

**EMPIRE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**October 15, 2024**

The Empire Township Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2024. The meeting was held at the Empire Township Hall.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Duane Shugart, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Duane Shugart, Dale DeJager, Micah Deegan, Larry Krawczak, Tom Petersen

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Dana Boomer, Recording Secretary; Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** The PC briefly discussed the agenda. **Motion by Deegan, second by Petersen to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

**ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST** – None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The PC briefly discussed the minutes of the September 17, 2024 regular meeting. **Motion by Deegan, second by DeJager to approve the September 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Cypher had previously distributed his monthly reports for September 2024. He summarized the ZA business for the month. **Motion by Deegan, second by Krawczak to acknowledge receipt of the September 2024 written reports. All in favor, motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **Sign Ordinance** – Deegan reported that he had discussed the draft ordinance with the Township Board. He specifically asked them to review the sign size and total square footage numbers. They discussed having a 12 square foot sign without a permit and up to 32 square feet in other districts. They then discussed total square footage numbers, and there was approval for 12 square feet in the residential district and 48 square feet in the other districts. They also discussed whether vile or vulgar language could be regulated, which Tim Figura is going to be looking into. DeJager stated that in Section 9.1, he thinks it should say “no sign requiring a permit...” instead of the current language. In addition, he questioned the civil infraction section and why there are two different types and levels of fines. Deegan will ask Figura about this. The PC believes that the sign ordinance is a matter for the Township Board to deal with currently. DeJager asked whether Cypher could enforce political signs in the road right-of-way – the discussion was that he can, and so can the Road Commission. The Road Commission tends to focus on clear-view issues and egregious violations, as well as complaints. **Deegan moved to table the Sign Ordinance discussion at the Planning Commission level and support the Township Board moving forward with changes. Petersen seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

- **Zoning Ordinance Review** – The PC returned to the discussion of the redline Zoning Ordinance. No further overall discussion was held of Sections 5-12. The PC held extensive discussion of Sections 13 through 18. The following changes were made:
  - Section 13.4.A – Add “unless necessary for the purposes of health, safety and welfare or to meet requirements of the Michigan State Bureau of Construction Codes.”
  - Remove Section 14.6.D.5
  - Section 15.2 – Amend to read “Assist the Township Clerk to maintain correct records...”
  - Remove Section 15.3.A.1
  - Section 15.3.B – Changed to one year, and added “The Zoning Administrator may approve an extension upon receipt of written request.”

In November, the PC will continue discussion of specific items that had previously been tabled or needed further research.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Pleasure of the Board** – Deegan stated that in the past, pre-2020, the PC frequently didn’t meet in the winters or summers. Because that has changed, he has recommended to the board that the PC salaries increase due to the increased workload. Deegan will not be at the November meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**BOARD COMMENT:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** **Motion** by Krawczak to adjourn at 8:36 pm, Petersen seconded. With no objection, DeJager adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Boomer  
Recording Secretary