

**WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 1, 2022**

Present: Deanna Heminger, Joseph Stepich, Colleen Curtis, Louis Nordell

Also Present: None.

Chairperson Heminger called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call was taken.

The minutes of the June 7, 2022 meeting were read. C. Curtis made a motion to approve the minutes as read. J. Stepich seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

During the guest comment period, J. Stepich informed the Commission that Watervliet Township has submitted its grant application to Berrien County to request money for the expansion of Broad Band service throughout the township. Stepich stated that, according to a study, the township currently has 142 existing properties that have no internet availability. He said that if the monies are forthcoming, broad band would be comprehensively expanded to all areas of the township.

**Rural Event Venues**

The matter was presented that the Township had been approached recently by an individual interested in purchasing a parcel of property on Blatchford Rd. with the express intent of converting an existing barn into a Rural Event Venue, or "Wedding Barn." He was told that use is currently not permitted in the township either as a permitted principal use or as a use requiring a Special Land Use Permit. But, due to the growing popularity of Wedding Barns, the Zoning Administrator thought it appropriate to present the idea to the Planning Commission for thought and consideration.

Through initial discussion, the Commissioner's consensus was that it may be a good idea to consider the adoption of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to possibly permit the use in specific areas of the township, reasoning that these venues have the potential of attracting a significant number of out of towners into the area where they would be supporting many local businesses. It was also pointed out that if someone invested in the development of such a venue, they would certainly maintain and protect the rural character of the area, which is their primary draw. That would be in keeping with the Township's Master Plan goal of preserving the rural agricultural character of the township.

Chairperson Heminger suggested that the most suitable course of action, at this time, would be for the Commission to study and research their impact on the surrounding area first. She further suggested speaking with people who currently own those types of venues and get their take on the operations.

J. Stepich stated that he would confer with the Michigan Townships Association and get information on how other townships have dealt with the use and if there are any legal issues that need to be considered.

With no further business before the Commission, J. Stepich made a motion to adjourn. D. Heminger seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Lohr", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Lohr  
Zoning Administrator