

VILLAGE OF BEULAH PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Beulah Village Hall

7228 Commercial Street

Beulah, MI 49617

I. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Behm called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Keith Behm, Chairman; Annie Browning, Village Council Rep; Ed Popour, Member; Barb Skurdall, Secretary; Debbie Smith, Member

Staff: Tim Cypher, Zoning Administrator; Allison Hubley-Patterson, Recording Secretary

Guests: None

II. Approval of Agenda (additions/subtractions)

Chairman Behm asked for a motion to approve the August agenda as presented. **Browning moved to approve the August agenda as amended; Popour seconded. All present in favor; motion carried.**

III. Conflicts of Interest - none

IV. Approval of Minutes: July 18, 2023

Changes to the July 18, 2023 minutes were noted and Hubley-Patterson will make these corrections. The "approved" minutes will then be sent to the Village of Beulah office staff for posting to the website.

Chairman Behm asked for a motion to approve the July 18, 2023 minutes as amended. **Browning moved to approve the July 18, 2023 minutes as amended; Skurdall seconded. All present in favor; motion carried.**

V. Correspondence - none

VI. Public Comment – (limited to three minutes per person unless extended by chair) - none

VII. Presentation of Area Reports

As part of the ongoing discussion regarding parking in the downtown area, Popour stated that he distributed a two-minute video to all PC members which explains angle parking on one side of the street with parallel parking on the other side. He noted that striping down the middle is also an issue and stated that the Village owns their own striping machine. He would like the PC to ask the Village Council to obtain guidelines from the Road Commission.

Popour explained that the video shows parking at a 30-degree angle coming down Main Street from the north; this provides a nice angle for people to park and they could easily get in and out of their vehicle. This proposed arrangement is different than before as drivers would have a visual of the approaching traffic with virtually no blind spots. He also proposed that signage be added at the corner so that people coming off of US-31 would begin to slow down and not speed into the downtown area. With this new parking configuration, parking would increase by 10 to 20 cars. The angle parking would be on the lake side and the parallel parking would be on the creek side.

Smith asked if the Village needs to do anything about electric vehicle charging stations. Popour replied that this is a matter for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to address.

Smith asked if the PC should prepare a proposal for the Village Council. Cypher will send Popour the Uniform Traffic Code but stated that the information submitted to the Village Council should come from an engineer. Cypher added that he can assist in this area and mentioned that he has contacts at MDOT. Browning shared that Deanne Loll, who serves on the Village Council, will be interested in this as she is the Chair of Streets and Sidewalks. Smith stated that a great deal of work has already been done. Cypher informed the PC that they can help the Village Council with this project and added that the Village Council is using him to help with a variety of projects.

Popour stated that Jeff Cypert suggested that the two feet of pavers be removed near the parking spaces; however, Popour noted that there would be a huge cost here. It was stated that there are other things in this area that could be impacted such as the storm sewer, etc.

Skurdall asked about the angle of the parking spaces in Frankfort. Popour stated that he is not sure but thinks the angle is 30%. Chairman Behm will look to see if he has a possible contact for Popour in Frankfort. Popour stated that he would also contact Elk Rapids as their parking is tight; this is similar to the situation in the Village of Beulah.

Popour motioned to move forward a plan for parallel and angle parking. Angle parking would be on the east side of Benzie Boulevard from Clark Street to Industrial at a sharper angle. Parallel parking would be on the east side of Benzie Boulevard. He also proposed moving the center line over 12 inches to the east side to give equal width. Popour also moved to look into placing a stop sign at the corner of Clark Street and Benzie Boulevard. Browning seconded. All present in favor; motion carried.

Cypher cautioned the PC that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes an average of how traffic is flowing. He stated that a traffic study should be conducted when there is not a lot of tourist traffic in the area.

Popour asked if the Village of Beulah has the authorization to put up a stop sign. Cypher replied, "Yes", and this is because the Village of Beulah controls the streets.

Browning reported that progress with Eden Brook has stalled due to the fact that Mr. Maris is not pleased about paying water and sewer bills. Cypher stated that the owner had previously threatened that if he had to pay these expenses, he would not proceed with the project. Cypher reported that Mr. Maris believed that one REU should cover the entire space but legal counsel is discussing this currently; there could potentially be a lawsuit in this matter. Cypher thinks that the Village Council would contest their allegations.

Smith asked if the condos that are located in the courthouse building pay individually for services. Browning replied, "Yes". Cypher stated that each unit is deemed a "dwelling" and added that this is what the REU is based on. At Eden Brook, they would like to have both short-term and seasonal rentals. The developer previously stated that he could not obtain financing and pleaded his case to get some monetary relief.

Browning stated that there is not a lot going on at the present time from the Village perspective. She thinks the PC should encourage the Village Council to consider climate change when undertaking any projects. Browning was approached by the Frankfort Land Trust and asked if this is something that is wanted in the Village of Beulah. She noted that this helps with affordable housing and added that she would be willing to help this get started. Browning believes this would greatly assist young people to be able to afford a home.

Popour asked if the Granary could be used for this purpose. Cypher stated that this is probably the only practical place for this and he asked Browning to have the Land Trust come speak to the Village Council so they could discuss a potential partnership. Popour added that young people cannot afford to live in Beulah.

Cypher discussed the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program where a tax abatement is received for ten years. This helps to attract low income-type housing and also helps with long-term planning.

Skurdall reported that she recently received an email message announcing the "Reveal" of Cottage #10 in Sunkissed Hills. The message included a drone photograph which showed that the cottage has a deck and a boat on the premises. It is necessary to sign up to tour the property. The two cottages that are furthest to the west are completed and now being shown. Skurdall hopes that the attitudes of the Board of Commissioners are evolving. She added that the PC must continue to educate this group.

Browning will see if the Land Trust will come speak to the Village Council. She will work to get them on the agenda. Cypher added that the Land Trust could provide quite a bit of information in a ten- to fifteen-minute presentation. He noted that there is often a stigma with having "affordable housing" next door to you.

Chairman Behm stated that the PC should have in their files a list of people in Benzie County who would be good contacts. Skurdall stated that all groups have discussed having the attention of the Board of Commissioners and these groups have attended various meetings and presented.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Planning Commissioners Handbook

Cypher stated that this is a good resource.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

1. 2023 Village of Beulah Owner/Resident Survey – continue discussion

Discussion ensued regarding the 2023 Village of Beulah Owner/Resident Survey that will be distributed this fall. Sending out the survey with the water or tax bills is not an option. The survey will most likely be sent standard mail and a mailing list will be provided by the Village of Beulah staff. Surveys will also be available at the office. It was suggested that the voter registration list could be used to compare property owners to renters.

Smith volunteered to stuff envelopes; she added that there are most likely under 400 residents. The process for distributing the survey to business owners was discussed. Cypher stated that surveys could also be mailed to this group and cautioned the PC to be careful not to alienate anyone. Smith reiterated that she could assemble volunteers to help stuff envelopes and place the mailing labels on the envelopes.

Browning stated that Ms. Carpenter would need language for the upcoming newsletter by Labor Day announcing that the survey will be distributed. Cypher reminded the PC that they previously discussed that the survey should be returned within 30 days. Staff will assist with tabulating the results and putting together pie charts to show the data. Chairman Behm inquired about having some type of public event to ensure that the PC has obtained as many opinions as possible. Cypher informed the PC that they should hold off on having a public forum until the results of the survey have been tabulated. It was agreed that the public forum could possibly be held in October.

It was mentioned that Popour's term will soon be expiring. He is willing to continue to serve on the PC; thus, arrangements will be made for the Village Council to re-appoint him to the PC. Skurdall inquired as to when her term expires; staff will check with the Village of Beulah office staff. Popour informed the PC that he will be absent from the September meeting; Skurdall will be absent in October.

Chairman Behm moved to change the date of the September meeting to September 12th;

Smith seconded. All present in favor; motion carried.

2. Village of Beulah Master Plan

Cypher stated that all PC members received a copy of the draft Master Plan and asked if there were any questions. Skurdall stated that the Master Plan would be impressive if the PC could do everything that was noted in the document. Cypher stated that this is possible as the Master Plan serves as a guidance document and added that they can be used for approximately 20 years.

Smith commented that she noticed the change in population figures. Cypher stated that this is cyclical. It was discussed that the growth area in Benzie County is Lake Ann which is a bedroom community to Traverse City.

The PC members commented that they are very pleased thus far with the revised Master Plan as it is a major improvement from the previous version. Cypher stated that comments from the PC are helpful because this provides the "local flavor" that staff may not have. Chairman Behm stated that the PC wants the document to embrace the people of Beulah. Browning inquired as to the next steps. Cypher replied that staff will continue to work on the document and asked all PC members to please email him directly with their comments. He asked that the PC be generic with their comments as a broad approach is preferable.

Popour shared a story about the history of cart racing in Beulah and wondered if this could be brought back as an activity. Cypher asked what Beulah is known for. Smith replied that the Village was previously known for smelt. Skurdall stated that the Fall Fest and Winter Fest are very popular. Cypher asked if the Chamber of Commerce is active and Skurdall replied that this is located in Benzonia.

Popour discussed that taxes on hotel rooms are currently 11%; two percent of this goes to Traverse City to promote events but he stated that the money is not coming back to Beulah. He stated that the only business which benefits from this arrangement is Crystal Mountain. Popour shared that a check is sent each quarter but they no longer receive the same services as before. The money is going to big business but the "little guy" is getting squeezed.

Smith discussed the marijuana tax money that is going to Benzonia and asked why Beulah could not benefit from this since we pay Benzonia tax. It was noted that Beulah will not receive tax revenue because the Village declined to have a marijuana dispensary.

Chairman Behm asked the PC members to read through the Master Plan and send their comments to Cypher. There will be further discussion once the PC has the results from the upcoming survey.

Cypher explained that the Master Plan will be sent to the Village Council. The PC and VC will both have Public Hearings in this matter; thus, it would be nice to finish the Master Plan this year.

X. Zoning Administrator Comment

Cypher reported that he issued two land use permits, one for a side-entry mudroom and one for a porch addition. A land use permit was also issued to Everstream as they are in town laying fiberoptic cable.

Regarding Eden Brook, the matter is currently pending and Cypher is waiting to hear back from the applicant's attorney.

Cypher has a pending investigation which involves a decision that both he and his predecessor made regarding siding. Today is the last day of their appeal process and Cypher stated that a variance can still be requested from the Village Council. The issue in this matter relates to "style" and this is not specifically addressed in the zoning ordinance. Cypher stated that this is really a war between neighbors.

Smith asked if the Village of Beulah can place cables underground. Cypher replied, "Yes" and added that many townships are going this route but it can also be cost prohibitive. If the

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municipality elects to go underground, grant funding or deep pockets are needed.

XI. Planning Commission Comment

Browning stated that there have been many articles recently in the Traverse City Record Eagle regarding PCs and she encouraged everyone to be on the lookout for articles related to housing, etc.

XII. Public Comment – none

XIII. Adjournment

Chairman Behm moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m. All present in favor, motion carried.

As discussed previously, the next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. at the Village of Beulah Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Hubley-Patterson
Recording Secretary

Respectfully re-submitted as Approved Minutes,

Annie Browning
Village Council Representative and Temporary Recording Secretary

VILLAGE OF BEULAH

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S JULY 2023 MONTHLY SUMMARY AND ZONING

ADMINISTRATOR'S JULY 2023 REPORT