

Hamilton Township Planning Commission
Hamilton Township Hall
July 22, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearing and Special Planning Commission Meeting

PRESENT: Steve Petersen, Sherry DeLoach, David Cerven, Rich Conway and John Young, William Lawson arrived at 7:25 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Bob May, Zoning Administrator
Robin Young, Recording Secretary

GUESTS: 8 guests

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Petersen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Conway requested that the following be added under Old Business:
Motion to distribute draft Joint Master Plan to the Hamilton Township Board for consent.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda as amended by DeLoach/2nd by Conway. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes for the June 10, 2024 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve minutes with amendment by Conway/2nd by DeLoach. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Limited Public Comment

Tyler Augst from MSU Extension gave a presentation and handouts to the Commissioners for upcoming programs they are hosting.

Deanna Cousineau spoke about the problems she is having with short-term rentals (“STR”) around her lake home. Numerous Commissioners explained that if there is something illegal or threatening occurring, she should call law enforcement immediately. Petersen stated that the Planning Commission is working on an ordinance for STR properties.

Brian Smith spoke about the continuous problems he is seeing with STRs around his home on the lake.

Joe Landblun asked about single-family dwelling zoning around the lake and fire control capabilities. Conway suggested that he attend the next Decatur/Hamilton Fire Department meeting for any questions he had regarding fire control.

6. Public Hearing for Proposed Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Shipping Containers and Accessory Buildings

The public hearing was opened at 7:30. May gave an overview of the proposed amendments to the ordinance. There was no public comment. The public hearing was closed at 7:34 p.m.

7. Old Business

a. Vote on Proposed Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Shipping Containers and Accessory Buildings

Motion by Petersen/2nd by Conway to approve text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Shipping Containers and Accessory Buildings to send to the Hamilton Township Board. Young requested a roll call vote.

Yes: DeLoach, Cerven, Petersen, Lawson and Conway

No: Young

Motion passed.

b. Update on STR Ordinance

May stated the township attorney (“attorney”) had given him two sample ordinances from St. Joseph and Fabius for the Commissioners to review. Conway noted that the Fabius ordinance had numerous items that Hamilton Township needs to consider, as follows:

- Registration
- Proof of Ownership
- Occupancy Limits
- Zoning Compliance
- Waste Compliance
- Pets
- Trash
- Camp Fires
- Noise Monitoring
- Parking for Tenants
- Owner Responsibility

Young suggested that STR properties be required to have someone that lives in the area and can enforce the ordinance requirements so that Hamilton Township does not have to employ or contract someone to do that. He also suggested being able to limit the amount of STR properties that Hamilton Township allows each year. He noted that he had given May an ordinance from Michigamme Township to give to the attorney for review after the last meeting in June. He stated that if that ordinance met legal requirements per the attorney, it would be a more comprehensive one to work from. May said he had not given it to the attorney and would do so.

Young also stated that he would like the ordinance to include all zoning districts in Hamilton Township, not just lake property.

Conway explained that the Health Department was testing Lake of the Woods water. He noted they were considering putting in a public sewer system and if that is approved then STR properties should be required to switch from a private septic to the public system.

Conway stated that he would also like a tax and yearly inspections on STR properties.

A sub-committee was formed to review STR ordinances and report back to the Board for approval at the September meeting. Members of that committee are: Lawson, Young and Cerven.

c. Update on Cell Tower Amendment

May stated that he has not gotten anything together and will bring a rough draft to the September meeting.

d. Planning Commission Bylaws

Young noted that each of the Commissioners had been emailed a draft of the proposed bylaws prior to the meeting. He gave an overview of what the sub-committee had discussed.

Conway asked for a motion be made to accept the bylaws. Petersen stated that he had not read them before the meeting because he only gets emails on his phone. Conway suggested that a special planning commission meeting was needed in August to discuss and pass the bylaws. He also suggested that bi-monthly meetings should be considered to be able to address issues in a timely fashion. Numerous Commissioners agreed that quarterly meetings were delaying issues and bi-monthly meetings should be held to efficiently discuss, approve and forward items to the Hamilton Township Board.

Motion by Lawson/2nd by Young to hold a Special Planning Commission meeting for Monday, August 12 at 6:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Distribution of draft Joint Master Plan to the Hamilton Township Board for comment.

Conway explained that the Planning Commission was required to make a motion to forward the draft Joint Master Plan to Hamilton Township Board. He stated that there would be another joint meeting scheduled in the future to discuss the draft.

Motion by DeLoach/2nd by Lawson to distribute the draft Joint Master Plan to Hamilton Township Board for comment. Motion passed unanimously.

8. New Business

None

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Lawson/2nd by Young. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Electronically Submitted By:
Robin Young, Recording Secretary