

**APPROVED  
EMPIRE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**April 16, 2024**

The Empire Township Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2024. The meeting was held at the Empire Township Offices.

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

**ROLL CALL:**

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

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 DeJager 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 March 26, 2024 regular meeting. **Motion by Deegan, second by Petersen to approve the March 26, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Sue Rife – She introduced Sarah Bourgeois as their new architect. They have submitted additional documentation, and are hoping to be on next month’s agenda.

Sarah Bourgeois – She distributed a summary of the project in its current status, with phases and drawings. They have been in communication with various agencies, and believe their application is substantially complete at this time.

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Cypher had previously distributed his monthly reports for March 2024. He has received a submittal regarding the Glen Lake Manor, and is in the process of reviewing the application. It is likely that the application can be on the agenda for next month. **Motion by Deegan, second by Krawczak to acknowledge receipt of the March 2024 written reports. All in favor, motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Zoning Ordinance Review –**

The PC continued the discussion of the Zoning Ordinance. Discussion was had on numerous items from the review list. Deegan stated that the township will be using Tim Figura as the township attorney. Figura would like a heads up prior to when reviews are needed, as his schedule is quite busy and the timeline for response will likely be longer than before. Deegan discussed the sign ordinance with the board – the board would like to see recommendations

from the Planning Commission on a re-write to the police power ordinance. Regarding the radio-controlled aircraft discussion, the Township Board had a general consensus to remove the section regarding RC aircraft from the ordinance. The airport is self-governing on the use of their property under the regulations of the FAA, and so they can run RC aircraft under the airport authority, versus the township authority.

The PC discussed the timeline of reviews for Figura – the three main reviews will be the review of the overall Zoning Ordinance, the review of the new sign ordinance, and a review of a potential new wind/solar energy ordinance to match the new state law going into effect in November. Deegan will talk to Figura about his recommendations for a draft wind/solar ordinance to have the ability to implement if the ongoing initiative to repeal the law fails. Deegan will also ask Figura whether he would like to see the draft Zoning Ordinance in sections, only once all draft changes are made, or be kept in the loop as new red-line versions are distributed.

The PC continued the discussion of the Zoning Ordinance, starting with Sections 4.8 (Landscaping) and 4.9 (Lighting). The PC extensively discussed lighting, and the definitions of security and the ability to regulate security lighting.

- Section 4.4 – Remove, as duplicated in Section 5.1
- Section 4.8.C.1.b – Increase distance between trees and curb/pavement to 6’ minimum
- Section 4.9 – Remove item “B”
- Section 4.16.B – Add “except for waterfront setbacks”
- Section 5.4.B – Change to “Lot size: The lot shall be five (5) acres or a minimum of twice the size of the required minimum lot size for parcels within the applicable land use district, whichever is smaller.”
- Section 5.4.D – Add minimum size for guest houses. Change minimum size for guest houses to 500 square feet here and in Definitions.
- Section 5.8 – Remove section and references to RC aircraft facilities in zoning districts
- Update section numbers subsequent to removed sections and update Table of Contents

For the next meeting, the PC will continue to review the ZO, focusing on sections highlighted in the review list and continuing some of the outstanding discussion items. Cypher will bring additional information regarding fence heights and setbacks.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Pleasure of the Board** – Cypher will inform the PC if the Manor is to be on the agenda for next month. Deegan will look into whether the Township Hall will be available. Petersen will not be at the meeting next month.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**BOARD COMMENT:** None

**ADJOURNMENT: Motion** by Krawczak to adjourn at 9:04 pm, Petersen seconded. With no objection, Shugart adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Boomer  
Recording Secretary