

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PORTAGE

Planning Commission Minutes

March 3, 2016

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

Public Present: Amy Zawada & Linda Ligon

Called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Discussion Items:

- Discussion started out with Amy Zawada from the City of Houghton concerning accessibility from bedrooms. Referred to the Michigan Building Code which stipulates a minimum of 5 Sq. Ft. for egress from a bedroom space.
- Another question was asked whether or not she felt it was a bigger liability concern if the TWP had a rental ordinance or not. Both Scott (from his telephone conversation) and Amy thought it lessened TWP liability if an enforceable rental ordinance was in place. Along those same lines Amy indicated that a lot of Insurance Carriers also send out Risk Control Representatives to inspect insured rental structures and they too make recommendations to the landlord – which also lessens landlord and TWP liability.
- Ultimately Amy is employed by the Houghton Police Department and has a well marked code enforcing truck and radio.
- The City of Marquette has a voluntary rental code enforcement program – they do not have a Code Enforcer empowered to write tickets and personally inspects rentals for code infractions. Code infractions that are ticketed in Houghton use a “civil infraction” process. A letter stating a time-period for correction and the accompanying ticket are sent. The tickets start at \$50 → \$100 → \$250 → \$500. If the ticketed party corrects the infraction quickly the Code Enforcer can tear up the initial \$50 ticket infraction → if it goes past the initial \$50 fine the escalating tickets are forwarded to a collection agency so the City/Enforcer does not have to deal with the collect.
- The “international Property Code” is used for building upkeep and maintenance in the City codes. It is used for such things as chipping paint, etc.
- Un-plated or Unregistered cars were discussed with Amy next. This falls in Chapter 34 of the City of Houghton’s codes. She gets the VIN # and the car is run to see if it is licensed. If not the landowner is given 49 hours to remove, repair or license. At the end of that time the car is towed to the impound area run by Steve Terrian.
- The building condemnation process was discussed for a short time.

- At the next meeting landlords that have retrofitted houses for rentals should be on the agenda. Mike Manderfield or the Laux's names were mentioned.
- The Commission thought that we should start promulgating and tailoring our own rental and structure maintenance ordinances utilizing Chapters 14 and 34 from the Cities ordinances.
- Next meeting was proposed for May 5, 2016 @ 7:00PM @ the TWP office.

- Peggy called for an adjournment at: 8:20 PM Motion that was Seconded by Dave.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Petersen
Township Supervisor