**MORTON TOWNSHIP**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING – July 19, 2023**

Call to Order at 5:29 P.M. by Jeff Cross  
Pledge of Allegiance by all.

Members Present: Jeff Cross, Jeff Ratledge, Larry Lenon, Travis Kizer

Members Absent: Karen McKenzie

Others Present: Jill Charron - Recording Secretary, Gary Moore – Intern, Cory Zandstra – Building Official

List of Public present: Shannon and Chris Cook, Bruce Fredericks

Approval of Minutes from June 21, 2023, Regular Meeting, as written.

Motion by: Travis Kizer

2nd by: Larry Lenon

Vote: 4 ayes 0 Nays 0 Absent 0 Abstain Motion Carried

**New Business:** Article 11 – Bylaws

1. The question was raised as to whether the bylaws can be embedded within the Zoning Ordinance or are they supposed to be separate.
2. Bylaws being separate would be easier to make a change to if needed.
3. Bylaws could become their own document and could be added to the end of the Zoning Ordinance.
4. A “Conflict-of-Interest” section needs to be added. i
5. Members elected to proceed with the bylaws being Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.
6. A public hearings will be scheduled for August 16, 2023.

Motion to elect Karen McKenzie as Secretary of the Planning Commission

Motion by: Jeff Ratledge

2nd by: Larry Lenon

Vote: 4 ayes 0 Nays 0 Absent 0 Abstain Motion Carried

**New Business:** Planning Consultant RFP

1. Jeff Cross put together a draft of the RFP.
2. Board may support using ARPA funds to hire a company to revise the entire Master Plan.
3. Should add everything that we could conceivably think of.
4. Add Jeff Cross as the contact person for the RFP.
5. Jeff Ratledge is looking for consultant groups.
6. Have a due date of 4 weeks for consultant companies to submit a proposal.
7. Schedule interviews within 2 weeks after proposal is submitted.
8. Additional 2 weeks to notify consultant after interview.

**Old Business:** Master Plan Discussion

1. Jeff Ratledge referred to Bruce Fredericks to give his opinion (based on his experience on the Planning Commission when the Master Plan was previously reviewed and revised):
   1. The consultant will tell you what items need to be in the Master Plan.
   2. Only conflict has been when we have let the vocal community take over the meeting.
   3. Morton Twp has some prime real estate, and the Gotion Plant is currently taking place.
   4. Bruce is seeing more townships going to consultants for Master Plans.
   5. Previously we had meetings and pulled from other townships.
   6. The public hearings were usually well attended. However, the public was concerned we were trying to rezone things instead of updating the Master Plan.
   7. We did not have the best maps available during our review.
   8. There was an issue once with the drain commission about conservation of wetlands.
2. The Commission would like as much public output as possible.

**Old Business:**

A. PC discussed an off-site sign on R2 property not in conformance with the Zoning Ordinance and the possible options of a Special Land Use permit or a rezoning of the parcel. Mr. and Mrs. Cook, owners of the parcel in question, presented their concerns and perspectives for consideration. The Special Land Use permit fee previously paid will be refunded. The next move is up to the property owners.

**Citizen Remarks:** None

**Reports:**

1. Building/Zoning Department (Cory Zandstra)
   1. Building permits have increased.
   2. The property owner was issued a ticket at Mr. Snyder’s produce stand. The second letter was not allowed to go out and Zandstra was instructed to issue a ticket. A SLU permit has been filed.
   3. Kilkenny house, there is a purchase agreement and closing is Friday. Ratledge said that demolition was supposed to be scheduled for tomorrow. Board approved extending demolition until after Friday.
2. Township Board (Jeff Ratledge)
   1. No updates to note.

**Correspondence:** None

**Adjourn Regular Meeting:**

Motion by: Jeff Ratledge

2nd by: Larry Lenon

Vote: 4 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Absent Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned 7:42 P.M.