

**Pentwater Township Planning Commission
500 N. Hancock St,
Pentwater, Michigan 49449**

December 10, 2024

Chairperson Tony Monton called the in-person meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Terry Cluchey	Present
Paula DeGregorio	Present
Heather Douglas	Present
Buz Graettinger	Present
Patrick Hooyman	Present
Tony Monton	Present
Peter Zangara	Absent

Keith Edwards, the Zoning Administrator, was present at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Heather Douglas moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded Buz Graettinger. All ayes and the agenda was approved.

Pat Hooyman made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented and Terry Cluchey seconded. All ayes and the minutes of the October 8, 2024 meeting were approved.

Chairperson Tony Monton asked if there was any conflict of interest to be identified in accordance with the items on the meeting agenda. No conflicts of interest were identified.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA – None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Application for changing the Zoning Map. Jeff Wrisley – Parcel ID No. 64-001-013-100-02. 56th Avenue (north of Oceana Dr and Park Street) north of Hammett Road.

Chairperson Monton opened the public hearing at 6:10 pm.

The applicant, Jeff Wrisley of 5566 W. Branch St. spoke in favor of the request stating that Pentwater needs the housing, the Oceana County Road Commission maintains the dust on the road, traffic is light and mostly from the landscape business down the road.

Larry Buttrey of 802 56th Ave. like the proposed 2 acre minimum requested as it should improve property values so he supports the request

Tom Pell of 590 Oceana St., in the Village of Pentwater stated that the applicant just wants to make money. The Oceana County Road Commission and Village neglect the maintenance of Oceana Street and 56th Ave. The road narrows as one travels toward the north. There is no water, sewer or natural gas, just electric. He is concerned that a Fire Truck will not be able to go down the road.

Curt Beenan of 8043 N. 56th Ave. supports the request as fire trucks can access his place north of the subject site, Semi-trucks will fit too. Turning Leaf Landscaping is not getting more trucks.

Jim Wallace of 555 N. Oceana St. has lived there since 1988 and prefers the rural character of the area. School millages have failed, school population declines every year, and the community is a resort/retirement community. There are too many rentals, so there is no need for housing. The Road needs help.

Jeff Wrisley of 5566 W. Branch St. says he like the rural setting too.

Noting that there was no further public comment, Chairperson Monton closed the public hearing at 6:30 pm.

B. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Amendment to definitions to add “Retaining Wall” and a new Section 3.38, Retaining Walls.

Chairperson Monton opened the public hearing at 6:31 pm.

Curt Beenan of Maple Leaf Landscaping expressed his displeasure with the definition of “retaining wall”.

Noting that there was no further public comment, Chairperson Monton closed the public hearing at 6:33 pm.

C. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Sections - Removal of “Lodges” from Sections 4.03.J, 5.03.H, 6.03.G, 7.03.F, and 11.03.J.

Chairperson Monton opened the public hearing at 6:35 pm.

No public comments were offered.

Noting that there was no further public comment, Chairperson Monton closed the public hearing at 6:35 pm.

D. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Section 3.29 – Keeping of Animals.

Zoning Administrator Keith Edwards reminded the Planning Commission that the proposed amendment was prepared to modernize Section 3.29 – Keeping of Animals in light of a recent complaint and consultation with the Township Attorney.

Chairperson Monton opened the public hearing at 6:38 pm.

Curt Beenan asked how many animals would not be allowed within the RR Zoning District if the Zoning Ordinance amendment was approved. Keith Edwards read that information from Section 3.29 Paragraph E of the draft amendment.

Noting that there was no further public comment, Chairperson Monton closed the public hearing at 6:40 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Application for changing the Zoning Map. Jeff Wrisley – Parcel ID No. 64-001-013-100-02. 56th Avenue (north of Oceana Dr and Park Street) north of Hammett Road.

Planning Commissioners discussed concerns regarding the width of the driving surface and condition of the soil-based road known as 56th Avenue. 56th Avenue is a public road maintained by the Oceana County Road Commission (OCRC)

and is only accessible from a public primary road (known as Hammett and Park Street) via Oceana Street, which is maintained by the Village. Planning Commissioners requested that Staff provide information regarding the improvements to 48th Avenue, which was improved by the OCRC approximately 10 years or more ago to accommodate additional development including the Pentwater Woods subdivision.

Buz Graettinger moved to recommend the Township Board approve the requested rezoning from RR to R-1, and Terry Cluchey seconded. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yes: Graettinger, Cluchey & Douglas.

No: Hooyman, DeGregorio & Monton.

Absent: Zangara.

Motion fails

Motion by DeGregorio to have the Township Engineer, Fleis & Vandenbrink provide a report on the conditions of 56th Avenue and its ability to support the proposed additional traffic if the 750 ft. portion of the subject property were rezoned from RR, Rural Residential to R-1, Single Family Residential. Seconded by Hooyman. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yes: DeGregorio, Hooyman, Cluchey, Graettinger, Douglas & Monton

No: None

Absent: Zangara

Motion passes.

B. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Amendment to definitions to add “Retaining Wall” and a new Section 3.38, Retaining Walls.

During review of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment for retaining walls, Planning Commissioners discussed the proposed requirement for a fence where there is not benefit, such as along roadways and driveways where the nearest home is at least 30 feet from the retaining wall. Planning Commissioners support the proposed fence for safety reasons, where there is a benefit, but not everywhere. This concern may be highly prevalent in the dune environment along Lake Michigan, but in other locales as well. Buz Graettinger supports revisiting the ordinance language.

Motion by Graettinger, second by Douglas to reject the amendment language and refer it back to the Township Attorney for a rewrite. All Ayes and the motion was approved unanimously.

C. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Sections - Removal of “Lodges” from Sections 4.03.J, 5.03.H, 6.03.G, 7.03.F, and 11.03.J.

No discussion.

Motion by Douglas, second by Graettinger to recommend the Township Board consider approval of the proposed amendment to remove the use known as “Lodges” from the Zoning Ordinance. All Ayes and the motion was approved unanimously.

D. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Section 3.29 – Keeping of Animals.

Planning Commissioners reviewed a Zoning Ordinance amendment to modernize Section 3.29 – Keeping of Animals in light of a recent complaint and consultation with the Township Attorney.

Motion by Douglas, second by Graettinger to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to Section 3.29 of the Zoning Animals – Keeping of animals. After Planning Commission discussion, the motion was withdrawn by Douglas, seconded by Graettinger to bring up for discussion at the next Planning Commission meeting while staff researches other communities and provides copies of such ordinances to the Planning Commission for review.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Section 3.11 – Fences.

Pentwater Township Property Owners Ed and Susan Phelan provided a written request to amend Section 3.11, paragraph B to allow fences that are located in the front or rear yard of a waterfront property to be 4 ft. tall rather than 3 ft. tall to contain small children and pets.

Planning Commissioners requested that Staff research other area communities' Zoning Ordinance to get an idea for their fence regulations and report back at the February meeting.

B. Discussion on the Cost of Construction.

Planning Commissioners reviewed the article from the Wall Street Journal submitted by Buz Graettinger as a segue into the next item up for discussion – “Housing”- in Pentwater.

C. Discussion on Housing.

Planning Commissioners review the memorandum dated December 3, 2024 as prepared by Staff, including the attached information. Zoning Administrator, Keith Edwards also pointed out the changes made to the Future Land use map within the 2023-2043 Master Plan.

The consensus of the Planning Commission was to return to the discussion at the April, 2025 meeting.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Keith Edwards’ Zoning Administrator and ZBA reports were accepted by the Planning Commission.

OTHER ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS - None

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT

Paula DeGregorio moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:53 pm. Buz Graettinger seconded the motion. All ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Keith Edwards, Zoning Administrator

December 18, 2024

Approved by the Planning Commission

February 11, 2025