

Keweenaw County Planning Commission
Public Hearing
Minutes – Thursday, August 22, 2013

Keweenaw County Courthouse 6:04 PM

Roll Call:	Jon Soper, Chairman	John Parsons, Vice Chair
	Ned Huwatschek, member	Richard Schaefer, member
	Steven Siira, member	Jim Huovinen, member
	Tom Hall, member	
	Ray Chase, Commissioner	Ann Gasperich ZA

All Members present

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

The agenda was approved by Ned/Richard/Passed.

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing to receive comment regarding the possibility to rezone the Town of Eagle River Plat RR-B&C to RS.

He started by explaining Section 20.2 in the Zoning Ordinance

B. Amendments may be initiated by the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission, a Township Board of Trustees whose township is under the jurisdiction of this Ordinance or by petition of one or more persons having an interest in the property to be affected by the proposed amendment. Each petition for amendment shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator who shall refer it for recommended action to the Planning Commission.

Jon first took Public Comment from those in attendance that were not at the meeting held on July 30th.

James Rovano asked questions regarding the data points that should be addressed such as public safety, water, sewer, he asked about a pre plan and the many items that should be considered prior to asking for a change.

Mark Taskala speaking on behalf of his sister and mother asked why is the zoning change being considered and who applied for it?

Doug Dawson asked to hear what the boundaries were and did it include Eagle River East? He also asked to explain the scope of future development in RS would look like. He finished by asking the Planning Commission not to get tangled up in the quagmire of commercialization.

Mary Lark spoke to keep Eagle River the way it is, RR.

Jack Treganowan asked if all of the comments from the previous meeting are on the record? He was told all the previous comments are on record. Then he stated, "I'm definitely against changing the zoning from RS to RR. Keep it the way it is!"

Gary Erickson agreed with Jack's statement.

Glen Mannisto and his wife Nancy spoke the comments of his children who are, "Adamantly opposed to a change in their future property!"

Jan Cole read a letter from her brother: From Edward Cole: I was relieved to hear that a change to commercial RS1 zoning in Eagle River has been discussed and is not the direction that this community wants to take.

That being said, going forward, we will need to discuss together and decide how tasteful, well executed small scale commercial endeavors in existing buildings, similar to the ones in operation today can come into being, be nurtured and grow. Otherwise, as at least two that I know which have recently closed will not be replaced and the character of our town will change in the opposite direction.

As a community, there must be an open to listen, a plan, a process and a trust among the community that all of us will do the right thing and support and nurture this amazing and special place.

My family and I have lived in Eagle River for 10 years this September. I love this place, its people, its charm and mystery. In the future I intend to spend more time here and will never leave. This is my home.

I look forward now and in the future as a member and steward in the community to discuss and commune the issues faced by this community to ensure that our future is both a healthy respect for the past, a lively embrace of today and well thought out plan and execution for a bright future.

Jan then cited from the 2002 Blueprint for Tomorrow, the 1997 strategies including home based businesses.

Sue Moilanen of Eagle River East expressed that this is a very special place and I am adamantly against any change.

Mark McEvers asked if the Future Land Use Map showed Eagle River as RR or RS?

Jon Soper said, "When the current zoning map was adopted, the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was adopted as identical to the Zoning Map. I will verify on the FLUM Eagle River shows RR."

Ann then read the written comments property owners within the town of Eagle River.

In Support – none

In Opposition – 6

Measured Growth – 1

Mark McEvers then asked, "What are you folks trying to do? What are you trying to accomplish? Are you attempting to bring more business to Keweenaw County? Why are you picking on Eagle River? Isn't there another lot and block location in the County that you can change to Resort Service?"

Jon Soper said, "in my view, the ordinance is a legal document that some people don't like. We spent many, many meetings trying to get this right. The goal of the Planning Commission is we are trying to get a document that has the guidelines that everyone is acceptable of."

Mark McEvers, "Isn't the RS along M-26 enough?"

Richard Schaefer asked Jon if he could respond, Jon said yes.

Richard then continued, "Our attempt is to take this 265 page document from downstate and try to accommodate local people – we are trying to be flexible. We do listen to those here at the public meeting."

John Parson asked Jon if he could respond, Jon said yes.

John continued to say, "We looked at Eagle River and saw existing businesses and thought since it was already mixed use, we would consider Resort Service."

Mark McEvers, "I hear 'existing businesses', are they all grandfathered?"

Ray Chase asked Jon if he could respond, Jon said yes.

Ray continued, "we try to accommodate the will of the majority. If someone comes to us and asks, we have to listed."

Kathy McEvers asked, "Do we do this again in two years if someone else moves into town and wants to change?"

Jon Soper replied, "Not if I'm still here."

Jon then closed the public hearing.

The Committee then discussed and reviewed public opinion regarding change from RR to RS. Jon asked Ann to tally the letters and opinions. 17 Opposed and one measured growth.

A motion by John Parson Seconded by Jim Huovinen to keep the zoning in Eagle River Plat as RR with a roll call vote.

John Parsons – yes

Jim Huovinen – Yes

Richard Schaefer – Yes

Ned Huwatschek – Yes

Steve Siira – Yes

Tom Hall – Yes

Ray Chase – Yes

Jon Soper -- Yes

Motion passed.

Public Comment

Jim Vivian asked to be sure the letter from the Township of the August 17th meeting is on File. He was assured it was received and placed on file showing the motion by Jim Vivian, seconded by Shari Chase, that the Houghton Township Board position regarding the proposed zoning change for Eagle River be to keep the zoning as it is now: RR.

Commissioners Comments

Jon Soper– Before we open the door in the future, we need more, something, a petition or something.

Ray Chase – we need to consider putting it back to the township before it comes to the planning commission.

Jon Soper – Business can reopen after a short period of time. Good Job everyone, Good job.

Next Regular Meeting – August 27th, 2013, 6:00 p.m. Courthouse Eagle River

At 7:03 Motion to adjourn by Tom/Steve.