

**WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 7, 2017**

Present: Duane Bodfish, Scott McKee, Joseph Frontczak, Kevin Schuhknecht, Joseph Stepich

Also Present: None

Chairman Schuhknecht called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call was taken.

The minutes of the October 3, 2017 meeting were read. J. Stepich made a motion to approve the minutes as read. D. Bodfish seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Master Plan Update**

J. Stepich gave the planning commissioners handouts, as a recap, containing goal categories as determined by the Commission at their October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Stepich said that the Commission has established goals, now they need to devise an action plan to bring each goal to fruition and suggested the appointment of an ad hoc group to formulate those action plans. J. Frontczak inquired if the preservation and support of emergency services, such as fire, police, and the hospital were specified as one of the goals. Stepich said that community safety could certainly be a part of the goal of "community facilities and services."

S. McKee said that he has been reviewing the Master Plans of other communities and specifically cited the Plan from Meridian Township that has the wording ... "maintain essential public services." Stepich replied that, apart from growth or expansion, maintaining services as currently provided is, in itself, considered a goal.

J. Stepich then asked the Commission if the focus for residential development should be on single family residences. D. Bodfish questioned if the trend for residential development is a preference for more open land out in the country and away from the traditional platted subdivisions, pointing to one platted development currently in the township that, in the five years of its existence, only has 2 or 3 homes built in it, and summed, "How do we proceed?" Stepich agreed that this was a salient point and questioned the Commission, "What drives residential development?" The commissioners replied that jobs, schools and safety are some of the factors.

K. Schuhknecht stated that he would prefer housing in clustered developments where the building sites already include essential utilities. "Clustering would be better than slapping a house in the middle of 20 acres," he added. Stepich did state, regarding that statement, that this is one approach toward achieving the goal of preserving the rural character and open spaces of the township. The Commission agreed, after further

discussion, that the most effective approach would be the promotion of single family residential neighborhoods and agreed that they should identify three or four locations that may be attractive to developers.

J. Frontczak, wanting to re-address D. Bodfish's questions, noted that the township already has several residential developments with considerable room for further expansion and asked, "Why are they not selling?" J. Stepich reasoned that if it is the Township's desire to promote residential development and keep it in areas already suited for that type of development, then the emphasis should be on making the community more attractive.

J. Stepich then directed the Commission's attention to aerial photographs of existing parks and land with park development potential. The areas, including Hays Park, run along the Paw Paw River from northeast of the airport to approximately ½ mile west of the city limits. K. Schuhknecht stated that, in his opinion, a park system of this magnitude... "would be reason enough to build a home in Watervliet." Through discussion, it was decided to amend the goal of "Increase recreational development" to "Create a diverse park and recreational system."

In further discussion it was determined that "essential services" should not be limited to police and fire protection but should be expanded to include such things as internet service, cell phone coverage, gas and sewer availability. Stepich reasoned that the above goals, coupled with infrastructure improvements and safe communities could all be condensed under the goal "Multi-community facilities and services."

Stepich expressed to the commissioners that the Commission should present the goals and ideas to the Township Board with explanations of each goal. After that, the Board could rank the goals per what they felt was appropriate.

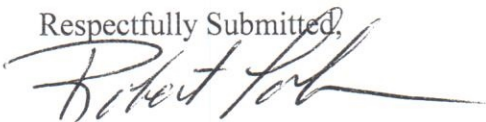
### **Shipping Containers**

In other matters, the trend of residents purchasing shipping containers and locating them on their property as accessory structures was discussed. It was requested that the Township should consider banning that practice, especially in the residential districts and amend the Zoning Ordinance to reflect that banishment. K. Schuhknecht made a motion to set a public hearing for the amendment of the Zoning Ordinance for banning shipping containers for any use in the township for December 5, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. J. Stepich seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

With there being no further business before the Commission, J. Frontczak made a motion to adjourn. S. McKee seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert Lohr

Zoning Administrator