

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PORTAGE**  
**Planning Commission Minutes**  
January 27, 2016

**Members Present:** Peggy Lee Anderson, Melanie Kueber Watkins, Dean Latendresse, Dave Rulison, John Ligon, & Bruce Petersen

**Public Present:** Jon Julien & Linda Ligon

Called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**Discussion Items:**

- **Rental Agreement Sub-Committee minutes/highlights were discussed with Melanie Kueber. The minutes of the 12/21/2015 sub committee were available to the commission. They are also posted with the Jan. 11, 2016 Board of Trustees monthly meeting minutes. Such things as; size and number of bedrooms should be used instead of number's of unrelated individuals, landlord responsibility for annual inspections, septic field sizing, the meeting of the fire codes, emergency exit placement, etc. were all discussed.**
- **Discussion with Jon Julien followed concerning his experiences with new rental unit constructions following the City of Houghton's new rental ordinance and the county and state building codes.**

**Jon's Observations/Comments**

>>The rental code VS the cities building code are sometimes at odds. The best course of action is to defer in the safety section of the new Twp. rental ordinance to the State and County building codes which are updated frequently. Let the building inspector refer to the building codes for such safety issues as window placements, door ingress/egress, etc.

>>When an older house is retrofitted to accommodate new rental units – it must then meet all the present day building codes.

>>The liability concerns of the landlords in most cases will be initially addressed by the insurance company covering the rental.

>>Currently the City fees for annual and initial rental inspections are based on the number of units inspected. He thought the fee's for inspections were fair.

>>Let the rental ordinance enforce such things as the parking requirements – not the general zoning ordinance.

>>There is great contention right now defining just what a rental is. As it stands now if money is exchanged for the rental of space then you have a rental. The big discussion centers now around “owner occupied” homes where a homeowner would like to rent out one room or space and still reside in the home. If that is defined as a “rental” then an inspection is required and the surrounding homeowners tend to feel that this designation would harm adjacent home’s property values. Jon felt that in those situations, owner occupied homes, that would not constitute a rental scenario as applied in the proposed new rental ordinance.

>>Lastly, the definition of the “number of occupants” were discussed. Based on the relationship, a married couple would constitute one occupant. A single person would also be defined as one occupant.

- The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Weds. February 24, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. depending on the City of Houghton’s Code Enforcer’s availability.
- Peggy called for an adjournment at: 8:15 PM Motion that was Seconded by Dave.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Petersen  
Township Supervisor