

**CHOCOLAY TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Monday, September 18, 2023 Minutes**

**I. Meeting Call to Order**

Chair Ryan Soucy called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**II. Roll Call**

Members present at roll call:

Ryan Soucy (Chair)  
George Meister (Vice Chair)  
Donna Mullen-Campbell (Secretary)  
Don Rhein (Board)  
Stephanie Gencheff  
Kendall Milton

Members absent at roll call:

Rebecca Sloan (Vice Secretary)

Staff present:

Richard Bohjanen (Township Supervisor), Dale Throenle (Planning Director / Zoning Administrator)

**III. Additional Agenda Items / Approval of Agenda**

Soucy requested that a discussion of Planning Commission absences be added to the agenda.

*Milton moved, Rhein seconded, to approve the agenda as changed.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

**IV. Minutes**

**A. August 21, 2023 joint meeting**

**B. August 21, 2023 regular meeting**

*Rhein moved, Gencheff seconded, to approve the minutes as presented.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

**V. Public Comment**

Nancy Richards, 495 County Road 480

Spoke on the desire to split her property of 17 acres with her two siblings but could not because of the twenty acre minimum of the AF zoning district.

**VI. Presentations**

None

## **VII. Unfinished Business**

None

## **VIII. New Business**

### **A. Discussion of Planning Commission Absences**

#### **Commissioner Discussion**

Soucy addressed Commissioner Sloan's absences from the last three meetings. He addressed this while referring to the Commissioner bylaws where three consecutive absences were cause for removal from the Commission. He added that Sloan was a valuable asset to the Commissioner team.

Soucy asked Throenle if there was additional information regarding Sloan's absences. Throenle stated that her family circumstances were dire, and that was the reason for the latest absence.

Meister added that he felt Sloan was a good contributor and wished to keep Sloan as part of the Commission; Mullen-Campbell and Rhein agreed.

The Commissioners decided to wait and see how Sloan's situation would go.

### **B. Draft Ordinance Considerations for the Agriculture / Forestry (AF) District Work Sessions**

#### **Staff Introduction**

Throenle presented the materials that staff suggested be made available for the town hall meetings. He added that the materials would be set up in a display format at various tables throughout the room during the work session. He added that State lands would not be included on the agriculture zoning district map so that concentration on the maps would be the agriculture / forestry zoning district.

Throenle added that a map will be placed on one of the tables to allow the public to put a pin in the map to indicate their preference related to the proposed language. He stated that a public notice was put in the newspaper and that a post card would be mailed to the owners of agriculture properties as an invitation to the town hall meetings.

Throenle stated that a handout with frequently asked questions and the proposed uses for the three districts would also be available.

#### **Commissioner Discussion**

Meister asked Throenle if an electronic GIS map could be set up to record the choices of the public during the work sessions. Throenle stated he would investigate that as a possibility.

Gencheff stated that if more information was presented, the public may be overwhelmed. She added that the times for the proposed meetings did not match up to the decided times from the previous meeting, but she was satisfied with the times that were newly published; Throenle stated that he was responsible for that error. Rhein stated that the times would be better as newly published to allow the public

time to go home from work prior to the work session.

Throenle added that staff had started a presentation that would be available at the meeting. He stated that it could be a rolling presentation that would continue throughout the work session.

Meister asked about the format of the work session, and how formal it would be. Throenle stated that the work session was set up to allow the public to come to the session at any time, without a formal framework for the night. Throenle added that the work session was intended to gather information and not a session where the Commissioners would make a decision at the end of the night. Meister suggested that there be a formal presentation at the beginning and a continual roll of the presentation throughout the evening.

Gencheff stated that she preferred that the sessions be informal, to allow the public to come as they chose. Rhein added that the Commissioners could address the issues with the public and direct them to the rolling presentation.

Mullen-Campbell asked for name tags so that the public could identify the Commissioners and staff; Throenle stated that those could be provided.

Gencheff asked about PA 116 and how that would apply. She asked that it be added to the AG 2 district; Throenle stated that it was a State regulation and that it would be applicable to any property that qualified.

Gencheff about base zoning for the State lands. Throenle stated that discussion would occur at a future meeting so as not to confuse the public.

Gencheff asked about the map showing the AG 1, AG 2 and AG 3 districts. Throenle emphasized that the map was not a zoning map, but one that showed the size of the parcels within the agriculture zoning district.

Gencheff asked about the future land use map. Throenle stated that the future land use map and future growth maps were intended to show the public where projected impacts would be within the Township over the next five years. Throenle emphasized that the maps were to show how parcels exist as of today.

Soucy asked what a success rate should be on getting the public comment. Throenle stated that 634 cards will be mailed out, and 10 percent of that would be 63. He added that there would be no guarantee of how many people will attend each of the township hall meetings; he stated that additional ways to get input should be considered if there is a low turnout at the meetings.

Rhein stated that putting the meeting in the paper, mailing the cards, and posting the meeting on the Township sign should bring people in; Meister added that it would show that the Commissioners did what they had to do to get public input.

Gencheff asked what the next step would be going forward if there was little or no public participation to resolve the non-conformances and where the zoning districts would be. Throenle stated that staff would not be directing the Commissioners as to where the zoning districts should be, as the Commissioners would be making those decisions.

Gencheff asked for a zoning map that showed the parcels prior to 2008; Throenle stated he could provide that for the Commissioners.

Gencheff asked what the difference was between the mixed use district versus AG 1. Throenle stressed that they would only be agriculture related business; Meister stated that the parcels in that district would be primarily residential as most of the smaller parcels already have houses on it. Meister added that the Commissioner's job was to determine the best allowable uses in those districts, with a concern about how that would affect the Township in the future.

Soucy asked what the Commissioner roles would be during the work sessions. Throenle stated that the roles should be related to the message the Commissioners wanted the public to know about the process. He added that the target for resolution of the issue is February, and that the solution would be a modification of the current zoning ordinance. Rhein stated that the message to the public should be related to addressing the non-conformities and to get feedback on concerns related to their properties.

Gencheff asked what to do if other issues, such as accessory dwelling units, come up while in discussion with the public. Commissioners decided that if that occurred, that the answers should be in relation to the agriculture discussion.

Soucy asked what materials should be presented at each table. Milton suggested a uses handout on one of the tables. Discussions were related to those items, and Commissioners decided that the tables should be:

- 1) 1977 zoning map, 2008 zoning map, Township AF zoning district map, and Frequently Asked Questions handout
- 2) Future land use map, future growth sectors map, and AF acreage sizes today map
- 3) Proposed acreage sizes map, proposed district uses handout
- 4) Parcel pin map

Soucy asked for Commissioners to choose which table they wished to represent; Commissioners established a tentative table selection.

Commissioners discussed if an additional meeting should be held to determine if changes should be made to the meeting format. Commissioners decided not to hold an extra meeting.

Gencheff asked if the pin map would be cumulative. Throenle stated that it would be easier not to have the pins, but that cumulative would work as well.

Soucy asked Throenle what Throenle thought Throenle's role would be during the meetings. Throenle responded that he would be in the background as a resource.

Gencheff asked if the presentation would be looped; Throenle stated that it would, and that page numbers would be added to indicate where the viewer was in the presentation.

Soucy agreed to meet with staff to determine the presentation detail.

Gencheff asked if a box could be added to sign up for the Township newsletter. Commissioners agreed that it was a good idea. Rhein asked if the Board needed to approve the idea; Throenle stated that it would be a voluntary signup. Throenle stated that the signup would be an individual sheet to keep the email address confidential. Throenle added that addresses collected for FlashVote would not be used for the email list. Meister added that the newsletter would help develop a better sense of community.

### **Commissioner Decisions**

*Mullen-Campbell moved, Rhein seconded, to send out the notices for the townhall meetings on September 6, October 10 and October 17 of this year.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

*After Commissioner review Meister moved, Milton seconded, that the proposed presentation materials for the townhall meetings be approved as presented and suggested for amendment between the Chair and staff.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

Meister asked how larger crowds would attend; Throenle stated that staff would review that.

### **IX. Public Comment**

None

### **X. Commissioner's Comments**

Rhein

Great discussion; felt things are going in the right direction.

Mullen-Campbell

Felt that it was a good move to have the town hall sessions.

Milton

No comments.

Gencheff

Expressed that she was concerned about doing the right thing and doing what the people want.

Soucy

Thanked the Commissioners for a good job.

Meister

Agreed with Soucy, and expressed that he was looking forward to completing this portion of the puzzle.

**XI. Director's Report**

Planning / Zoning Administrator Throenle

No comments.

**XII. Informational Items and Correspondence**

**A.** Township newsletter – August, 2023

**B.** Marquette County Planning Commission minutes 08.02.23 draft

**C.** City of Marquette Planning Commission minutes 07.18.23

**D.** City of Marquette Planning Commission minutes 08.15.23

**XIII. Adjournment**

*Rhein moved, Meister seconded, to adjourn the meeting.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

Soucy adjourned the meeting at 7:44 PM

Submitted by:

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Planning Commission Secretary

Donna Mullen-Campbell