

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PORTAGE
Planning Commission Minutes
October 6, 2016

Members Present: Peggy Lee Anderson, Melanie Kueber Watkins, Constance Sherry, John Ligon and Dave Rulison

Members Absent: Ted Soldan and Dean Latendresse

Public Present: None

Called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. by Melanie Kueber Watkins

Discussion Items:

- A resident of Dodgeville had visited the Township Office with concerns about the P.C. approving the presence of a “tiny house” in Dodgeville without notifying the neighbors. The P.C. revisited the issue and decided that notifying the neighbors had not been necessary since permission was granted until June, by which time the P.C. will have definitions and regulations in place for “tiny houses”.

Connie Sherry made a motion that if any more requests come in for “tiny houses” that they be approved only until June of 2017. (if they are approved at all). The motion was seconded by Dave Rulison and approved unanimously.

- There were a series of questions posed to the P.C. by John Ollila, (Board Member, not present). The first being → What would the P.C. would do if it were determined that, for example, a structure were built to close to the property line – or if something else were found to be out of compliance?

The P.C. thought that the Houghton Co. Building inspector would deal with the following based on the Michigan State Building Code as well as the existing Twp. regulations.

The second being → Did the new sign at the River Valley Bank located on Sharon Ave. met the requirements found in the Zoning Manual?

The bank is in Portage Twp. and the P.C. did not consider the question because the sign application met the requirements in the new zoning manual. Those signage requirements should be reviewed by the P.C. in the future.

- Melanie and Bruce Petersen looked at the Keweenaw County Civil Infraction Ordinance as a possible guidance document for ours. The Twp. attorney also looked at it and thought it was a good document. Melanie has been working on a Civil Infraction Code

for the Township. When she completes the write up, she will forward it to Bruce who will review it and then he will send it to our Legal Counsel. Some enforcement issues and subsequent penalties were discussed. The P.C. thought that they should be included in the ordinance and that the Twp. Constables should be responsible for the issuance of tickets once the procedure is in place.

The P.C. established a fee schedule. Fee schedules from other locations were reviewed and it was a concern of the P.C. that if fees were not high enough that people may just pay the fine and ignore the violation. The following fees were approved for inclusion in the draft of the Civil Infraction Code.

First Infraction: \$200.00 fine plus any associated court/legal costs

Second Infraction: (May be the same as first infraction) or \$400.00

Third Infraction \$600.00 fine plus any associated court/legal costs

The first infraction citation must be rectified within one year of the initial citation. If a person/entity does not pay the fines they can be added to their respective taxes.

- The marihuana dispensary in the mall and the ever-changing State laws that impacts that dispensary were shortly discussed. According to P.A. 281 the TWP must now have a local Ordinance indicating which kind of facility (grower, processor, secure transporter, provisioning center and or a safety compliance facility) and the numbers of each that will be allowed within the TWP jurisdiction before an individual can open a business.
- Decided on the P.C. 2017 Meeting Schedule:
 - >> January 19, 2017 (Thursday)
 - >> April 6, 2017 (Thursday)
 - >> July 6, 2017 (Thursday)
 - >> October 5, 2017 (Thursday)

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion was made by Peggy to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 P.M., Seconded by Melanie, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Sherry
Acting Secretary