

Melrose Township Planning Commission Minutes
Melrose Township Hall
Regular Meeting of August 23, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Bart Wangeman called the meeting to order at 5:33PM.
- B. **Members present:** Bart Wangeman, Bob Bourassa, Dan Nowland, Charley Zimmer, and Tim LaGasse.
- C. **Members absent:** None.
- D. **Staff present:** Recording Secretary Tom Mackie.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Following a review, the agenda was approved by consensus.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bob Bourassa motioned, Dan Nowland seconded, to approve the June 28, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. All five members present voted Yes, motion carried.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Emily Meyerson – Bear River Water Trail Presentation:

Bart introduced Emily, who then provided a PowerPoint presentation on Tipp of the Mitt Watershed Council's proposal for a Bear River Water Trail beginning near the snowmobile bridge on River Road South and extending to Little Traverse Bay. Significant parts of the plan include:

- A State-designated Water Trail is organized, supported, and managed by a dedicated entity and/or community partnership that declares its intention to be responsible for long-term funding and management. A "Friends Group" established by the Watershed Council would serve in this capacity.
- River access points are defined as Primary, Secondary, Emergency, and Rest Stops. The South River Road site is identified as a Primary site but will require a Township agreement with the Road Commission for parking within the easement. Other locations in the Township including the park, US131, and Springbrook Road have issues with low water, parking, wetlands, and accessibility. These could serve as secondary or emergency access points.
- A Primary Access Site includes parking, carry-down access, pit toilet, and wayfinding.
- Tip of the Mitts new "Friends Group" would provide coordination of site development, stewardship (debris removal, invasive species management, river cleanup), coordination of sign installation, and trail promotion.
- The action plan timeline runs from 2021 through 2026.
- Funding for site development is expected to be through grants applied for by the townships/city with guidance from the Friends Group. Each jurisdiction would budget \$4,000 to \$5,000 for site design. By comparison, 2021 construction of a Primary Site (without a bathroom) in Elk Rapids was \$250,000.

Bart motioned to encourage the Township Board to review and accept Tip of the Mitt's plan to develop a Primary Bear River Access Site on South River Road as part of the overall Bear River Water Trail Project. Motion seconded by Tim. All ayes motion passed.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Further discussion regarding minimum square footage for a residential structure in the Farm and Forest (FF) District.

Bart noted we've had numerous discussions on this topic recently, and more are needed. Before considering specific regulations, we need to define our goals and the best way to address them.

We discussed various structure sizes and the impact they could potentially have on affordability as well as the rural nature of property in the FF District. General agreement was reached on the following:

- Initially we would not consider any reduction in minimum lot sizes or a provision for multiple homes on one lot (regardless of their size). A recent change to the Zoning Ordinance has already reduced minimum lot size in this district from 10 to 5 acres.
- Presently no applications are pending for smaller homes, although a few inquiries have been made in recent years.
- Additional information, including regulations in other neighboring municipalities, that would help guide our discussion is not yet available.

Dan motioned to table further discussion to our March 2022 meeting to provide time to gather additional information and to evaluate public need and the best interests of the township. Motion seconded by Charley. All ayes motion passed.

VI. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS / REPORTS: - None

VII. PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Dan noted he would not be available for our next regularly scheduled meeting on September 27th.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

IX. NEXT MEETING: Scheduled for September 27th.

X. ADJOURNMENT: At 6:55 PM

Prepared by

Planning Commission Approval by:

Tom Mackie, Recording Secretary

Charley Zimmer, Secretary

Copies: Melrose Township Board, Planning Commission Members, www.melrosetwp.org