

**WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 8, 2019**

Present: Joseph Stepich, Glen Giannetti, Deanna Heminger, Kevin Schuhknecht, Colleen Curtis, Scott McKee

Also Present: Rick Taylor, Mark Smith, Jessica Fette, Joe Amt, Brad Burkett.

Chairman Schuhknecht called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Roll Call was taken.

The minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting were read. C. Curtis made a motion to approve the minutes as read. J. Stepich seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Master Plan Up-Date**

It was reported that the maps for the Plan are in the process of being recopied and printed at a professional printing facility and is taking longer than was anticipated. When they are done, the draft copies will be bound and sent to the required municipalities and agencies. At that time the clock for the 63 day wait period will start and the required public hearing can be scheduled.

**Proposed Medical Marijuana Facilities Ordinance**

Township Attorney Jessica Fette began discussion by noting that she was presenting an updated copy of a draft ordinance that replaces the originally submitted draft dated 1-3-19. She explained that the ordinance presented was just a draft and a point of beginning for the Commission's process of discussion and recommendation. She explained, however, that the commission needs to decide what, if any facilities, they think should be allowed in the township, how many of each and what zoning districts each particular facility should be allowed in. D. Heminger asked Fette if there are municipalities with such an ordinance in place. Fette responded that there are "many" state wide. K. Schuhknecht stated that he, and was sure other commissioners, would like to have that list for reference and asked Fette if she would e-mail that list to the Zoning Administrator and he could, in turn, forward it to the commissioners. S. McKee suggested to start the process by reviewing the draft ordinance and proceeding one section at a time. J. Fette noted that Section 2 - Definitions may be skipped as the

ordinance proposes to use the identical definitions by reference in the state statute. As such, she elaborated, if any of the definitions are amended at the state level the Township would not need to undergo the amendment process for the ordinance. Fette suggested that the first thing the planning commission should do is decide what uses to permit. She noted that Watervliet Township possesses a great deal of agriculturally zoned land and that might be an area to accommodate grow operations, however, she did note that most current grow facilities are located in industrial zones for the fact that they are always located inside buildings. J. Stepich, concurring with Fette's suggestion, said that for starters decide what uses the Commissioners think should be allowed, then worry about zoning later. Audience member R. Taylor told the Commission that grow operators prefer industrial areas because they usually possess all the required facilities and utilities and added that most agricultural land does not have such.

K. Schuhknecht noted that medical marihuana is an industry and "if your going to have an industry you need product," voicing his support of permitting grow facilities. Stepich said that perhaps the Commission should be going from the other direction, "are there any facilities we don't want?"

After further discussion, focusing mainly on the transport aspect, Stepich suggested that the Commission deal only with grow, processing and provisioning facilities and leave transport and testing to others. Both Taylor and Smith told the commissioners that they would prefer for them to establish a set number of facilities allowed because, according to Taylor, that would go a long way in protecting the investment of development of the facility.

It was asked how many facilities are existing in the area. M. Smith said that the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) has a map on their web site showing the type and location of all currently licensed facilities in the state. Stepich said that, upon reviewing that map, if there is a demonstrated need for any particular facility in the area the Township could be the first to permit those uses. M. Smith did note that testing facilities are in short supply and the one testing facility, located in Kalamazoo, charges an exorbitant amount of money for their services. Stepich stated that he is of the understanding that many municipalities in Berrien County have chosen to opt-out and reasoned, "Why can't we accommodate the market?"

D. Heminger said that she would feel more confident about making a decision on the allowed number of facilities if she had a chance to tour a local existing facility. G. Giannetti asked the question, "Do we want facilities at all?" Stepich responded by stating that the Township Board made a decision previously that they wanted facilities in the township and directed the Planning Commission to work out the details and present an ordinance for adoption. "It's down to what kind and how many," Stepich said.

At this point, J. Stepich made a motion to initially permit all facilities and, if after further discussion and consideration, remove any that are deemed uneconomical or not needed.

G. Giannetti seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

In concurrence with Commissioner Heminger's request, the commission set Wednesday January 23rd to tour, first, the Green Door grow and processing facility in Bangor then the grow facility in Paw Paw there after.

With no further discussion or comment from the audience or business before the Commission, G. Giannetti made a motion to adjourn. C. Curtis seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 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