

**Minutes from the  
Almira Township Planning Commission Meeting  
October 5, 2021  
6:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** Chairperson Ratajczak called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. at Almira Township Hall in the Village.

**Members Present:** Bill Ballard, Vince Edwards, Melissa Martin, Ryan Ratajczak, Lori Florip, Duane Newman

**Members Absent:** None

**Additions/Deletions to Agenda:** NA.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Ballard, supported by Florip. All ayes, motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Ballard, supported by Florip, to approve the minutes of September 7, 2021. All ayes, motion passed.

**Brief Public Comment:** NA

**Zoning Administrator:** Z/ A Williams presented his monthly report. The Township Board met to discuss the 'Big Fam Festival' and review about 20 complaints received from township residents. The major complaints involved the number of vibrations coming from the sound stage in particular on Friday evening. ZA Williams is investigating means to mitigate future issues with festivals of this size including imposing restrictions on decibel levels allowed to be emitted. He spoke with the Roxbury Village clerk regarding how they handle a rather large festival in their area for reference.

**Township Board Representative:** Township Board member Florip reported: The Fire Dept has submitted a grant to the state for Air Packs for the firemen. The Fire Chief presented a Multi-Year Plan at the August township board meeting. Florip also reported that Title work continues Mistwood Greens property which the township currently owns.

**Zoning Board of Appeals Representative:** NA.

**Intergovernmental Representative:** Village Council Member Edwards – The Village is looking to fill two vacancies, Street and Park Administrators. The Village Halloween event has been canceled.

**Conflict(s) of Interest:** NA

**Guests:** Janet Burch, Becky Gray MacGirr, Lance Terry

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**Old Business:**

**A. Zoning Map Review:**

- a. Equalization is working on some overlay maps. More info to follow.

**B. Master Plan Review:**

- a. Initial planning meeting with Networks Northwest occurred with Martin and Ballard in attendance. Follow up meetings will occur monthly. Networks Northwest has begun the process of mapwork and is still waiting on census data to be released.

**C. Site Plan Review: 6118 N Reynolds Rd. – Home Occupation**

- a. Mr. Terry presented an application for a Home Occupation at the September planning commission meeting. The commission requested additional information from Mr. Terry prior to moving forward with his application. He presented letters from The Leelanau/Benzie Health department, and the DNR to support his butchering and meat processing business. He had also been in contact with the USDA, and they are aware of his operation. There have been multiple complaints from neighbors including concerns with, discharging of firearms in the dispatch of animals and extreme odors. Mr. Terry has addressed the odor issue by utilizing a dumpster and placing lime in it. He had considered purchasing a Bolt gun to dispatch the animal, but the cost was prohibitive. He does have a “kill pen” which is 9' tall and is made of reinforced wood and metal, and you cannot see through it. Neighbor Janet Burch objects to the dispatching of animals on the property and considers that action to be operating as a slaughterhouse. Commissioner Newman's concern is the smell, as the limestone doesn't appear to be working, and the smell permeates the neighborhood. Becky MacGirr inquired about the Home Occupations definition and questioned the difference between a slaughterhouse and Butcher Shop. Ballard commented he has reservations about the location on Reynolds Road, but that Mr. Terry is trying to build the business up, so he can eventually take this on as his main job. Ballard was concerned this location was not the best and whether Mr. Terry could eventually move to another site within a couple of years. Mr. Terry replied that he would like to see that happen in 1 year.
- b. The Planning Commission proceeded with the application review in accordance with section 7.05 Site Plan Application Review. Ratajczak made a

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motion to approve the application with the condition that no dispatching of animals would occur onsite and that odors would be monitored on a regular basis. Mr. Terry agreed to these conditions and a Roll Call vote was held Ballard yes, Edwards yes, Martin yes, Florip yes, Ratajczak yes. Newman abstained. Motion passed

**New Business:**

**A. Site Plan Review:**

**a. 7817 Needmore Rd. – Short Term Rental Application**

**Section 7.05 – Site Plan Application Review**

B. The Planning Commission shall have the responsibility and authorization to review and approve, disapprove, or approve with conditions, the Site Plan in accordance with requirements of the zoning district in which the proposed use is located and all other applicable requirements set forth in this Ordinance. The Planning Commission shall further consider the following standards:

1. Whether the sewage disposal and water systems meet the applicable health and sanitary codes and ordinances.
2. Whether the location and nature of the use will not conflict with any principal permitted use of the district or neighborhood.
3. Whether the use will not create any major traffic problem or hazard.
4. Whether the use will not be any more objectionable to adjacent and nearby properties than would be any permitted principal use of the district by reason of traffic, noise, vibration, dust, fumes, smoke, odor, fire hazard, glare, flashing lights, or disposal of waste and sewage.
5. Whether the use will discourage or hinder the appropriate development and use of adjacent premises and the neighborhood.
6. Upon approval of the site plan, the master deed and by-laws for condominium projects shall become part of the site plan; consequently, any later changes to these documents relating to

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the use of the property itself will be considered a change to the site plan and must be approved by the Planning Commission. (N/A)

7. The proposed site plan shall be consistent with the general principles and objectives of the Township's Master Plan.

The Planning Commission did not find any objections to the standards outlined in Section 7.05 for the application as presented.

A motion was made by Edwards and supported by Florip to approve the application. All ayes.

The Short-Term Rental applications were approved with the condition that a one-year probationary period will be enacted to measure compliance with the conditions outlined within the ordinance.

**Extended Public Comment:** Becky MacGirr spoke on behalf of Advent Lutheran Church. The church which holds a monthly baby pantry would like to place signs around the township to help support this event. She was looking for guidance and legality issue. She will follow up with ZA Williams to clarify what is allowed. She also discussed the plan to develop a Labyrinth on the Church Property which does not require approval from the Township.

**Commissioner Comments:** Edwards reported on the Leelanau county STR situation.

**Chair Comments:** None.

**Adjourn:** 8:10 p.m.

William Ballard  
Recording Secretary