

**Pennfield Charter Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of June 8, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm at the Pennfield Middle School cafeteria. Members present were Jon Bartlett, Jack Pooler, Brad Messenger, Tammi Damerow, J.R. Walter and Paul Anderson. Curtis Whitaker was excused. A quorum was met.

Others present: Rob Behnke, Sandra Cummings, Perry Beard, Larry Skelding, Lee Adams, Rick Stout and Mark Lambert.

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Brad Messenger, seconded by Jack Pooler to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of May 11, 2015. The motion carried.

INTERVIEW SESSIONS: 5 YEAR RECREATIONAL PLAN PROPOSALS

a) Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, represented by Lee Adams

Mr. Lee Adams of the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council went over his proposal for working with Pennfield Township on the 5-Year Recreational Plan. The Planning Commission members asked the following questions:

1) Does this firm offer grant writing assistance? Yes, grant writing assistance is offered independent from the 5 year recreational plan project. The size of the grant being sought would vary depending on the size of the park or project planned. If a park offers many amenities, a larger grant would be sought. Some grant writing projects utilize university grad students who may perform the service for a small fee and also receive educational experience at the same time. Since Pennfield is seeking to offer certain features such as a canoe launch on the river, a grant specific to waterway access would be sought to help fund the project.

2) Would this firm help with funding of maintenance once a park is established? Yes, there are some grants available for maintenance, although they are not as large as grants for establishing a new park.

- 3) Would your staff members visit the actual sites in Pennfield that may potentially become park areas? Yes, the design crew would canoe or kayak the river and visit the potential sites to be developed.
- 4) Would your staff be present at public meetings regarding the development of parks and recreation sites? How many meetings will be needed? Yes, we would be present for meetings for public input; there should be 3 or 4 meetings of this nature.
- 5) What is the time line for implementing the planning process? It is about a three month process, with the first month involving the planning, the second month to draw input from local residents, and the third month to put the plan in motion. This process would need to be complete before March of next year as that is the start of the fiscal year. The public meetings should be held during the school year, as during summer months people are less likely to attend meetings.
- 6) Once a park is established, who is responsible for funding the upkeep? The municipality is responsible, along with private sources for funding.
- 7) Will liability insurance be increased substantially for parks and recreation areas? Mr. Adams indicated that the liability insurance carrier for the township can adjust the insurance to accommodate any new liabilities, and that liability should not be that great.

Mr. Adams commented that if Pennfield Township was willing to join with other municipalities such as the City of Battle Creek, Calhoun County Conservation District and the DNR for a more regional plan, there could be many additional benefits as there is grant money available for urban projects and projects involving waterway trails and waterway recreations. Also, people tend to travel outside their home jurisdiction to enjoy parks and recreation opportunities. Mr. Adams indicated that a joint plan would be more efficient than individual plans.

Some members of the planning commission felt that if we joined with other jurisdictions they may want to take over and lessen our input of our projects.

b) Fleis & Vanderbrink, represented by Rick Stout

Mr. Rick Stout of Fleis & Vanderbrink went over his proposal for a 5-year Recreational Plan. He highlighted the fact that he has a large staff who can deal with all aspects of planning, such as land surveys, trail way construction, grant writing, green technologies, and pricing of construction materials. He addressed the following questions:

- 1) What is the time line associated with the planning process? Does it include notification of public meetings? How many meetings are anticipated? The timeline would be 4 to 5 months. Publishing the meetings is not included in the basic planning

proposal. The firm will attend two meetings normally, but they rely on the township to tell them what is needed.

2) Would the firm come to the site of the proposed parks and recreation areas? Yes, the firm would visit the development sites and inspect for any environmental issues.

Mr. Stout indicated that he has done many long term projects in various parts of Michigan, and is interested in establishing a long term relationship with the municipalities who engage him in their Recreational Plan process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Mark Lambert spoke, as a neighbor who owns a home and a parcel of land on Dream Drive. He has offered his parcel as an access point for river usage, his help with the planning process, and also indicated that there are sources of funding set aside for this project.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Recommendation to the Township Board on the awarding of a contract for the development of a 5 Year Recreational Plan.

A motion was made by Paul Anderson, seconded by Brad Messenger to recommend to the Township Board that Pennfield contract with Southcentral Planning Council for the development of a 5 Year Recreational Plan. The motion carried. Roll call vote follows:

Paul Anderson	yes	Jack Pooler	yes
Jon Bartlett	yes	JR Walter	yes
Tammi Damerow	yes	Brad Messenger	yes
Curtis Whitaker	excused		

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

Brad Messenger commented on the importance of everyone watching out for motorcyclists on the road.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be July 13, 2015.

A motion was made by Brad Messenger, seconded by Paul Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm. The motion carried.

Submitted by Sandra Cummings
Recording Secretary