

  
**WEST LAKELAND TOWNSHIP**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
May 18, 2023

Present: Mr. Mark Votava, Mr. Del Miske, Mr. Dave Sanocki, Ms. Rachel Dana, Ms. Betsy Vance, Mr. Sean Flaherty, Supervisor Philip Moosbrugger

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Mark Votava called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, May 18, 2023

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Ms. Dana moved to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Votava, the motion carried.

**Tompkins 12630 12 St N Accessory building proposal**

Resident was not present at the meeting. Topic was not discussed.

**Proposed Ordinance Text Amendment for Digital Sign**

Mr. Jake Steen (Larkin Hoffman) representing Stephen H Nelson Land Company presented a recommendation for a text amendment to allow for digital advertising signage. The Nelson Land Company owns the nonconforming 1.7 lot with a sign standard at the corner of Stagecoach Trail and Hudson Road. In the 1990's the township issued a permit for a billboard, and was rejected by Washington County who, at the time, had priority in the zoning authority. It has been vacant since and has challenges in terms of size and access. Previously proposed a digital sign in 2017. What is presented in a proposed text amendment to allow a digital billboard as a conditional use subject to stringent conditions, including management of light, size restrictions and spacing restrictions. Mr. Votava suggested that the concept be reviewed by the town board to determine the desire of the board to continue with an amendment to the ordinance.

**Concept Proposal for Ordinance Amendment to allow Solar Farm as a conditional use in the SFE Zone**

The board requested the planning commission review the proposed language for an ordinance amendment to allow for solar farm use in the SFE district as a conditional use. Mr. Matt Wolf presented a concept draft which provides for an overlay district surrounding the airport overlay zone for solar farm use, with proposed conditions to provide for screening, setback and other concerns. It is his opinion that the location on 30<sup>th</sup> Street is one of the few locations where a solar farm would be acceptable and viable, with an additional layer of a developer's agreement for each installation to address concerns. It was noted that MAC would allow access between the lots for solar. Mr. Dana suggested that any modification consider applications across the township, and not be focused on this single location. Mr. Flaherty expressed a concern that any update of the proposed language would be an approval of the solar farm in the SFE district. He does not support that use, regardless of conditions, in the SFE district. Mr. Votava will bring back the feedback that the change in use is not supported, but should the board continue to pursue this direction, that the conditions not be constrained to this location, setbacks be maximized, and robust screening be emphasized.

**Recodification of Town Code**

Supervisor Moosbrugger found a potential resource through the Minnesota Association of Townships and Mr. Votava found resources through the sector representative of the Met Council. After consulting some of these resources, the estimate for the recodification would be around \$6,000. A formal proposal is pending.

**Building Permit Fee Schedule**

The board directed the fees to be reviewed as there is uncertainty whether we are charging too much, or charging too little. Mr. Votava referenced the state statute 236B.123 regarding formulation of building schedules. Mr. Isaac Stensland pointed out that West Lakeland includes the plan review fees into the permit fee schedule, whereas the IBC standard and state statute lists those fees separately. It was noted that a number of smaller jobs, such as roofs, windows and such are charged a flat rate. It was noted that the flat rate services are not referenced on the fee

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schedule. Mr. Votava requested that the building inspector provide the flat rate service fees and the time justification studies they have done to support those fees in other communities.

**Township Fee Schedule**

Mr. Flaherty redrafted the township fee schedule, noting the fees and the ordinance sections referenced. There were gaps and ambiguities that need to be addressed. The planning commission agreed to review the document and return to discuss at the next meeting. Ms. Dana recommended that the contracts associated with these fees, such as animal collection, be reviewed to ensure the costs are appropriate relative to the contract.

**Building Use Policy**

Ms. Dana asked if there was additional work on the part of the planning commission regarding the policies for the use of the town hall. There is a concern that the building remodel should be consistent with the agreement for use. There is no clarity on how the township will proceed with the use of the building. At the time of purchase, the planning commission took it on themselves to draft proposed documents. Ms. Dana will take the proposed documents for policies, procedures and application for use to the building committee for review. The documents are drafts, without approval from the town board.

The consideration of online or video meetings was discussed, with no action taken.

**Adjourn**

The date for the next meeting was confirmed on June 15, 2023. Having no further business, Ms. Dana moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Sanocki, the motion carried. Mr. Votava adjourned the meeting at 9:54 PM

Respectfully Submitted,



Elizabeth A. Vance  
Secretary