

Keweenaw County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Draft Minutes
August 26, 2024

Keweenaw County Courthouse 4:00 PM

Roll Call:	John Parsons, present	Steve Siira, present
	Barry Koljonen, present	Harvey Desnick, present
	Daniel Yoder, present	AJ Kern, present
	Jim Vivian, Commissioner, absent	Bob Pokorski, present

Yoder named as acting secretary by Parsons.

5 Member quorum is **present**, meeting was appropriately posted.

Pledge of Allegiance **recited**

Approve Agenda

[Corrected date of next meeting as listed from September 23 to September 30 after discussion during final comments]

Motion (M) to approve Pokorski / Second (S) Koljonen, motion carried

Approve minutes of the regular meeting on June 24, 2024.

M to approve Desnick / S Pokorski, motion carried

Guests: Guests acknowledged and invited to present public comment

Public Comment:

Kathy McEvers – question regarding correspondence that the commission receives

Deborah Shelonzek – questions and comments regarding bed tax for short term rentals, oversight of septic systems, public meeting agenda and minutes

THIS IS THE TIME SET ASIDE ON THE AGENDA TO RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC. THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A PERIOD FOR DIALOGUE. EACH PERSON WHO WISHES TO SPEAK DURING PUBLIC COMMENT SHALL STATE THEIR NAME AND ADDRESS. COMMENTS SHALL BE LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES OR LESS FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSIONERS.

New Business:

Recap new discussions and issues since the last PC meeting

1. Zoning administrator position

Parsons informed that Zoning Administrator position is vacant. Parsons said that Eagle Harbor zoning administrator Sue Hocking is filling in.

Pokorski indicated that the position has not been posted by the County and curious why.

Discussion by members postulating on whether County can afford full time vs. part time.

Consensus that the role is important.

Parsons said he will communicate with Don Piche on the need for the position.

No motions made.

2. county millage vote

Parsons recapped actions taken by County Board to address funding zoning activities. Stated that millage has been proposed at 0.50 mill to appear on ballot in the general election. Parsons speculated that this may be a referendum on zoning.

No motions made.

3. zoning permit fees? STR data (Dan Yoder)

Parsons presented concept of charging fees for zoning permits. Parsons said there have been 61 permits issued this year.

Kern suggested \$1,000 for short term rentals and then \$300 for zoning permits.

Pokorski suggested researching nearby zoning departments' fees, and suggested idea of different fees for different districts/uses.

Desnick suggested \$100, and also suggested reviewing overall needs and activities of zoning function to present "ideal" department that the County can use to determine budget.

Yoder suggested that collecting permit fees could help offset cost of zoning functions.

Parsons requested that the members research zoning fees to bring information to next meeting.

Yoder presented data he compiled from AirDNA, WUPPDR, US Census Bureau, and news articles discussing STR market outlook, concentration, locations in Keweenaw County.

Desnick thinks STR market may be softening.

No motions made.

4. large scale alternative energy law

Parsons shared information about a new law taking effect November 2024 affecting renewable energy projects, which information he received from County attorney. Suggestion by the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) is to review options (do nothing, adopt ordinance matching law, or creating law deviating from state standards). Parson provided sample ordinance and recommended adoption. Discussion by members. Parsons will provide more context by email for further review.

No motions made.

5. county board/MSHDA grant and BOC representative on PC

Parsons noted lack of County commissioners present at planning commission meetings, desires more County involvement. Cited news article about Housing Readiness Incentive (HRI) Grant through MSHDA which may be used for zoning ordinance updates and shared email sent by Jerald Wuorenmaa of WUPPDR to Don Piche and Robert Demarois.

No motions made.

6. MSU extension- public meetings

Parsons shared that Michigan State University Extension can facilitate public meetings and public input process.

Yoder suggested that TNC grant and HRI grant might be used to hire facilitators to gather public input on master plan and zoning amendments.

No motions made.

Unfinished business

1. Master Plan Update/TNC Grant application update. (Bob Porkowski)

Pokorski presented TNC grant work plan for members to review. Upon consensus by planning commission, TNC will draft a grant agreement for Planning Commission review and County board approval.

Kern suggested more time to review and tabling for a future meeting.

Desnick questioned travel costs of \$2,500 listed in draft agreement.

Julia Peterson of TNC explained that the entire grant is \$75,000, and that up to \$2,500 could be spent by County on meeting-related expenses, but any consultant costs should be included in their proposal.

Kern indicated wanting more time due to not seeing plan in advance of meeting.

Pokorski briefly discussed prior work presented at planning meetings earlier in the year on the topic.

Parsons indicated that he and Pokorski have been coordinating details with TNC to move application forward.

Desnick stated support of the project as a good move.

Motion by Desnick to accept draft work plan for TNC to incorporate into grant agreement to be presented to the County.

M to approve Desnick / S Siira, motion carried. Kern opposed.

2. Work Sessions?

Parsons suggested resuming review of zoning text amendments that have been in review.

Discussion by members on days of the week and times of day that work sessions could be scheduled.

Yoder indicated availability in evenings and on Saturdays due to work schedule.

Parsons said he will suggest proposed dates and times in a later email to commissioners.

Additional discussion on work session topic occurred in Code of Conduct agenda item.

No motions made.

3. Code of Conduct?

Parsons distributed information from MSU Extension on code of conduct and requested that members review prior to next meeting.

Kern raised concerns about potential procedural errors in text amendments being adopted in May 2024.

Koljonen indicated that something was missing from conversation and needed reviewed.

Parsons and Pokorski requested suggestions and ideas about path forward for commission to resolve Kern's concerns.

Kern raised concerns about feeling slandered by commission members and others related to prior executive session discussions, code of conduct discussions, planning commission activities. Kern requested public apology.

Pokorski apologized for misunderstanding regarding Meg North discussion.

Parsons apologized to Kern.

*Parsons said that the commission will revisit zoning amendments.
No motions made.*

Public Comment:

Kathy McEvers – question about conflict of interest policy

John Kern – comment on conflict of interest policy and commission bylaws

Deborah Shelonzek – question on TNC map, STRs in residential districts

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Final Comments:

Yoder clarified date of next meeting should be September 30, not September 23 as listed in the agenda.

Pokorski confirmed the meeting should be on the last Wednesday.

Next Regular Meeting September 30, 4:00 PM

M to Adjourn Pokorski / S Siira, motion carried