

**MINUTES SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING – JULY 24, 2024**

Chairman, Nick Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24, 2024. All present recited The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nick Barnes, John Joossens, Ben Schilling, Veronnica Kenreich, Jon Tidey Mike Glynn, and Tim Feirick

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Davis, Wendy Colburn, and members of the public

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA FOR JULY 24, 2024

John Joossens motioned to approve the agenda for July 24, 2024.

Tim Feirick seconded.

Motion passed by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 26, 2024

Veronnica Kenreich motioned to approve the minutes from June 26, 2024.

Ben Schilling seconded.

Motion passed by voice vote.

COMMUNICATIONS

Veronnica Kenreich passed out information and communications she had about the master plan. Members will discuss this in the New Business tonight.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BUILDING AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Updates given by Mark Davis.

ZBA REPORT

Updates given by Ben Schilling.

NEW BUSINESS

Master Plan discussion: Veronnica Kenrich reported that requests for proposals (RFPs) were sent via both mail and email, with the latter including delivery notifications to confirm when they were read. As of now, there have been no responses except one. During discussions, members

weighed the advantages and disadvantages of partnering with the Cass County Planning Commission. Kenrich highlighted that the township would need to align with Cass County's meeting schedule, typically held at 4 pm on Wednesdays, which conflicts with her work commitments. John Joossens would like to know if the 4 pm meeting time is negotiable, Veronnica Kenrich offers to reach out to the county. Nick Barnes expressed similar concerns about his availability for these meetings. The absence of proposals has left members feeling unable to effectively evaluate the township's next steps. Some members believe that their participation and input may be restricted not only by meeting times but also by the nature of the collaboration. Mike Glynn suggested sending an RFP to Attorney Sara Senica, expressing concern that working with Cass County might not align with the township's interests due to differing perspectives. Nick Barnes raised the issue of potential attendance challenges for members at essential meetings. Ben Schilling inquired about the delay in sending the RFPs, noting that he believed they were to be dispatched shortly after the previous meeting, and questioned whether it was premature to send follow-up emails or set a response deadline. Both Nick Barnes and Mike Glynn indicated that follow-ups might be unnecessary if members are reconsidering collaboration with the county.

Motion made to extend the deadline for the request for proposals from September 1 to September 24, 2024, and to add Attorney Sara Senica to the request for proposals list and send by July 26, 2024.

Veronnica Kenreich motioned to approve.

John Joossens seconded.

All members approved, and no members denied.

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Short-term rentals and Good Neighbor Policy: Last month, members submitted a packet to the township concerning short-term rentals. Mike Glynn mentioned that members needed more time to review the material they had received. Veronnica Kenrich discussed the possibility of Mark Davis and Scott Saunders handling inspections for short-term rentals along with database management. They both expressed interest and suggested a fee ranging from \$300 to \$600 to cover their work. Veronnica emphasized that this is uncharted territory for the township, so the fee is yet to be determined. Additional fees may be involved if it is found that a property does not meet the safety standards. She also suggested that as far as enforcement is concerned non-compliant property owners would first be handled by Mark Davis then referred to the township attorney and could face additional fees. The focus of the inspections would be on general safety issues, and Veronnica plans to share a checklist currently used for her Indiana rentals with the planning commission members and the building inspector. She mentioned that the fire chief has not been included in these discussions and questioned whether it would be better to have township-handled inspections.

The "Good Neighbor Policy" was shared with members as a guideline, and a draft was provided to give an idea of the policy's content. Veronnica mentioned that she already has a similar policy that her tenants sign for her rentals. Input from the building department and Undersheriff Roach has been considered in formulating the policy. Mike Glynn, while he liked the look of the brochure-style packet, expressed concern that it might make it seem like the township is promoting short-term rentals, as opposed to regulating them. Ben Schilling emphasized the importance of keeping the policy user-friendly and would like to avoid a long list of rules for renters. However, he understood Mike Glynn's concerns about the use of "Silver Creek" logos, as it might appear that the township is endorsing the rentals. Mike Glynn mentioned that "Silver Creek Welcomes" also concerns him because short-term rentals have not been permitted use and feels this might be moving ahead too quickly. Veronnica reiterated that these are just ideas, and nothing is set in stone. Nick Barnes expressed an understanding of the concerns, he likes how the material is presented and expressed a desire to submit something. Mike Glynn would like to prevent unnecessary calls to the township, as monitoring rentals in this way is not the role of the township and feels any material from the township should stay within the boundaries of safety and enforcement. Mike Glynn suggests adding numbers in the material to redirect these calls. Ben Schilling, Nick Barnes, and Veronnica Kenrich would like to submit the policy as is and allow the township board to make any necessary changes. Ben Schilling proposed adding a clause to hold the township harmless and to emphasize the neutrality of the township in this matter.

Motion to submit the brochure to the township board as is.

Ben Schilling motions to approve.

Tim Feirick seconded.

All members approved, and no members denied.

Motion carried.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS:

John Joossens is concerned that the proposed fee of \$300 for rentals is too low to cover all expenses. Veronnica Kenreich suggests that the fee should be higher, in the range of \$750-\$900, to account for administrative costs and additional job functions for the building department. She bases her suggestion on her experience as a rental property owner. She would also like to remind owners that an agent needs to be within 30 minutes of the rental property in case of emergencies. Mike Glynn inquired about the creation of an inspection checklist and suggested a yearly inspection. Veronnica Kenrich proposes an initial inspection fee with subsequent inspections at a lower fee, and Nick Barnes supports the idea of separate registration and inspection fees. Mark Davis feels that the fee should be higher, suggesting \$500 or more, considering the number of potential rentals. Nick Barnes raises concerns about inspections for rentals that are closed in the winter and suggests a clear policy for fee adjustments. Ben Schilling

suggests establishing a cut-off point for rental inspections as well. Veronnica suggests creating a comprehensive menu of boat rules and laws, but Nick believes that including rules for different lakes might confuse renters. Mike Glynn emphasizes the need for enforceable policies and suggests mentioning potential enforcement costs in the policy. He also proposes that the homeowner should provide the information packet to renters to avoid implying direct involvement of the township. Veronnica agrees to work with the building department to gather feedback and finalize the checklist for the next meeting. Nick would like members to think about inspection fees and how often inspections should occur and readdress it at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

August 27, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

John Joossens motioned to adjourn.

Veronnica Kenreich seconded.

All members present approved, and no members denied.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Recording Secretary, Wendy Colburn

Secretary, Veronnica Kenreich