

VILLAGE OF BEULAH PLANNING COMMISSION

Keith Behm, Chair – term expires 10/2025

Annie Browning, Village Council Rep - term expires 12/2024 Ed Popour – term expires 10/2026

Debbie Smith, Vice Chair – term expires 10/2024 Barb Skurdall – Secretary term expires 10/2026

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, February 20, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.
Village of Beulah Office
7228 Commercial Street, Beulah, MI 49617

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

- I. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance – Roll Call
Meeting called to order by: Chariman Behm at 4:00 pm
Roll Call:
Behm – present
Browning – present
Popour – present
Skurdall – present
Smith – present
- II. Approval of Agenda (additions/subtractions)
Behm moves to approve the agenda, Browning seconds, all present vote yay, motion is approved
- III. Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest – no conflicts of interest
- IV. Approval of Minutes: October 17, 2023 – Popour moves to approve, Browning seconds, all present vote yay, the motion and minutes are approved

Workshop notes from 1/16/2024 are acknowledged by Keith Behm– impromptu meeting at library with much discussion.
- V. Correspondence
None
- VI. Public Comment - (limited to three minutes per person unless extended by chair)
Jeff Bowley – here for Tom Waring who attended last time. No specific comment at this time.
- VII. Presentation of Area Reports -
ZA Cypher – requests that members who attended watershed meeting provide an update.
Browning – Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay – several townships attended. They will not drive anything, the municipalities will. The goals of the group were discussed, and brainstorming took place. The short term goal is for all municipalities to have same or similar ordinances. One factor that complicates this is that the land changes around the lake, sometimes the road is right next to the lake, there is no way to have uniform setbacks.

Smith: Informs PC that she made a comment at previous meeting that was misinterpreted. Clarifies that PC makes recommendations, not decisions. ZA clarifies that it was a hearsay discussion.

ZA – Citizen Planner course is a guidance document, not the law. Specific issues may need to be addressed with attorney. It's just a good guidance document, but it hasn't been vetted by legal counsel.

Land Trust – primary speaker could help PC with the Master Plan. Cypher: we are in the early stage of Master Plan. We will have public hearings on the Master Plan. Outside organization should keep in contact with us, look at meeting minutes, etc. We aren't obligated to inform them. We're all learning through the process. FACLT – could come to give insight as PC works through the Master Plan process. Examples provided about what has happened in other townships. Michigan zoning process allows for a possible remedy if someone is aggrieved.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Meeting dates for 2024

March 19, 2024

April 16, 2024

May 21, 2024

June 18, 2024

July 16, 2024

August 20, 2024

September 17, 2024

October 15, 2024

November 19, 2024

December 17, 2024

January 21, 2025

February 18, 2025

March 18, 2025

Overlay meeting with Crystal Lake is March 5th. Browning to provide info on location. Browning moves to approve, Skurdall seconds, all present vote yay, the meeting dates and motion are approved. Skurdall notes that she won't attend the March meeting, Behm excuses her from next meeting.

b. Election of Officers

Behm, if someone else would like to be Chairman, he's OK with that. Or we can table for a month and let other think about it. Election discussion postponed until next meeting. Popour moves to leave officers as is. No one seconds. Browning clarifying if they can add new members. Cypher: Village Council would need to be involved. Behm motions to table until next month, Browning seconds the motion, 4 of 5 vote yay (all but Popour), motion carried to table election of officers until next month.

c. Noise / Nuisance ordinance discussion – ZA

We briefly discussed at last meeting in October. Someone inquired about noise/nuisance in ordinance. We have nuisance, but no decibel levels. If those are put in place, a baseline must be established for level of noise before a nuisance can be reported. Equipment would have to be available. Example: motorcycle and decibel level. Court decides what is considered reasonable. Ultimately it would go to Village Council, then courts. It's easier to keep it vague and not make it too specific. Jake braking is a thing for people who live near a busy highway or street. When state has a trunkline – you have to

go into a traffic study. State police will conduct study at a cost to council and village. Historically this can lead to an increase in the speed limit. We can also consider talking to sheriff or state police. Truckers can't stop on a dime, sometimes this is required. Some systems can be installed to help this noise on a truck, but it's expensive. The only restriction is load limit for trucks. Lobbying is going on about this issue. State law and court has already decided this.

Smith: brought this up when they were fixing the roads this summer. Someone else told her that a study risks an increase in the speed limit. Can't understand how a flourishing business would be impacted if the speed limit were increased. Especially without turn lanes. Where do we want to grow, where should people be going? Smith feels that iconic businesses like Cherry Hut should be protected. Cypher: other areas have created a walkway over the busy road. MDOT has a marker, and it can be a death. If it isn't broke, don't fix it. Popour reports that on average, 10K cars a day go down 31.

Smith: was approached and passed the buck to the Village Council. People are putting cars and equipment on their lawn. It looks bad. Cypher: Could be zoning because 2 parking places are mandated per unit. If they are selling or not plated, it could be a zoning issue. They can write a complaint and submit to ZA before going to Village Council. Some things are grandfathered in. Private covenances and deed restrictions are not enforced by Zoning. They can go to court, but it's difficult to enforce.

Behm turns meeting over to Cypher.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

a. 2023 Village of Beulah Owner/Resident Survey – ZA comments on processing results

Cypher: noted Village Council thought font too small, and need bigger charts.

Ed – surprised that only 15% live here year round. When is property typically rented?

Looking at those 2 graphs, locals are outnumbered by 2nd homeowners. Actual count vs surveys sent is being calculated. Results posted online by the end of the month in a PDF.

There is a separate tab for the Citizen Survey on Village of Beulah website. Planning and Zoning has a section. There's a link on the first page for agendas and meeting minutes. Cypher will confirm percentages.

Browning clarifies, can public hearings impact master plan, yes, plan not final until Council approves it.

b. Master Plan update from ZA

Copies just handed out today. Cypher suggests reading through the survey and then go into the master plan. Master Plan is still in draft form. Things are highlighted. Asks PC to review and answer, are we on the right track? Master Plan from early 90's was very professional. Using snippets of that and updating to present day. Suggests further discussion at a later date after PC members have had a chance to review survey and master plan. Master plan still a work in progress.

Browning: her feedback on Master Plan, it looks significantly better than previous version.

Behm: people who live here want this to happen. Cypher: we can add photos to tie things together as well. That's what he means by a work in progress. Comments welcomed.

Behm: Reed City wants to adjust their zoning so that Dollar General can go downtown. He considers Beulah to have nice character and don't want a Dollar General downtown.

Cypher: Dollar General is a retail business, and they are allowed in certain districts. Zoning districts can be created that prevent certain businesses. Get a plan together where it could work for preventing an undesirable business. Exclusionary zoning.

Behm: Reed City had to rezone. Character – having residential place downtown on the first

floor, this isn't a goal. Cypher: character in a community is increasingly important. Bring comments to the next meeting about the Master Plan. One on one discussions are ok, no group discussions.

- X. Zoning Administrator Comment – discussed above about Master Plan and Survey
 - XI. Planning Commission Comment
 - a. Crystal Lake Update – Browning – discussed earlier in the meeting
 - XII. Public Comment - (limited to three minutes per person unless extended by chair)
Behm thanks Tim for the Master Plan. Not a speed race – Cypher.
 - XIII. Adjournment – Popour Moves to adjourn, seconded by Browning, all vote yay, meeting adjourned at 5:19 pm, Next meeting, March 19th, 2024.
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NOTE: No Village of Beulah Council business will be conducted at this meeting.