

COVERT TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 18, 2023 REGULAR MEETING
6:30 P.M., COVERT TOWNSHP HALL

Call to Order / Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Rendell called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Members Present: Lenard Berry, Robert Brown, Austin Harding, Wayne Rendell, Lonzey Taylor

Members Absent: Joseph Frabotta
Keneisha Harrington

Others Present: Rebecca Harvey, Township Planning Consultant

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Brown, seconded by Harding, to approve the agenda of the October 18, 2023 regular meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – *September 20, 2023 Regular Meeting*

Motion by Chair Rendell, seconded by Berry, to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2023 regular meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Alan Smaka inquired as to the process for public comment during the meeting. Chair Rendell explained that public comment on non-agenda items can be offered at this time . . . and that public comment on agenda items can be offered at such time as the item is considered.

Taylor expressed his appreciation for public attendance and interest in Planning Commission meetings. He advised that the Township is in the process of camera installation in the Board room to facilitate electronic meeting attendance.

No further public comment was offered on non-agenda items.

Ongoing Business

Review of Zoning Ordinance for Compliance with RTFA

Review of Article 21 – Mineral Removal for Consistency with MZEA

Text Amendment – Article 25 – Conditional Rezoning

Harvey stated that both ‘clean copies’ and ‘bold/strike-out’ drafts of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments noted under Agenda Items 5.A. (RTFA) and 5.C. (Article 25 – Conditional Rezoning) were provided in the meeting packet. She noted that no further discussion on these proposed amendments is needed and that they are on the agenda only to be scheduled for public hearing.

It was agreed that the public hearings would be scheduled at the conclusion of the discussion of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment noted under Agenda Item 5.B. (Article 21 – Mineral Removal).

Harvey provided an overview of Draft #1 (dated 10.18.23) of the proposed amendments to Article 21 – Mineral Removal. She highlighted where the proposed amendments intersect with the suggested changes outlined in the 3.15.23 memo ‘Zoning Ordinance Review, Article 21-Mineral Removal’ and the Township Attorney’s written review of Article 21 (dated 9.19.23).

General Commission discussion of the lengthy draft text ensued. At the conclusion, it was determined that the Commission was comfortable with proceeding with a public hearing on same in November. It was noted that Commission members would complete their review of the draft text in preparation for continued discussion in November. The Commission requested that Harvey provide a ‘clean copy’ draft of Article 21 for the November public hearing.

Motion by Chair Rendell, seconded by Harding, to schedule the proposed amendments to 1) Section 2.02 – Definitions, Sections 4.02/4.03 – AG District, and Sections 5.02/5.03 – RR District; 2) Article 21 – Mineral Removal; and 3) Article 25 – Conditional Rezoning for public hearing at the November 15, 2023 Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Discussion: Lake Access Regulations (Keyhole Development/Anti-Funneling)

Chair Rendell reminded that the topic of ‘Keyhole Development/Anti-Funneling’ is a Work Plan Item and that general discussion of same was slated for the October Planning Commission meeting.

Harvey presented an overview of the concept of ‘anti-funneling’ regulation and provided sample ordinance text for general consideration.

Public comment was offered . . . largely related to the question of ‘why’ the Township might be interested in establishing such regulations.

General Commission discussion ensued regarding how/where ‘anti-funneling’ regulation would apply and the elements of the sample ordinance text provided. Harvey was then directed to provide informational articles on ‘anti-funneling’ regulation to expand the Commission’s understanding of the concept, as well as additional sample ordinances, in the November meeting packet for continued consideration.

2023 Planning Commission Work Plan

Chair Rendell referenced the updated 2023 Planning Commission Work Plan (dated 10.18.23) and suggested the Commission conduct a review and reprioritization of same in November. In response to questions, Harvey advised that the Work Items shaded in blue have been completed by the Planning Commission and are currently being processed for Township Board action. The process for moving Planning Commission recommendations (on zoning ordinance/zoning map amendments) to the Township Board for adoption was briefly reviewed.

Communications

Harvey reported on the status of the Master Plan/Coastal Management Plan project. She provided updates regarding the Focus Group Roundtables event held October 9, 2023 and the community survey launched in August. Harvey noted that the Township is currently in discussion about expanding efforts to advertise the survey to increase response rates.

Alan Smaka expressed support for expanded efforts to gain community feedback on the question of 'what does Covert Township want to be?'

Taylor advised of recent interest expressed to Township Officials in locating a 'battery energy storage system' facility in the Township. He noted that the interested party intends a formal presentation to the Planning Commission and to the public in the near future.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
(McKenna)
Township Planning Consultant