

Ford River Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2020

Meeting was called to Order at 7:00 pm by R. Livingston and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: P. Dagenais, K. Jaeger, R. Livingston, D. Wellman, K. Mineau.

Public Comment on Agenda Items - None

Conflict of Interest Declaration - None

Guest Speaker

- Scott Dianda from Tranquility Fields explained their business plan and that they work with a local owner to create a franchised marijuana microbusiness. He explained they focus their products towards the baby boomers, those with arthritis or that can't sleep with a low dosage product. They are working with townships across Michigan.

Public Hearing

- Special Use Permit - Hart Storage Units - Supervisor Fontaine provided the board with an E-mail from Kristee Hart, withdrawing her request for the Special Use Permit as the owner has decided not to sell.
- Marijuana Public Hearing
A motion was made by K. Jaeger to open the Marijuana Public Hearing, seconded by P. Dagenais at 7:10. Unanimous Approval.

The commission and Supervisor Fontaine explained the current ordinance and that the Commission was gathering information to make their recommendation to the Township Board. R. Livingston opened the floor to the public to express their thoughts/concerns.

Irene Fisher - stated she would be opposed to permitting any marijuana shops on M35 between Breezy Point and the bridge, due to additional traffic. Regarding other areas of the township, she asks the board to consider property values, and feels they would be negatively impacted by having pot shops in residential areas.

Max Martin - Works at a local hydroponic store, wanted to second Scott stating that he sees many baby bombers asking about equipment to grow it as well as options for safe access to product. He feels as though this would allow safe access to products that are clean from contaminants and mold, and would eliminate some of the black market activity. He also stated NMU has started a program, training in a generation of young professionals on all aspects of the business.

Cassie Lapinskas - Agrees with everything Max said, she feels it will create jobs, grow our community, and create tax revenue for our community. She doesn't see why we shouldn't keep up with the rest of the nation.

Jill Martin - She has been focused on Internet Access for the township, she feels as if there is an opportunity to generate revenue for the township, it should be done. She's hopeful that if it was approved, some revenue could go towards that. She also agrees that it can be professionally and safely done and that the Township Board and Planning Commission can structure it so it fits with the community. She said we are a community that needs jobs, and revenue and feels as though it can be crafted to work in the community. Her background is public health, she does agree it needs to be done safely.

Sheriff Ed Oswald - He stated recreational Marijuana is here in Michigan and they do see it. One concern he has is if someone is purchasing marijuana where are they getting it. The problems they have seen is people creating their own oil rigs, they have either created an explosion or created a bad product. He looks at it similar to prohibition. Right now a person can have plants growing in their house, most infractions are having too many plants which would be a civil infraction similar to a speeding ticket. People are going to get it somewhere, he's not sure where they are getting it, but it is legal for them to possess. He's seen good grows and he's seen poor grows and he is not advocating either way the township goes. He also understands the concern with traffic, but it is no different than a bar operating.

Al Martin - Just wanted to make a note that he stopped and grabbed a 6 pack of beer on the way to the meeting at Meisters, noting that business along M35 were two bars and a store that sells alcohol. His son lives in Oregon where it has been legal for awhile and he wanted to note that these businesses want to be a part of the community, they want to help the communities they are in, they are not bad people.

A motion was made by R. Livingston to close the Marijuana Public Hearing, seconded by K. Jaeger at 7:25. Unanimous Approval.

Minutes

- Planning Commission meeting minutes from December 2019 were approved with a motion by K. Mineau, seconded by P. Dagenais. Unanimous approval.

Permits

- Z1081 - Kristee & Jason Hart - Special Use Permit

LAND DIVISIONS

- Z1082 - Martin Labumbard, 3024 14th Rd, 12/13/19
009-225-012-00, Land Division

Unfinished Business

- Wind Turbines - Tabled until next month
- Marijuana Recommendation - The commission does have a workshop on January 23, 2020 at 7 pm to continue discussion.

- Annual Report - A motion was made by R. Livingston to approve the Annual Report, seconded by K. Mineau. Unanimous Approval.

New Business

- Election of Planning Commission Officers
 - Chairman - Motion was made by K. Jaeger to nominate R. Livingston, seconded by K. Mineau. Unanimous Approval.
 - Vice-Chairman - Motion was made R. Livingston to nominate K. Mineau, seconded by P. Dagenais. Unanimous Approval.
 - Secretary - Motion was made by R. Livingston to nominate K. Jaeger, seconded by P. Dagenais. Unanimous Approval.
 - Vice-Secretary - Motion was made by R. Livingston to nominate P. Dagenais, seconded by K. Mineau.

Communications

- Supervisor Fontaine provided the board with the e-mail from Kristee Hart withdrawing their application for the Special Use Permit.
- E-mail from Kathie Scott opposing any marijuana growers.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

- Ray Fettig would like to thank Sheriff Oswald for his service as it is Law Enforcement Day.

A motion to adjourn was made by K. Jaeger, seconded by P. Dagenais. Unanimous approval. Meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

K. Jaeger 2-6-2020