

**MORTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – September 15, 2021**



Call to Order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman- Dennis Morawa

Pledge of Allegiance by all

Members Present: Dennis Morawa, Jeff Ratledge, Steve Brandt, Lisa Thompson, Steve Stratton

Members Absent: Larry Lenon

Others Present: Cory Zandstra- Zoning Administrator; Vicky Esch- Recording Secretary

List of Public present: Wanda Ratledge, Paula Helms, Max & Susan Helms, Brian & GERALYN Monfils, Deb & Steve Perry, Lori Parris, Ronald Presley, Cathy Merdzinski, Julia Harris

Approval of Minutes from August 18, 2021, Regular Meeting / Public Hearing

Motion by: Steve Brandt **2nd by:** Jeff Radledge

To approve the August 18, 2021, Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

Vote: 4 Ayes 0 Nays 1 Absent Motion Carried

Jeff Ratledge introduced Cory Zandstra, Morton Townships new building official/zoning administrator.

Open Public Hearing

New Business

Chairman, Dennis Morawa, read the rezoning request: Applicant – Kevin Helms. Application request to rezone the following parcel number from a R-2/Wetland to a A-2 District (Agricultural 2). Parcel #5411 001-013-003, located at 6488 11 Mile Road.

Cory Zandstra, Zoning Administrator commented that he had spoken with applicant regarding a building permit. He does not see any issue with the rezoning request.

Dennis Morawa read letter from Kevin Helms (applicant) as he was unable to be present that Paula Helms (his wife) provided to the commission.

The commission members did not have any issue with the request. Their only concern was how much of the acreage (155 acres total) is wetlands. Dennis Morawa remarked that he had asked the township assessor that question and that the wetland area was so minimal that it would not affect anything.

Close Public Hearing

There was no further discussion by the commission members.

Motion by: Lisa Thompson **2nd by:** Steve Brandt

Motion to recommend to the Morton Township Board of Trustees to approve the rezoning request for parcel #5411-001-013-003, located at 6488 11 Mile Road, from a R-2/Wetland district to an A-2 (Agricultural) district.

Roll Call Vote:

Dennis Morawa - Aye; Steve Brandt - Aye; Lisa Thompson - Aye

Vote: 3 Ayes 0 Nays 1 Abstained 1 Absent Motion Carried

Jeff Ratledge abstained from voting as he has ownership in a neighboring parcel of property.

Old Business

Jeff Ratledge updated the commission members on the decisions made by the township board at their meeting on September 14, 2021, on the recommendations from the planning commission for the changes to the zoning ordinance.

- Approved: Section 5.14 Storage Buildings; Section 5.15 Height & Placement Minimum; Section 7.3 Signs

- Not Approved: Fireworks Ordinance. Township board position: impossible to enforce.

Jeff also handed out an updated copy of recent amendments to the Fireworks Safety Act to the commission members.

Comments by citizens in attendance:

Geralyn Monfils asked if anything had been done to adopt a tree ordinance since the last commission meeting. Several other township residences were in attendance with the same concern about falling trees on to their property.

Dennis Morawa commented that he had went to several of the sites online that Geralyn had recommended.

Concerns from the citizens in attendance included:

- Neighboring properties that are in the state land bank, if a tree is to fall on their property, how much are they responsible for?
- If a tree is dangling over my house, what do I do? Who is going to do something about it?
- It should come from the township that landowners must be responsible for the trees that are falling.
- What about wood that is on the ground, it is a fire hazard.

Comments from the commission members:

- Is an ordinance viable to have? What can we do?
- If an ordinance was adopted, how do we decide if a tree needs to be taken down.
- If the ordinance is something we cannot enforce, we do not adopt.

Dennis Morawa thanked the township residents for coming and encouraged them to come up with some ideas as to what they would like to see and email those ideas to him. The commission members will keep an open mind on the subject.

Reports – Building / Zoning Department (Cory Zandstra)

- A resident would like to install ground mounted solar array on their property in the front yard. The ordinance only allows for them to be installed on the side or rear. The owner owns 20 acres and is 500-600 feet off from the road. Cory does not see any problem with the placement in the front and if the decision was his, he would approve. Commission members replied that the resident would have to go to the ZBA for approval.

Reports – Board of Trustees (Jeff Ratledge)

- Reported on decisions made at the township board of trustees meeting on September 14, 2021.
- Motion to approve hiring a full-time fire chief.
- Motion to approve recommendations from planning commission on zoning ordinance changes.
- Public Hearing #2 held on September 2, for the Tri Lakes Gypsy Moth Special Assessment district. Survey to be done this fall, with spraying in the spring.
- Business park has only three lots left for sale. At this time, the board has received offers for two of those lots and there is interest in the third.

Correspondence: None

Adjourn Regular Meeting

Motion by: Jeff Ratledge **2nd by:** Steve Brandt

To Adjourn regular meeting

Vote: 4 Ayes 0 Nays 1 Absent Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned 7:35 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Vicky Esch

Vicky Esch, Recording Secretary