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Casco Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

December 20th 2023

6:00 PM

Casco Township Hall

Members Present: Andy **Litts**, Dian **Liepe**, Dan **Fleming**, Greg **Knisley**, Ryan **Brush**, Irene **Wood**

Members Absent: Kelly **Hecker**

Audience: None

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman **Litts** 6:04PM
2. Review and approve agenda: A motion was made by **Fleming** to approve the agenda, supported by **Liepe**. All in favor. Motion carried.
3. Public comment: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by **Fleming** to approve the November 15th 2023 minutes, supported by **Liepe**. All in favor. Motion carried.
6. Public Hearing: None
7. New Business:

a. Approval of Casco Township Planning Commission 2024 Meeting Calendar:

A motion was made by **Fleming** to approve the Meeting dates on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6pm, supported by **Liepe**. All in favor. Motion carried

b. Reviewed the Master Plan Update proposal from Williams & Works:

The last Master Plan update was in 2012. The Township looked at it 5 or 6 years ago and decided that it was in order and no revisions were necessary.

After an initial review of the Williams & Works proposed fees **Wood** suggested that the Online Community Survey and a Zoning Ordinance Cursory Audit would be adequate; open houses and workshops probably would not be necessary. Adding that, all of the meetings are open to the public to have the opportunity to comment.

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Wood also commented that the update to the Master Plan documents should include the Executive Summary, Introduction and Plan Purpose, Community Profile, Existing Land Uses, and Community Facilities. Adding that Transportation, Future Land Use (FLU), Vision/Goals/Strategies, and Plan Implementation probably wouldn't need updated.

Litts requested that the PC members review the Master Plan (MP) and determine what they think needs updated; bringing their comments to the next meeting. **Smalley** stated that Zoning Enabling Act requires a Zoning Plan be added to the MP.

The initial thoughts were that sending out a short survey to all of the Township residents would be the first step. Their input into the future of their community would help guide the PC into what updates are necessary. The Township Attorney would also need to review the MP before it is adopted.

8. Old Business:

- a. Continue Solar Farm Ordinance Discussion.

Hecker was absent so this discussion was postponed. **Litts** requested Bultje's interpretation of Michigan Senate House Bills 5120 and 5121. These bills will only allow local units of government to regulate solar projects with a capacity of 50 Megawatts (MW) or greater if the jurisdiction's renewable energy ordinance complies with statewide standards; like setbacks, decibel levels, and height. Casco Township's SES Ordinance cannot be more restrictive than the statewide standards or the applicant can apply directly to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). **Litts** also suggested that the topic of Solar Farms be added to the MP survey questions

- b. Private Road and Shared Driveway Discussion

Smalley presented her proposed Access Easement Ordinance language; which would allow a land division ingress and egress access, to an otherwise land locked parcel. This ordinance would lessen the Private Road requirements if only two parcels are being served by the shared driveway. The shared driveway would have to continue/extend into the new land division for a distance equal to the minimum lot width requirement of the Zoning district in which it is located.

Woods commented that it may be easier to send applicants to the ZBA rather than write ordinances. **Liepe** likes the idea of just allowing two dwellings per parcel. **Fleming** asked why the amount of dwellings per property was regulated at all.

The need to have road frontage at all was also questioned. **Smalley** explained that the "road frontage" created by the easement could be on paper and not an improved surface. The PC members agreed that any approved access should at least meet the Fire Department requirements and have its own address.

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- c. Review the Sign Ordinance for compliance with new case law:

Smalley explained that signs cannot be regulated by type/purpose. You can regulate the setbacks, style, size, and amount. One suggested change to the current Ordinance is changing prohibiting “Business” vehicle signs to prohibiting any kind of vehicle as a sign; including the use of Shipping Containers as a sign board. Further discussion will be required.

9. Administrative reports:

Zoning Administrator – **Smalley** presented the November monthly Invoice.

Township Board Representative – **Fleming** reported that the Board had hired a new Transfer Station Attendant, Cemetery Sexton and Grounds Keeper. **Fleming** also reported that the Township Clerk, Cheri Brenner, would not be seeking re-election in 2024.

ZBA Representative – **Liepe** reported that the ZBA approved James **Hammers** variance at 50 North Shore Dr N 03-02-085-013-00 to rebuild/construct a deck in the side yard. The required side yard setback is 15 feet; the applicant requested 13 feet of relief.

10. Public comment: None

11. Adjourn at 8:56 pm

Attachments: available upon request

Minutes prepared by:

Jennifer Goodrich, Recording Secretary