



PRESQUE ISLE TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Minutes - DRAFT
March 4, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

6:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge was recited.

Roll Call

Present: R. Kurkechian, L. Larkin, T. Guyer, T. Ludwig and C. Paavola. Absent: None. Township Supervisor and Zoning Administrator, Stephen Lang, was also in attendance.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by C. Paavola to approve the agenda as written; supported by T. Ludwig; approved by all.

Approval of Minutes 2.5.24

A motion was made by T. Ludwig to approve the minutes of the February 5th meeting with the following revisions: remove items one (1) and four (4) from the Potential Time of Transfer section which state that “testing would not be required immediately” and “the houses within the Presque Isle Harbor Association would not be subject to inspection since they have a private water supply system which is regularly tested”; supported by R. Kurkechian; approved by all.

Audience Comments – not related to the Time of Transfer Ordinance

The Board heard from one (1) audience member.

Unfinished Business

- a. Brown Island Firearm Discharge**
- b. Continuing Discussion of Potential Time of Transfer Ordinance (Septic – Well)**

Brown Island Firearm Discharge: The Board received a copy of Resolution No. 7-2024 that S. Lang sent to the Department of Natural Resources in Lansing. T. Guyer explained to the audience that many citizens have expressed concern about an excessive amount of firearm discharges on Brown Island. The Board has been working with the DNR on the issue and recently passed this resolution which asks the DNR to investigate.

Potential Time of Transfer Ordinance: T. Guyer welcomed everyone in the audience and thanked them for coming. After correcting an erroneous statement which had been posted on Facebook and summarizing an item of correspondence, he then asked the audience to offer their questions, concerns, and suggestions to the Board. The



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Board heard from eleven audience members in attendance at the Township Hall and four (4) over Zoom. Also in attendance to answer questions and offer expertise on the matter were Kevin Prevost, Environmental Health Director for District Health Department No. 4 and Mr. Kyle Taylor of Lakeshore Realty.

The key questions raised:

- Are transfers and/or sales the best triggers for a septic inspection or would a calendar system be better?
- If a calendar system was used, at what age should a septic system require inspection?
- Should regular pumping of septic tanks be required?
- Should the inspections be performed by the health department or by private contractors?
- Is it fair to involve realtors in the enforcement of this ordinance and penalize them if they don't comply?

When there were no further questions, T. Guyer thanked Mr. Prevost for taking time from his schedule to join the meeting. He thanked the audience and urged them to continue to come to meetings. He invited the audience members to email the board members and assured them that the ordinance would be written with input from the community. The board then moved to deliberation. T. Guyer asked every board member if they agreed that the Township needs to do something to protect our waters. All board members agreed. T. Guyer then cited a 2015 study conducted by Michigan State University which sampled 64 rivers and concluded that septic systems seemed to be the primary driver of fecal bacterial levels. R. Kurkechian discussed the difference between human and animal E. coli and why human E. coli is more dangerous. T. Guyer then discussed some pushback he has received from realtors and suggested that they reach out to realtors in Milton Township to see what



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kind of problems they've been experiencing with the time of transfer affidavits there, if any. He mentioned that a study conducted in Milton Township found that their time of transfer ordinance was now widely accepted by buyers, sellers, and realtors. While realtors can play a valuable role, he wasn't sure if they should be required to do so. He addressed the problem of homes that are just transferred from generation to generation, thereby never getting inspected. He suggested bringing in a retired Halls septic inspector to ask for his suggestions on how best to find problematic septic systems within the Township. While the Board had hoped to have enough information to formalize an ordinance in April and conduct a public hearing in May, they agreed to gather more information, and continue the discussion in April to determine what is the best trigger to protect the local waters. He invited the audience members to come back as well and moved to the next item on the agenda.

New Business

a. For Discussion Commercial Wind and Solar Energy

Commercial Wind and Solar Energy Discussion: Presently, the Presque Isle Township Zoning Ordinance guidelines regarding solar and wind energy are *more* stringent than what the State of Michigan requires. If the Township were to reject a wind or solar energy project that fails to meet the Township's requirements yet meets the state's mandate, the Township could be penalized. While there aren't currently any proposals for solar or wind energy farms to be built within the Township, T. Guyer recommended being ready should such a project arise. He suggested meeting with the Township attorney to determine if the Township needs to align its ordinance with the state mandate and what risks are involved if it doesn't. S. Lang will invite the attorney to meet with the Planning Commission sometime after the April meeting.



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Township Board Report – Cynthia Paavola

Report
Attached

ZBA Liaison Report – Rick Kurkechian

No Report

Adjournment:

7:36pm

Meeting Reminder:

The next PC meeting is scheduled for April 1st, 2024 at 6pm.