

VILLAGE OF BEULAH PLANNING COMMISSION

Keith Behm, Chair – term expires 10/2025

Annie Browning, Village Council Rep - term expires 12/2024 Barb Skurdall - term expires 10/2026

Ed Popour – term expires 10/2026

Debbie Smith – term expires 10/2024

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, May 21, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.
Village of Beulah Office
7228 Commercial Street, Beulah, MI 49617

MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order at 4:00 pm – Pledge of Allegiance – Roll Call
In attendance: Behm, Browning, Smith, Skurdall, Popour, ZA Cypher, Recording Secretary Bufka
Jim Thompson – public
Steve Stevens - public

- II. Approval of Agenda (additions/subtractions) – Browning moved to approve as amended, 2 new items, Smith seconded, all in attendance voted aye, and the agenda was approved.

- III. Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest - none

- IV. Approval of Minutes: April 16, 2024 Browning moved to approve as amended, Popour seconded, all in attendance voted aye, and the April meeting minutes were approved.

- V. Correspondence

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

- VII. Presentation of Area Reports –
Browning – went to Honor PC Meeting. Received a copy of the Annual Report and felt like it was something the PC could also create annually. It was agreed upon that the Zoning Admin and Staff will create an annual PC report in Jan 2025 for Feb Township meeting
Browning attended the Benzie County Inland Lake Water Consortium – led by Benzie Conservation District and there were about 20 attendees.
Skurdall –DNR changed the definition of wetlands and there is no recourse. Attendee Stevens comments: saw that the DNR changed the definition of wetlands, Sunset Hills can do what they want because wetlands are no longer there. Only wetlands if they have running water or a stream or a river. He has not been able to verify that yet. The Township Board will be invited to a meeting (input session) about a park between the VoB and Benzonia. Narrow point at the area of the outlet with universally accessible for kayaks and parking. Parks and Rec will invite the VoB Board.

- VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion about undeveloped land for low income housing – PC shows ZA Cypher 2 lots (10-02-506 and 10-02-516) and he says they are zoned residential conservation. ZA Cypher reviews ordinance to understand ability to develop on these lots. The use is permitted, set up at low density with a lot of open space. There is supported language so no zoning change would have to be made. A developer could come in with a PUD, but would the Township Board support that? Workforce housing is more difficult than low income. There may be development costs involved, depending on grades and roads, etc. ZA Cypher would prefer to get permission from Village Council to pursue as a joint venture. The wealth in the area can make it challenging to qualify for grants. Subsidized housing is strict. Would the Village be willing to match dollars? ZA Cypher to talk to Don Simpson about this. (Homestretch) They have a varying segments of payments/housing. Behm, wants to become educated about the programs available to undertake something like this. If the Village is interested, we could get someone here to discuss with the Board. The job of the PC is to make recommendations. Determine highest and best use, get appraisals, up front costs with no guarantees.

Browning suggests that the Land Trust be invited to one of these meetings and will reach out to her contact.

b. Electric charging station grant(s) for 2025 – Popour inquired about putting a charging station at the resort and at the back of the govt building. Working with For Love of Water (FLOW) – Because it's on 31, those are areas that they want to put in both fast charging and overnight charging. Neighboring resorts and towns have the charging stations. Popour was told they are matching dollar for dollar in the grant.

c. Annual reports – see earlier conversation

IX. OLD BUSINESS

a. Master Plan update –

- Review and discuss comments from May 8th meeting, continue review – Smith moves to discuss in next special meeting, Popour seconds. There are maps missing, that's the biggest shortfall, but ZA Cypher should have them this week or next. ZA Cypher clarifies that the PC can make the changes they want. Smith agrees that it was a good starting document, and they are trying to word it to make it more Beulah.
- Natural environment vs. rip rap – Skurdall wants to know what recommendation they should make to the Village Council under this bullet. How can Beulah set an example for the other townships around Crystal Lake? Skurdall lives on the North Shore of the Lake and they don't use rip rap or concrete. They do this through planting perennials. She wants long term, big protection of Crystal Lake. ZA Cypher: for a natural looking frontage, EGLE has suggestions. Having a general statement about resource impact, but individual property owners have a right to protect as they see fit. Skurdall: if there were seawalls, it wouldn't protect the lake. She wants to set an example with planting native plants to protect. ZA Cypher confirms that there is an ordinance. Smith – suggests referencing the ordinance about the watershed. As long as people aren't violating there's nothing that they can control about how a homeowner protects their waterfront.
Attendee Stevens: comments about the document that has been available since the 1990's. Barb likes his rip rap because of his plants. Browning: Benzie Conservation District expert is coming to the Village of Beulah Township meeting.
Attendee Shapiro: Native Edge is a business dedicated to native plants and could help lake front homeowners with education on plants.
- Special Meeting in June – meeting notice to be resent, PC members to respond

FINAL

- X. Zoning Administrator Comment – ZA Cypher will try to be part of the next meeting. He can call in if he can't attend. He believes the PC is on the right track going forward. Normally there's a purpose for the statements to meet state law requirements. Popour feels it would have been better if Cypher was there. ZA Cypher clarifies that there is flexibility to change the Master Plan, as long as there is consensus. No restrictions on the draft.
 - XI. Planning Commission Comment – Browning: wants to challenge everyone here to continue at their pace.
 - XII. Public Comment - (limited to three minutes per person unless extended by chair)
Cindy Shapiro – Browning said there were sound difficulties with people not being able to hear properly in the meeting room and asked Cindy to attend to evaluate. She made suggestions about how people could hear better. Put chairs in half circle. Don't talk over each other, coughing or ac can be loud.
Steve Stevens: agreed with Cindy that it is difficult to hear. He had some difficulty and doesn't wear hearing aids. In the past he represented the Village with the county on the Master Plan. Recommends to review County MP to look for relevance in the VoB MP.
 - XIII. Adjournment – Browning moves to adjourn the meeting and Popour seconds, all vote aye and Smith adjourns the meeting at 5:21 pm.
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NOTE: No Village of Beulah Council business will be conducted at this meeting.