfield
Elizabeth Heitzleman
Joe Whitsett
Judy Grant
Abbie Ellsworth
Mary Pitcher
Barbara Drew
Mary Hughes
Christine Decker
David Decker
Terry & Linda Frysinger
Jo Pace
Robert Renwick
Sidney Mueller
Jim Niederhofer
Lonnie Davis
Ann Mayo
Connie Black-Pond
Patrick Pond
Fred McGill
Sofia Costa
Jennifer Costa

3. CALL FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST: There was none.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: None.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF April 24, 2024

Commission Chairman Wright moved that the draft minutes of the April 24, 2024 meeting be approved. Commissioner Herd seconded. All Ayes. Minutes approved.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Wright moved that the draft agenda for tonight be approved. Commissioner Ewing seconded. All ayes. Agenda approved.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Wright asked members of the public to hold their comments until the second opportunity on the agenda for Public Comments.

8. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

A. Chair Report: Chairman Wright reported that Commissioner Mike Pasche had resigned his position on the Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission, and Mr. David Spragens was appointed by the Township Board to take Mr. Pasche's place. Commissioner Spragens is a former attorney with experience in planning and zoning.

B. Zoning Administrator Report:
Zoning Administrator Kucera said the draft work paper for short term rentals is going to the attorney for his review. The plan is to hold a joint meeting with the Township Board on the issue when the document is ready. In another matter, that is, the status of Roger Mix's RV Park in regard to the bond required on his property, follow-up has been received regarding conditions the RV Park was to undertake. Commissioner Herd will be reviewing that status with Kucera.

C. Zoning Board of Appeals:
Kucera reported a request for a variance on a property on South Shore has been received and a hearing on that application will be held at 6 pm May 30, 2024, here at Township Hall. It concerns a request for a variance of certain setbacks that are required by Ordinance.

9. CAMP NEARBY SLUP APPLICATION REVIEW

Zoning Administrator Kucera said he was starting to work on preparing the Staff report on this application but was delayed by illness. He is studying the glamping units, accessory buildings, tent sites, and other details relative to the Ordinance. He will be contacting Doug Mansfield of Mansfield Land Use Consulting on many specific details. Kucera may or may not be able to have a draft Staff Report complete by the June meeting. The proposed Park lies within the Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay so must be looked at for compliance with the Overlay, including the issue of density of dwellings. Just prior to tonight's meeting, he received a letter from the Township Attorney. As he just received it, he has not been able to review the letter so he cannot yet comment it. Also, there are details on the drawings on the proposal that need some clarification, and he is working to get that. If the Commissioners have any additional questions you wish me to research, please let me know.

Commissioner Herd asked what is the procedure? Must we wait till the application is complete and reviewed before we can discuss? Kucera answered the Commissioners may discuss the Proposal at any time. Commissioner Northway asked if Kucera would be sending his Staff Report to them by email before they next meet, and Kucera answered he hopes the timing allows.

Chairman Wright next asked the Applicants to introduce themselves.

Doug Mansfield of Mansfield Land Use Consultants said the Heintzleman family is here tonight. After the last meeting here at the Township, we compiled a bullet point list from all the comments received and have begun working on them. We also reached out to the twelve adjacent neighbors with an invitation to meet with them in the next few days to go over their particular concerns. We sent the letter by Certified Mail and got notification that eight of our invitations were received by the recipients. We heard from one neighbor today and look forward to meeting with that neighbor. Hopefully, other neighbors will respond to our invitation. We look forward to Zoning Administrator Kucera's Report and are working on relabeling some terms to be commensurate with the language of this particular Township's Ordinance. We've also provided Tom the required letter from Mrs. Heintzleman's father as the owner of the property. We anticipate further modifications to our Proposal in consideration of Tom's review.

Applicant Elizabeth Heintzleman introduced herself and her husband Mike. She said they plan to be here for all future meetings on their proposal.

Mike Heintzleman introduced himself and emphasized again how anxious we are to meet with all the neighbors to do what we can to meet your concerns and establish a good buffer zone. We want to do right by you.

Elizabeth Heintzleman said she and her husband Mike will be running the business. She pointed out her Dad Joe who was sitting nearby, and in whose name the property is owned.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Wright next asked attendees to please give their name and residence if making a comment. Also, please sign the sign-in sheet if you have not already done so, and please be respectful of all concerned.

An individual rose to speak. He identified himself as Terry but as his name did not appear on the sign-in sheet, the spelling of his last name is unknown for recording purposes. He passed to the Commissioners photos he took which apparently showed Onkeonwe Road. He is against the planned entry on that road. He said he believes it is no accident that the entry is right next to the public access on Crystal Lake. He said traffic fatalities had already occurred in that vicinity. He is adamantly against that entry location.

Connie Black-Pond asked why the Applicant's Web Site claims the campground is "coming soon" and why it lists a "physical location"? She feels it is presumptuous to state these things on their Web Site before their application has been approved.

Mike Heintzleman responded that the Web Site is simply a landing page and they do not presume anything other than they are very excited that his wife's father has purchased the property and they are excited about their plans and involvement, if their plans are approved.

Connie Black-Pond continued to object and ask why is it being marketed as a done deal? Mike Heintzleman said he would be happy to make appropriate changes to the Web Site, but there are certain things that must be done when making an application, such as registering as an LLC, providing a description of their plans, and so on.

Connie Black-Pond said it's not accurate.

Mike Heintzleman said I hear you.

Chairman Wright clarified that public comments are just that. They are not to be used to engage the Applicant or the Commissioners in a back and forth.

Fred McGill asked is there a set of criteria by which the Commissioners make their decision – which would be available to the public?

Chairman Wright responded the Ordinance is the governing guide. Anyone interested should look at the Ordinance.

Zoning Administrator Kucera added that Articles 16 and 14 in the Ordinance have a list of questions that any applicant must answer. This Applicant has provided answers to these questions, and all are viewable by the public. *(Note: All these documents, including the Application, are available on the Crystal Lake Township Web Site.)*

Ann Mayo said what Terry said about the speed on that road is correct. She herself enters the area behind Casey Road. The proposed entry is not good for a trailer park. Also, she objected that there's no sewer there – it's all septic. It's all going to go into the ground – it could get into the lake and our wells.

Sofia Costa said she already shares a beach with the DNR boat launch and has experienced problems with those visitors already. She said now there will be additional intoxicated people.

Jo Pace said these incoming crowds – people that fish – if they leave three trailers there that's already a lot. How can a campground use an area that's not that big? The Crystal Lake Watershed Association has rules about boats going into the lake. Where would the trailers go?

Sofia Costa said she does see trash from the already existing DNR boat launch and it comes onto her beach. Where will these campers put their trash?

Jim Neiderhofer said you are in a room full of people who don't want this. On your Web Site, it is clear that you believe in protecting the environment. Please consider doing something different with that site. I'd rather you put in four homes on that property than campsites.

Unidentified woman said you seem like a nice couple but this is not camping. Camping should be in the woods, not in a residential area.

Elizabeth Heintzleman said she thinks there's some terminology that should be clarified regarding the difference between trailer parks, campsites, etc.

Jim Neiderhofer said your clientele will typically have kayaks. How are they going to get them down there, if not with trailers. The traffic speed there is dangerous. If you lived on these streets, you would not be happy.

Mike Heintzleman said we are not going to be providing fishing tackle or that sort of thing.

Abby Ellsworth asked who is going to mitigate our traffic safety concerns?

Doug Mansfield responded that 75 years ago the State of Michigan established that the responsibility for decisions regarding public safety on roads within the State of Michigan would henceforth be held by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the County Road Commissions. The State gave these units of government that responsibility and the authority to implement their decisions. He said his job as consultant to this proposal is to provide to the Planning Commission the decisions that have been made by MDOT and the Road Commission in regard to this proposal.

Terry (unidentified last name) spoke again saying five or six years ago he went to MDOT about the passing lane onto Shorewood and yet it is still a blind spot. He said MDOT isn't the answer. They didn't take care of it back then. We can't rely on MDOT for our safety. These are nice people who are making this application but my kids and my wife are nice people too. Every time I leave Frankfort I have to be afraid of that road.

Sofia Costa said the previous owner of the property had all her dogs and cats killed on that road. Who is responsible?

An unidentified individual said that not all the cats were killed and some remain.

Zoning Administrator Kucera said we are investigating all these matters.

Unidentified woman said she is at the Fitness Center and hopes that the Applicants will encourage people to come to the Fitness Center and other local establishments rather than putting in their own store.

Mike Heintzleman was asked how to get in touch with him for the tours they are offering. He gave an email address of <Mike@CampNearby.com>. Zoning Administrator Kucera also offered to be a contact for anyone wanting a tour. The Heintzlemans will be here and offering tours until next Wednesday.

After all attendees had finished making comments, Wright thanked everyone for attending.

Commissioner Spragens added that there will be a Public Hearing on this matter at which the public will get an additional opportunity to comment.

11: OTHER BUSINESS: None

12. ADJOURNMENT: All business concluded, Wright adjourned the meeting at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeannette Feeheley, Recording Secretary

Next Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting:
7 pm, Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at Crystal Lake Township Hall