

**MONTCALM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, July 17, 2023 at 3:30 p.m.
#3rd Floor Conference Room, Administrative Building
211 W. Main Street, Stanton, MI 48888

Members Present: Darin Dood
 John Johansen
 Chuck Hill
 Jakob Bigard
 Adam Petersen

Members Absent: Lonnie Smith
 Chris Mark
 Daniel Brant

Others Present Michelle Becker
 Brenda Taeter
 Elisabeth Waldon
 Eric Tester
 Kathy Craig

Chuck Hill called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present. Public comments were offered; none were given.

Motioned by John Johansen, supported by Darin Dood, to approve the minutes as presented from June 19, 2023. Motion carried.

Motion by Darin Dood, supported by Jakob Bigard, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Secretary & Training Reports –No reports were given.

Old Business – The committee discussed the General Plan update and will not be moving on anything until a decision has been made on the direction of the Planning Commission.

New Business: The committee discussed the future of the Planning Commission; Commissioner Petersen stated he emailed commissioners about their thoughts on the future of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Baker responded with an excerpt of what the commission is currently doing and Commissioner Carr suggested a more economic-driven committee.

Jacob Bigard suggested creating bylaws as an advisory committee to the Michigan Economic Alliance.

Darin Dood suggested the following:

- Change to an Economic Development Committee or team that would report growth/developments in the county to Board of Commissioners.
- Develop a link on County website that would be added to municipal and township sites also that would show vacant/available parcels/properties throughout the county, show current zoning and offer what utilities may be available.
- Update the general plan accordingly and provide on the website.

- Create new bylaws with 2 of the seats committing to attending Michigan Economic Alliance for 2 years, then could rotate; also, work on collaborating on countywide projects and information.
- Could include other committees such as Brownfield Authority or Montcalm Solid Waste Committee.
- One member commit to Greater Greenville Transportation Committee and report back regularly.
- Create a final product as if we are selling all that Montcalm County has to offer.

Chuck Hill read from the current Planning Commission Ordinance “for the purpose of having planning in Montcalm County, to create, organize, enumerate powers and duties, and to provide for the regulation and subdivision of land, coordinated and harmonious development of the County” and stated he is on board with changing directions if this is what the Board of Commissioner would like.

John Johansen offered the following points:

- Provide a variety of training opportunities to local governments to improve their knowledge of local planning and zoning techniques.
- Build training around the ten smart growth tenets of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council.
- Encourage the development of local regulation and a program of local enforcement that practice quality of life and fair and consistent for property owners.
- Provide an atmosphere whereby area youth have a stake in the community.
- Work towards centralized transportation which is very needed in Montcalm County.
- Economic development based on growth principles and develop a common, countywide vision of a sustainable future.

Darin suggested that John’s points could align with a new title. Brenda Taeter was asked her thoughts on the subject and she stated the lack of attendance has been frustrating.

The committee discussed that if the Planning Commission did dissolve, the ordinance from local municipalities would go the Board of Commissioners for review as would the PA116’s. The committee agreed they will outline a new plan and direction and provide that recommendation.

Motion by Darin Dood, supported by Adam Peterson, to recommend to the full board to change the Planning Commission to an Economic Development Committee over the next 3 months and create new bylaws for economic development. Motion carried.

The committee discussed committee vacancy of a citizen at large, and reviewed two citizen applications received from Mike Falcon, Village of Howard City Manager and Jake Borton, Isabella County Director of Recycling.

Motioned by Darin Dood, supported by John Johansen, to appoint Mike Falcon to the citizen at large appointment. Motion carried.

The committee reviewed the Douglas Township Ordinance Amendment to permit and regulate solar energy conversion systems in attachment A.

Motioned by Darin Dood, supported by Adam Petersen, to send a letter thanking Douglass Township for the opportunity to review the correspondence and there are no comments. Motion carried with John Johansen abstaining.

Public comments were offered, comments were given.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 21, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.; Darin asked that attendance be added to agenda for the next meeting.

Motioned by Darin Dood, supported by John Johansen to adjourn at 4:15 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Darin Dood

Darin Dood, Secretary