

**FOREST HOME TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 23, 2016**

Members present: Paul Trumble, Doug Dewey, Dan Steiner, Linda Cran and Tom Sheneman.

Absent: None

Also present: Stephen Barnard, FHT Zoning Administrator, Tom Frey,Carolynn Nichols, Barb Carton, ~~Tom~~ Carl Stellin and Suzanne Mahan.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman Paul Trumble at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag.

AGENDA:

It was moved by Tom Sheneman, and seconded by Doug Dewey that the agenda be approved as written. Motion carried – all present voting yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Chairman requested public comment:

Tom Frey thanked the members for continuing public comment periods at each meeting.

Zoning Administrator – Stephen Barnard Update Report:

Reported that he had written nine (9) letters to property owner’s letting them know that they are or may be in violation of the township zoning ordinance. Three are issues involving campers and one was a shed placed on the neighbor’s property which was immediately moved.

Mr. Bacon continues to hold out and will be appearing in 86th District Court on the 30th of August, 2016.

A meeting was held with FHT Attorney, William Derman regarding the proposed draft forms for Special Land Use and Farm Tourism Facility Special Events. The application forms were reviewed and approved by legal counsel.

Special Land Use Application

Form advises applicant to ~~referee~~ refer to the language in the FHT Zoning Ordinance requiring that a site plan must accompany the application in accordance with Section 18, and shall include details specified. The guidelines be reviewed by the applicant as required in Article 16 and that the owner grants permission for township officials to access the property for premise inspection and compliance of the zoning ordinance. Application fee being set at \$100.00 and Special Land Use Permit will be scheduled before the Planning Commission.

Farm Tourism Facility Special Events Application

Form must be completed listing dates, times and include a listing of all Special Events, indicating if the events are periodic or permanent recreational or entertainment activities or facilities with detailed description and that the owner grant permission for the township officials to access the property for premise inspection and compliance. The application fee being set at \$50.00 and require approval from the Planning Commission.

It was moved by Tom Sheneman, seconded by Doug Dewey that the Special Land Use Permit Application and the Farm Tourism Facility Special Events Application be approved. Motion carried – All present voting yes.

It was moved by Tom Sheneman, seconded by Doug Dewey that the minutes of meeting dated July 6, 2016 with the correction that the research that Linda Cran had performed on behalf of the Commission included information gathered from seven (7) townships and that a copy of her research was attached to the minutes. Motion carried - All present voting yes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Dan Steiner reported that he had discussed with the FHT Board the issue of forming a Short Term Rental Ordinance. The Board raised concerns on enforcement and police power for such an ordinance, stating that the Board is not aware of any complaints reported to the Antrim County Sheriff Department and the Sheriff provides a monthly report to the Board. It was recommended that before a great deal of time be invested on an ordinance that the township determine if there is a problem. No action was taken.

Linda Cran presented and provided copies of the research she had completed since the last meeting.

Blight Report

Linda Cran presented a Blight Report and provided copies of her research completed since the last meeting. She spent three (3) days on the road visiting areas of concern for Blight, she traveled up East Torch Lake Drive, Lewin Drive and back to East Torch Lake Drive to Steiner Road and Clam Lake Road up to Bellaire Highway. Found that there were many small signs left from the election, garage sales and Builder's signs advertising their business and noticed some old trucks, cars and equipment on one contractor's property. Also, some old trailers on several sites on East Torch Lake Drive, Shore Drive and near Green Acres Subdivision some out in the open and some covered under wooden structures. Old construction materials left and accumulated over the years was notices on Torch Lake Property. She continued her drive to Vandermark Road, then East on Bellaire Highway 620 to the Village of Bellaire, up around the Terrance to M-88 then on the river side to 4th Street, Green Acres to Shore Drive, then back to M-88 traveling around Deep Water Pointe. Also traveling through Cedar Meadows Subdivision, Lake Bellaire Area (Evergreen Shores), and 620 Bellaire Highway, Right Road, Lynn Road back to Clam Lake Road and on to 620 Bellaire Highway. The worst property was noted to be a site on M-88, many old trucks, tires, and piles of clothing towards the back of house with no fencing to conceal the rubbish.

Vacation Rentals by Owners Report

Linda Cran represented a Vacation Rentals Report and provided copies of her research since the last meeting. She went to the website: Vrbo.com and Homeaway.com for Vacation Rentals by Owners searching an estimated 19 pages finds 36 + in Forest Home Township and an estimated 619 area wide. Ranging from cottages to homes, including waterfront properties that sleeping 2 – 15+ people per unit, with 1-5 bedrooms/1-3 Bathrooms cost ranging from \$104.00 -\$539.00 per night. Information is provided with photos of rentals units; there square footage, local services, boating, maps, rates per night, and all you would need to know when considering making reservations. These websites provide all the rules and regulations of the rentals written by the owners or managers. It is unknown how many of these are actively being rented or if the owners move out in order to rent out homes or if or they have been purchased to create an income.

The Chairman requested that the members be polled to establish a starting point for discussion.

Tom Sheneman – Address issue without a lot of regulations and set permit fees per season.

Linda Cran – The Board can assign a person or persons to check rental sites and in favor of seasonal permit.

Doug Dewey – Simple you either allow or not allow short term rentals.

Dan Steiner – First is there even a problem and these property owners are citizens and taxpayers to our township. Are the owners renting their homes to assist with paying taxes and keeping up with the maintenance and upkeep? Dan asked Barb Carton how she handles complaints with the neighbor's rental – she stated that she calls the property owner.

Paul Trumble – Until the township receives multiple complaints it appears that there is not a real problem and that the township looks at the owners/renters the same. No action to be taken until an ordinance can be justified.

Public input:

~~Tom~~ Carl Stellin thought that the commission should contact about their ordinance with permits being required for each rental. People just have to say enough is enough to get satisfaction on both issues Seasonal Rentals and Blight Ordinances.

Carolynn Nichols added that rental "Homes" are businesses maybe consider as a Bed and Breakfast. She spoke to problems that Cedar Meadows has experienced with their shared waterfront. Such as trespassing, lack of privacy and noise, not to mention the liability of those using the raft.

Suzanne Mahan provided a copy of the report submitted by the Sheriff at the last Board meeting, listing 2 complaints having been reported.

(1) Trespassing complaint (1) noise complaint.

Members:

Tom Sheneman – No problem, no ordinance

Linda Cran – At this time ordinance is not needed.

Doug Dewey – At this time ordinance is not needed.

Dan Steiner – At this time ordinance is not needed.

Paul Trumble – At this time ordinance is not needed, will reconsider if problems arise.

Dan Steiner will report the results to the FHT Board.

Paul Trumble asked Dan Steiner to check with the Board if they have received the final report on the Water Quality Study. Paul announced that '**Point of Sale**' discussions may be resurfacing in the upcoming months.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Chairman requested Public Comment.

Tom Frey spoke on the Blight problems in the township and that people don't see this has a problem until it happens in your neighborhood. An ordinance is really important and would be good for our community to move forward could be preventing new situations. Barb Carton agreed with Tom Frey and was glad to hear that the 'Point of Sale' discussion may be resurfacing in the near future.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 7, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Chairman, Paul Trumble

Secretary, Linda Cran