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**KASSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**Monday, September 16, 2024; 7:00 p.m.**  
**Kasson Township Hall, 10988 S. Newman Road, Maple City, MI 49664**

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call Meeting to Order / Pledge of Allegiance – meeting called to order at 7 pm by Lanham, and all in attendance said the Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call of Commissioners and Staff / Recognition of Visitors
  - A. Commissioners present (roll call): Lanham, Carter, Roush, Noonan, Eftaxiadis
  - B. Staff: Zoning Administrator (ZA) Cypher, Andria Bufka – Recording Secretary
  - C. Visitors present 2
3. Consideration of Agenda: Additions or Corrections – Eftaxiadis moves to approve as is, Noonan seconds, all vote aye and the agenda is approved.
4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest - None
5. Approval of Minutes–August 19, 2024 – the PC points out corrections of two names – Carter moves to approve with corrections, Roush seconds, all vote aye and the minutes are approved.
6. Correspondence Received – None received
7. General Public Comment:

Jerry Konczal informs the PC about a large piece of land (county dump) and sees this as an opportunity for affordable housing. There's nothing going on there now.  
Chris Hauke: she states that we need Workforce housing in Kasson Twp. She's retired but sees that we need it. It needs to be planned and zoned that way. That will bring people and families with kids in. We should have a mix of people not just those who can afford it.  
Lanham thanks them for their comments.

8. Area Reports
  - A. Chairperson – Commissioner Lanham - nothing
  - B. Secretary – Commissioner Eftaxiadis - nothing
  - C. Township Board – Commissioner Carter - nothing
  - D. Zoning Board of Appeals – Commissioner Noonan – no report
  - E. Zoning Administrator's Report – ZA ZA Cypher reports that he emailed his monthly report out. The PC did not have any questions about his report. He reports that there was a violation in early spring, the farm on Coleman that was having a regular barn

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sale with vendors. He spoke with the owner and she got in compliance. She mentioned that there may be one in October, he left a message about it asking if she was having it. As of the date of the meeting he has received no response from the owner to confirm or deny an October event at her farm.

One other comment: suggests reviewing the by-laws first so that it gets discussed. The PC initially agrees to that but then decide to limit the ordinance discussion to 30 minutes. Eftaxiadis asks about where the county dump is. Noonan says it's owned by the state now and it's been closed for 35 years.

9. New Business - none

10. Old Business

- A. Ordinance updates discussion – Lanham asks what township Attorney Grier said about parking. ZA Cypher doesn't have a report back from Grier yet. Lanham sums up what was discussed in the last meeting. Asks if there are other areas of concern for the PC. Waiting for Grier to respond about 5.1.3

Lanham asks if anyone else wants to discuss something in the ordinance. No other discussion from the PC. Lanham asks them about screening gravel pits with berms and trees. Lanham gave an example of a buffer that's lasted. Concerned that when the trees grow, and they are 20 feet up on a berm, they may topple over. They discuss the tree berm on Baatz – Noonan states that it was 90' from the center of the road. The trees planted as a buffer on 669 are mostly dead and the living trees are volunteers.

The PC discusses changing the ordinance back to the way it was. They discuss only using trees and not having berms. Noonan suggests going back to how it was – Roush and Carter voice their agreement. ZA Cypher clarifies that it's called a greenbelt. The PC discusses 90 feet from center of the road being enough for the trees, and not to have them planted too close together or they won't live. ZA Cypher asks if they should mandate irrigation.

The PC discusses if this is too much for the applicant to have to do. They discuss the availability of water trucks vs irrigation or adding a well. The PC considers adding language with a time frame where irrigation is required, 3 or 5 years. They further discuss what if existing trees are there? They decide that they cannot control if a person keeps a tree or not, but the ordinance is written to preserve existing trees. Any new commercial approvals should have a greenbelt around it – states Noonan, with all members nodding in agreement.

Lanham asks if they need to specify tree size required and ZA Cypher says it's a nice standard. The PC then discusses commercial buildings that abut to residential areas.

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Screening has been something that ZA ZA Cypher has been chasing since he got here. Noonan says the trees should be at least 2 years in any new greenbelt. ZA Cypher suggests deferring to the experts – County Forester or Soil Erosion dept. Lanham asks to get the Forester at the next meeting. ZA Cypher states that he will try to get in touch with the county about it.

The PC invites Konczal to speak up based on his experience. He states that with greenbelts the watering is crucial and that the current drought is an example. He informs them that it is better to plant smaller trees and in fall, not spring. They should be looking at diseases and get a mix of trees, red and white pine. He states that they don't want all the same tree in case it's infected with disease. There should be mulching and not just watering. Drip is hard without a water source. A truck with a tank can work. It's easier to plant a smaller tree – 2 years old.

ZA Cypher asks if putting an age on the tree can replace putting a caliper measurement on the tree as a requirement. Conifers are sold by height, not caliper. The PC instructs Konczal where to go to see newest planting on a berm. The PC agrees that it's still good to talk to a forester and not put Konczal in a tough spot if something about his recommendation doesn't work out.

ZA Cypher talks about what a Forester can do for the discussion, after reviewing any planned site. Soil sample, review of site, make recommendations, etc. ZA Cypher: most recent Forester recommendation he has seen was only a list of trees, not the rest. The PC is discussing this in all districts, not just in the gravel district. Roush refers the PC to page 75 of the ordinance and the description of landscaping.

Lanham, 5.1.7 “.....buffering land usage” asks if they should change the terminology to greenbelt. The PC discusses the difference between buffering and greenbelt. Noonan suggests leaving it the way it is. Noonan suggests following the ordinance and handling each situation as it comes, because they have something to work with.

ZA Cypher references a worksheet he provided over a year ago. Asks the PC to consider no uses by right for businesses, he wants the PC to be able to regulate that. More and more places are doing this, as some people are asking forgiveness after, OR there is a meeting but no public notice about the special use that a business wants to do. (Section 4.7.2) Special Land Uses – example Forested 4.7: single family and duplex dwellings, home occupations, residential plan developments, adult foster care, family childcare home, foster family home – feels these should be moved into Special Uses.

ZA Cypher discusses keeping single family dwelling and home occupations under his administration, but the others should be moved to be managed and approved by PC. If uses come in that aren't appropriate for a neighborhood, the PC should consider

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moving certain things to a special use area. The PC agrees to let ZA Cypher make suggestions about what could/should be moved for the next meeting.

Eftaxiadis asks what the remaining life is of the gravel pits. Noonan states there is anywhere from 30-50 years. When Kasson vs Kaizer went to court, there were expert witnesses that testified about the life of gravel pits. He suggests checking meeting minutes. Eftaxiadis se wants to find out the remaining life, and maybe have it morph into a subdivision next. Says in SW Michigan, that's what has happened. The PC discusses that it could become a subdivision or a lake.

- B. By-Laws review – PC discusses the email from Tom Grier. Lanham thinks the feedback is cut and dried. Lanham clarifies if a Public Hearing is required or not – no. ZA Cypher says it's customary to send to the township board for approval next. The PC discusses how to go about doing this. Roush moves that we send a copy of the proposed amendment of the PC bylaws to the township board for review and approval, Eftaxiadis seconds the motion, all vote aye and the motion is passed.

ZA Cypher: Grier's letter of 8/19/24 – there was a discussion about more and more townships having a special temporary events ordinance. A police power ordinance is what it would be, and not require a public hearing. ZA will send them what Empire township did, after a 2-3 year review. It's wordy, but no stones are unturned. He feels this is a good standard to follow. ZA Cypher doesn't want to reinvent the wheel, but to customize for what makes sense for each Township. ZA to forward the Empire ordinance to the PC for review. Carter to inform the Township that this is coming.

### 11. General Public Comment

Konczal: discusses alleged experts and county Foresters, who plant trees with known diseases. They also don't always consider trees needing to be deer proof. Red and white pine are deer proof. He would like to review any plan brought forth by so-called experts.

Hauke: when you do public notices, suggestion that the notice be published on the township website. Under right to farm, doesn't it include concentrated livestock and operations? ZA Cypher communicates that MDARD is the regulatory agency. Noonan states that there are no more farmers and no new ones coming.

### 12. Comments from the Commissioners

Carter: affordable housing – the cost to build is astronomical. They will have to have a job somewhere. He sees residents going to GA or TC to work. He's heard that there will be 200 Filipino nurses being brought in to work at Munson.

Eftaxiadis: October 7<sup>th</sup> the county will have a workshop on the new state laws regarding solar farms. We currently have little control over sizing. Eftaxiadis will attend to learn, and to understand how they are constructed. He's hoping the PC can control some

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aspects of solar farms; spacing, other, etc.

Carter wonders why would you put solar panels in Kasson township. The PC discussed STR's, but no conclusion. Lanham, it's not an issue, the other townships are waiting for state regulations on STR's.

13. Next Meeting: Monday, October 21, 2024; Kasson Township Hall

14. Adjournment - Eftaxiadis moves to adjourn, Noonan seconds, all vote aye and the meeting is adjourned at 8:07 pm.