

Draft

Douglass Township Planning Commission

3521 W. McBrides Rd

Stanton, MI 48888

989-762-8014

Regular Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2023

7:00 pm

**Call to order:** 7 pm by Chairman Rick Baldwin

**Pledge Of Allegiance:** recited

**Roll Call: Present:** Kathy Craig, Matt Moorman, Rick Baldwin, Mike Swan, Jon Bailey, Eric Tester. Absent: Melissa Bannen

**Approval of agenda items:** Eric Tester made a motion to approve the agenda as provided, seconded by Mike Swan. Ayes: 6 nays: 0 Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes from September 20, 2023 special meeting:** Jon Bailey made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 20, 2023 special meeting as written, seconded by Eric Tester. Ayes: 6 nays: 0. Motion passed.

**Public Comments on agenda items:** public comments opened and closed at 7:03 pm, as there were no comments offered on agenda items.

**New Business**

Zoning Board of Appeals- variance issues:

- **pole barns( accessory buildings) on vacant properties:** Rick Baldwin reported that there have been 13 variances granted over the past four years because they are being denied under ordinance 2.02.5 because accessory buildings cannot be in the front yard, and a vacant property does not have a front yard. (This applies only to residential zoned areas). It also has to be aesthetically compatible with the primary residence, which does not exist. PC discussed wording to address the issue, size of lot determining size of residence/pole barn, requiring site plans for pole barns designating a future residence, requiring pole barn to be built to the side or rear of future dwelling, and the differences that might be required around lakes. Rick reports that most proposed plans have potential dwelling sites along with pole barn plans. PC reached consensus that for rural estate, medium density, and low density residential, the width of the house plus the setbacks constitutes the front yard, potential primary dwelling plan will be required, and the pole barn/accessory building will be required to be set to the side or rear of the potential dwelling. For the Lake residential zones the PC reached consensus that it needs to be looked at differently because of the location and size of lots. Some of the vacant lots would not be large enough for future building sites, or well and septic. Lake issues may have to go variance.
- **Lake properties:** better description of if the front or back yard is lake side. Currently in the ordinance book, a front yard is the roadside and the rear yard is the lake side. In ch.2.02.A.5, it reads that one can have an accessory building in the front yard

(roadside). In 2.16.A, it requires storage to be behind the front face (which is interpreted as having to store things in the backyard also known as the lakeside). Discussion involved defining a front yard as the side touching the street, changing the storage wording to no storage on the lakeside, changing the front yard to lakeside and not allowing storage in the front yard, in 2.16.C, take LR out of heading and add a "D" not allowing storage in front yard except for LR, or leave as written in ordinance book and let it go to variance.

- **Height of pole barns:** the height of pole barns in residential zones comes up to the ZBA often. In 2.02.A.6, it currently reads that pole barns have a max sidewall height of 14 feet and a 20 ft peak limit. The issue is that this does not allow enough clearance for campers, boats, etc. The PC discussed that if allowed to go too high, there would be attempted living quarters put in, and that violates other sections of the ordinance. Leaving it as is makes it so that people have to leave campers and boats outside, which violates other sections. It was brought up that the original intent of the ordinance was to keep accessory buildings compatible aesthetically with primary residences, and to not allow occupancy. Consensus was reached that increasing height of sidewalls to 16 feet and the peak to 25 feet could be acceptable.
- **Granny houses/tiny homes:** There are issues surrounding occupancy, square footage, and future resale. The PC agreed to table for now.
- **Types of siding:** steel siding is not allowed under 2.06.A, requiring variance request. Should we allow it? PC agreed to table for now.
- **Motor homes:** related to height of pole barns, and long term occupancy. PC will discuss at a later date.
- **Cabins/Camping:** this was discussed before the PC began working on the wind issue. It involved permits for a set amount of time, and periodic inspections. PC tabled for now.
- **Noise ordinance:** We have a noise ordinance, written many years ago. We need to determine how to enforce it. Questions came up about a county noise ordinance and the possibility of using it, and if the wind ordinance decibel levels would be related to that.
- Further discussion ensued about holding a public hearing to get resident input on the first three issues, and to have a special meeting to keep discussing the others. Rick Baldwin, Kathy Craig, Mike Swan, Eric Tester, Matt Moorman and Jon Bailey were all in agreement to hold the hearing and special meeting. Eric reported that the board voted to allow us extra meetings so we could hold them.

Eric Tester made a motion to hold a public hearing on November 29, 2023 at 7pm regarding pole barns on vacant property, height of pole barns, and definition of front yard/rear yard of lakes. Motion seconded by Mike Swan. Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion passed.

Kathy Craig made a motion to hold a special meeting immediately following the public hearing on November 29, 2023 to review other potential ordinance items. Motion seconded by Eric Tester. Ayes:6 Nays: 0. Motion passed.

### **Committee Reports**

- Eric Tester Board Liaison: Will take information from tonight back to the board on Wednesday for their next meeting.

- Dave Kelsey Zoning Administrator: Reported that there have been 4 applications for permits. They are all for pole barns. One has been denied and has applied for a variance.
- **Old Business:** none

**Public Comments** opened at 8:54 pm

Citizen	Comments
Linda Reynolds	If there is a citation, does the board get notified? (Dave K. replied he gets the summons as township representative). Who makes the decisions? (Dave K. replied that the magistrate will set fine/court costs/time limits). Regarding the change to steel: there are some higher grades than others, and what about stone or fake stone? Clifford lake is mentioned a lot, other lakes should be included as well. If buildings are on the lakeside already, could they be grandfathered in?
Sara Beechy	On the storage for lakes: some people pull boats out and store them. Swim docks as well. Clarification is needed on what is allowed or not allowed for storage. Concerned on where to store stuff if not allowed on the lakeside.
Gina Moorman	Question on grandfathering in some of the accessory buildings. Are there measurements for sheds? Some are dollhouses for storage. (Jon Bailey suggested we define storage, such as winter storage).
Larry Engel	He has heard alot about lake problems, don't forget him as a rural area. There used to be all cottages and now there are mansions selling for a million dollars.

**Public comments** closed at 9:06 pm.

**Further commission discussion**

- Feedback for Eric to take to the board: Eric will take the Carr rezoning and the public hearing/special meeting information to the board. Kathy will email the info to Cindy on the Carr rezoning.

**Next meeting date:** November 29 after the public hearing.

**Adjourn:** Eric Tester made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Swan. Ayes: 6 Nays: 0. Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Craig  
 Douglass Township Planning Commission Secretary

