

**Pennfield Charter Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of March 2, 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, Elaine Walter and Curtis Whitaker. Tammi Damerow and Paul Anderson were excused. A quorum was met.

Others present: Mr. and Mrs. Mark Lambert, JR Walter, Supervisor Rob Behnke and Recording Secretary Sandra Cummings.

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

a) Chairperson – A motion was made by Curtis Whitaker, seconded by Brad Messenger to nominate Jon Bartlett to the position of Chairperson for the year 2015. The motion passed with all members in favor of electing Jon Bartlett to the position of Chairperson.

b) Vice-Chairperson – A motion was made by Brad Messenger, seconded by Jack Pooler to nominate Paul Anderson to the position of Vice-Chairperson for the year 2015. The motion passed with all members in favor of electing Paul Anderson to the position of Vice-Chairperson.

c) Secretary – A Motion was made by Elaine Walter, seconded by Curtis Whitaker to nominate Brad Messenger to the position of Secretary for the year 2015. The motion passed with all members in favor of electing Brad Messenger to the position of Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Brad Messenger and seconded by Elaine Walter to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of November 3, 2014. The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- a) Outdoor Wood Furnaces

Rob Behnke indicated that the Township Board members have approved the Outdoor Wood Furnace amendments to the Code of Ordinances, as provided for in Section 22-1(a)(6), paragraph (b), C-2 and CBD Districts with a minimum lot size of (5) acres. The amendments have been published and are now in place.

b) Aggregate Industries/ Meyer Material Company update

Rob Behnke indicated that he has had recent correspondence with Randi Wille of Meyer Material, who is assembling information needed for the upcoming Special Land Use and variance requests to expand a gravel mining operation on 12 Mile Road. Mr. Behnke stated that both the Zoning Board of Appeals variance request and the Special Land Use request will be presented by Meyer Material on the same night, with both Boards present. The Zoning Board of Appeals request will be held first, followed by the Special Land Use request directed to the Planning Commission. If the variances and Special Land Use are granted, a recommendation will be sent to the Township Board of Trustees for approval. There has been no opposition to the proposed requests from any property owners or residents up to this point.

Mr. Behnke stated that Mr. Wille is about two or three months away from presenting his request. Mr. Wille has offered to give tours of the existing facilities to anyone who wishes to go, when the weather gets better.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Mark Lambert - Informational Presentation

Mr. Mark Lambert is the owner of a one and one-half acre strip of property, 20 feet wide which runs off Dream Drive down to the Battle Creek River. He has expressed a desire to create a public access to the river for recreation purposes. He stated that he would like to join with the Michigan Conservation District, the City of Battle Creek, the County of Calhoun and Pennfield Township to develop a recreation plan to include a canoe launch, wetland boardwalks, and an off-leash dog park to enhance recreational opportunities for Pennfield residents. Mr. Lambert pointed out that there is grant money available from the State of Michigan for these types of projects, but a municipality must have a five-year recreation plan in place first in order to qualify for such funds.

The proposed project would involve Mr. Lambert's parcel, a ten-acre parcel along the river to the east of his parcel and a five-acre parcel located at the McAllister Road Bridge both owned by the Calhoun County Conservation District, a four and one half acre parcel at the back of Bailey Park owned by the City of Battle Creek, and part of a fifty-three acre parcel owned by Pennfield Charter Township. All of these areas could be included in a five-year plan and be dedicated to recreational use, and therefore be eligible for grant money.

Mr. Behnke is open to further exploration of this project, and indicated he is going to ask for \$6500.00 to be budgeted to hire a consultant to help develop the five-year recreation plan.

Brad Messenger made a motion, seconded by Curtis Whitaker to recommend that money be budgeted in this fiscal year which begins April 1, 2015 to hire a consultant to assist in the development of a five-year recreational plan. The motion passed, with all Planning Commission members in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Lambert stated he will be happy to help with the recreation project, and help bring together the Township, the City of Battle Creek, and Calhoun County to make use of the Battle Creek River, which is an untapped resource.

TOWNSHIP UPDATES

Mr. Behnke stated that a project will begin next week to evaluate the sanitary sewer system throughout the township. Through a grant awarded to Pennfield Township by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Terra Contracting and CEI, Inc. have been hired to videotape and clean the sewer lines, and identify any problem areas needing immediate attention.

Mr. Behnke announced that road repair projects will begin this summer, and he hopes that the projects will be completed in three years instead of five years. He said that ballot language is being prepared by the State of Michigan for the May Ballot request for increased sales tax, with the money generated to be used for road and bridge repairs.

Mr. Behnke indicated the Township Rental Ordinance is still in the works, and said that a few realtors have expressed discontent with the idea.

COMMISSION MEMBERS COMMENTS

Jack Pooler indicated that he hopes some of the township road millage money will be used for tree trimming over the roads.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be April 13, 2015. Mr. Lee Adams, Director of the South Central Michigan Planning Council will be attending.

ADJOURNMENT

Brad Messenger made a motion, seconded by Jack Pooler to adjourn at 7:32 pm. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

Sandra Cummings, Recording Secretary