

**Lake Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2024
4988 W. Kinde Rd, Caseville MI 48275**

Unapproved Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 by Siver at the Lake Township Hall.

Roll call: Keith Hoffman, Bob Siver, Tim Quinn, Matt Pryor, present; Nicole Collins absent.

Supervisor, Valerie McCallum, Supervisor, as well as one (1) virtual guest from Fresh Coast Planning present.

Siver proposed an addition to the agenda for Hoffman to provide a brief synopsis of the Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBA”) meeting held on October 24, 2024 under **Old Business**.

Siver asked if there was no objection, to change the order of the agenda; Mr. Greg Ransford from Fresh Coast Planning was invited to join virtually to introduce himself and explain the services available. Siver suggested letting Ransford go first so as to not take up too much of his time.

Motion by Hoffman to approve the agenda with the addition of a Zoning Board of Appeals discussion under **Old Business** and to allow Ransford from Fresh Coast Planning to move up on the agenda, seconded by Quinn. All ayes – passed.

Public Comments: None

New Business:

Fresh Coast Planning – Ransford thanked the PC for the invitation. Ransford stated he has a Bachelor’s and Masters from Grand Valley State University in public administration and has been in this field for 22 years. Ransford stated he formed the company in 2017 and has five (5) employees and his services range from planning and zoning administration, advising Planning Commissions (“PC”), ZBAs and Boards of Trustees (“BOT”). Ransford further stated that they write ordinances all the time, whether it’s zoning ordinances amendments, map amendments, etc. Fresh Coast Planning handles everything from zoning enforcement, land division administration, process improvements which has been used in several communities to help them improve their processes for efficiency. Ransford stated they write Master Plans, Recreation Plans, conduct community surveys, workshops, everything involved with working with the community to create policy documents. Ransford stated Fresh Coast Planning currently represents 16 communities in west Michigan.

Siver asked Ransford if Fresh Coast Planning would have a problem representing a township that is quite far away; any logistical challenge. Ransford stated he doesn't think it would; virtual meetings are an option to attend the meetings. Ransford further stated there are certain instances when a personal presence is appropriate and he realizes that comes with the job. Siver stated that at some point Fresh Coast Planning should come to the community, drive around the township to understand the area. Ransford stated he has no objection, that it makes sense.

Hoffman asked Ransford for the costs of the service. Ransford stated that with new communities they like to start out with a small retainer and \$6,000 was proposed to Lake Township. The retainer gives Fresh Coast Planning financial surety to be available to the township on meeting nights and with that commitment they want some sort of financial commitment on the township's end. Ransford further stated if the work is clearly more than the retainer over the course of time, the retainer would not have to necessarily be maintained because the work load is more significant than that. Ransford stated that as the work is done, the hourly rate is deducted from the retainer; his hourly rate is \$145 per hour and the associates are \$115 per hour. At the end of the year, if there is a \$1,000 left, it resets and an invoice is sent for the retainer of \$5,000 for that year. If the retainer is used up and there are a few months left in the year, then they will bill at the hourly rate depending on which associate is doing the work.

Hoffman asked how Fresh Coast Planning prices in-person visits; is there a charge for travel and miles. Ransford stated that because of the distance, he proposed an hourly rate charge for travel time and miles involved to and from the township. Ransford further stated there would not be a charge for the initial visit to the area; he considers that an initial set-up of getting documents and getting familiar with the community. Hoffman stated the amount could add up for a meeting with travel time and milage and asked Ransford if he was open to negotiation. Ransford stated he is open to negotiation.

Hoffman addressed the issue of a conflict of interest due to the referral from Bloom. Ransford stated they have conflict of interest language in their contracts; Fresh Coast Planning cannot represent someone within the community that they represent.

Siver asked if Fresh Coast Planning would be doing a careful read-through of the Zoning Ordinance and read through the Master Plan to know what its dealing with or would Fresh Coast Planning approach it on an as-needed basis. Ransford stated a combination of both.

After further discussion on rates, Ransford asked how often the PC would prefer Fresh Coast Planning to attend its meetings. Hoffman stated he doesn't see a need to physically attend, attendance can be virtual. McCallum stated a physical presence would be needed if a public hearing was held off-site.

Siver asked Ransford if he had any questions for the PC. Ransford asked what the Lake Township population is; McCallum stated between 1,500 and 2,000 homes with 800 year-round residents and not much commercial property. McCallum asked Ransford if Fresh Coast Planning assists Planning Commissions in drafting their Annual Report; Ransford stated they do.

After no further questions, Siver thanked Ransford for his time.

McCallum stated it may be helpful to have a consultant available to attend PC meetings. Quinn asked how much the Township has spent on planners. McCallum stated all the time and hours

from LandPlan were all put under the Planning Commission Consultant budget but the time and hours could have been from other areas also; building and zoning, supervisor, etc. McCallum stated the amounts are not from LandPlan's invoices but from the activity on budget; 2021 – 2022, \$7,500, 2022 – 2023, \$4,400, 2023 – 2024 \$900, 2014 – 2015 - \$1,800, 2015 – 2016 \$7,400, 2016 – 2017 - \$9,000.

Hoffman asked whether it would be beneficial to have a planner at the meetings; it could be productive to keep things on track. McCallum stated to keep in mind that the PC can use a planner, who has the experience and works with attorney and charges less, or the PC does the work themselves, sends the work to the attorney for review and any changes, which is more time and money spent. It was discussed that the planner does not need to be present for the entire PC meeting; the planner can be present for specific parts of the meeting. Quinn asked what firm the surrounding communities are using for planners. McCallum stated that most of the surrounding communities are under county zoning; Caseville Township does their own zoning as does Port Austin Township. McCallum stated Spicer and Wade Trim are the two big firms that are used in the area and Lake Township has used both. McCallum further stated that Spicer and Wade Trim are engineering firms and for the purpose of what the Township is doing, it may be better with a planner.

Siver stated for the next PC meeting, he will invite Rowe Professional Services to discuss their services.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Hoffman to approve the October 16, 2024 Minutes, seconded by Quinn. All ayes – passed.

Correspondence:

- Building Permit List for September 2024 – Quinn referred to the report and noticed that the work descriptions are blank; McCallum advised Kelly will be taking a class to get familiar with the program.
- Zoning Permit List for September 2024 – no comments.
- Building/Zoning Report for September 2024 – no comments.
- Building Permit List for October 2024 – no comments.
- Building/Zoning Report for October 2024 – McCallum stated the new Building/Zoning Administrator had a situation on Port Austin Road where a deck was removed and a new deck was being constructed in the road right-of-way. No permit was applied for and a stop work order was issued.
- Supervisor Email Re: Zoning Report – McCallum stated the PC members should review the Zoning Permit List and do random checks to make sure the Zoning Ordinances are being followed by the Zoning Administrator. Hoffman recommends the PC review the Checklist form that is used by the Zoning Administrator to make sure all pertinent elements are included in the form.
- APAMI Workshops for Officials – Siver asked the members to review the workshops and get back with him if interested in attending.

Old Business:

10/24/2024 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – Hoffman stated the ZBA denied the request for the variance from MDK Enterprises LLC for the rear-yard setback on his lakefront property. Hoffman further stated it came to light that the foundation was built right on the lot line. After the meeting, the neighbors were informed that they may be able to appeal the decision on the foundation; there are timelines for an appeal of this nature but because this was an error on the part of the Zoning Administrator, the Township attorney is looking to see if there is any leeway.

Public Comments: McCallum advised the PC that Lisa Clinton will no longer be the Recording Secretary.

Siver advised that Dorothy Colletta, the wife of former PC member Lou Colletta, passed away.

Motion made by Pryor to adjourn, seconded by Quinn. All ayes – passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Next meeting Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Clinton