

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 15, 2023

Chairman Larry Shaffer called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry Shaffer, Lou Lundquist, Jenny Irvine, Nancy Grizwold, Christine Lundquist, Phil Bontrager, Jeff Cuthbertson (via zoom).

AGENDA: The agenda was approved on a motion by Christine with support by Nancy.

MINUTES: Minutes of the May 11, 2023 meeting were approved on a motion by Phil with support by Lou.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Larry read into record letters received related to development of the former North Shore lodge property. Letters in favor of the development were received from:

- Bill & Cathy Egerer
- Jeannie Kain
- Lewis (Mike) & Sheri Bates
- Janet Sigwart
- Robert & Carol Thompson

A letter opposed was received from Gary & Anna Wood (Woods Resort) expressing concerns about competing business and lack of onsite management planned for the site.

Jeff Cuthbertson reiterated his concerns expressed at last month's meeting and noted the Commission has the right to stipulate conditions for property development that could include onsite management.

Paul Dame asked questions about nonconforming class A & B, noting that the Commission needs to be mindful of what could happen if the business fails.

COASTAL RESILIENCY GRANT: Larry introduced Barry Hicks (attending via zoom) to discuss the Coastal Resiliency Grant, funded through EGLE. Barry reviewed the power point presentation he put together related to the Bay in Grand Marais, showing changes over time since the 1930's and providing information about water current and sand flow and buildup.

Chris Siegwart, an engineer who worked on the breakwall project indicated the sand buildup at the south end of the new breakwall was anticipated.

Lou Lundquist noted community concerns about whether there is enough water flow in the Bay.

Jeff asked about who controls the Bay (e.g. Army Corps of Engineers, Township, EGLE, etc.).

Christine asked about sand buildup on the west side of the pier coming into the Bay and if we need to be concerned it will build up to the end of the structure.

Phil asked how much more the south shore of the Bay was going to build up before the Bay stabilizes.

Rod Lowe noted that ice buildup in winter will likely keep the sand from completely closing off the south end of the new breakwall.

Larry asked if the final report could answer these questions and provide the Township with ideas for protecting the Bay. He thanked Barry for his presentation and time this evening.

ZONING ORDINANCE: Larry introduced Pat Coleman from “North of 45” who has been contracted by the Township to assist with updating the zoning ordinance. Pat noted that he had read the current zoning ordinance and had provided a copy with highlighted items for discussion and/or correction. He noted that, as with many communities, he understood upcoming changes may need to address items such as ST rentals, affordable housing, bay protection, camping on lots, conditional use considerations, solar & wind energy, & sexually oriented business. He asked if there were concerns about cannabis shops moving in and Lou indicated the Township has not addressed the issue. A member of the audience indicated that he was aware of someone looking for acreage for growing cannabis and opening a shop in the area, so the Township may not want to wait to take action.

Jeff asked about nonconforming use issues and how we should proceed to review the issues.

Larry noted that standards for downtown construction were needed to maintain the character of the downtown area. He noted restrictions on things like phone tower placement were necessary, too.

Christine noted the need for height restrictions on buildings near both the Bay and Lake Superior shoreline.

Jeff asked if there is anything that can be done within zoning to assist in dealing with snowmobile and 4-wheeler traffic. Pat noted that roads in Grand Marais are maintained by the County, so any restrictions would likely have to be approved at the County level.

Phil would like to see conditional use issues condensed between zones.

Pat noted standards should be set for each conditional use.

Christine noted that potential changes noted in the Master Plan need to be part of this discussion, and asked that Pat be provided a copy of the Master Plan if he does not already have it.

Phil asked about parking issues, business, and expansion around the highway. An audience member noted that commercial/industrial use options on the highway need to be better spelled out. He noted his desire to open an automotive garage but hesitancy to proceed due to potential zoning issues.

The Township Clerk noted there are areas in the Township of which many are not aware. Jenny suggested that we may need to visit some of these if they pose potential issues.

Larry asked about the importance of a zoning map, noting the Master Plan includes some potential mapping.

Christine expressed a desire to maintain the character of the community while encouraging/allowing growth.

Larry noted that the Planning Commission may need to meet more than once per month in the immediate future due to issues on the table. After asking about date issues from the Commission, he suggested we plan to meet on both July 20 and July 25. One meeting would primarily be about the "Northshore Lodge" property development and the other would relate more to work on the zoning ordinance.

OTHER: An audience member asked about a trolley that is bringing visitors to town from Munising and where they are allowed to park. Few people were aware this was happening, and the Township Clerk indicated she would look into it and get back to the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Nancy Grizwold announced they she was resigning from the Commission due to extensive travel plans keeping her from being able to fully participate. Larry thanked her for her service to the community. The Township Clerk indicated she would place an ad in the local paper for a new member. She indicated that this member needs to be a registered voter in Burt Township.

Jenny asked if we were still meeting on June 22. Larry indicated that as we have not received any updates related to the proposed development of the Northshore property, there was no reason to meet.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Christine with support by Jenny to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.