

Corwith Township Planning Commission Minutes

May 28, 2024 Meeting, Township Hall 6:00 PM

Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: Chair Judi Jarecki called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

Roll Call: Jim Neeley ✓ Maureen Charbonneau ✓ Others present:
 Judi Jarecki ✓ Richard Millington ✓ None
 Tom Kellogg ✓

Approval of April 29, 2024 Minutes: Charbonneau motioned to approve the Minutes. Millington seconded, and the motion carried by those present.

Correspondence: Township Focus

Public Comment: None

Planning Commission Items:

1. Township Planning Commission (TPC):

a) Coordination with Village: Participants from Vanderbilt and Corwith Township attended a May 22nd businesses event at 5:30 PM at the Township Hall. Local businesses discussed potential ideas for marketing collaboration. There was a discussion about positive directions the community could take. David Harwood suggested a local business expo at the school auditorium to which several businesses were favorable. Another idea focused on a "Community Garden" as a way to bring people together, and foster communication between local residents, businesses and students. Some businesses expressed a desire to help with the effort, and even pledged to sponsor a growing bin and a water tank. Several attendees would like to organize a group to take on the project. When asked about the Garden idea, the DNR representative offered guidelines and four cedar posts for the project. Lisa McComb will help organize the next community gathering in October, the day and time to be determined.

Kellogg will visit the Village of Vanderbilt to discuss the May 22nd business gathering.

b) Master Plan: Continuing to work on the local business initiative and a Township roads asset management policy; and to include both strategies in the Master Plan.

2. Review Otsego County Land Use Services (OCLUS) documents as necessary; make a recommendation

a) Event Facility proposed language for the Otsego County Zoning Ordinance: During a discussion of the proposed language regarding Event Facilities, it was generally agreed that the definitions and language for the new terms and requirements were concise, and provided unambiguous clarity. Charbonneau motioned to recommend that the Township Board support the proposed language for the County Zoning Ordinance. Kellogg seconded, and the motion carried by all present.

b) Guest House proposed language for the Otsego County Ordinance: After some discussion of the proposed language, it was generally agreed that the Guest House language was acceptable but that the Ordinance itself is failing to address rapidly changing housing conditions and needs within the County, especially affordable housing. For example, there is a requirement that a main single-family dwelling unit must meet a minimum size of 720 sq. ft. This requirement prevents those with limited means from exploring alternatives such as "tiny homes" which are becoming popular in other areas. It further forces builders to construct larger buildings than may be necessary for an applicant's needs. As an additional example, one home owner desired a safe and modern, but small home as a hunting cabin on his property in Otsego County. However, the owner was forced to build a larger 720 sq. ft. home to satisfy the Ordinance. This can not only result in unnecessary expense to an owner, but is a needless consumption of available building materials and subsequent environmental pressures. Permitting smaller homes, to include tiny

homes, would expand the availability of much needed housing units, and provide an avenue of home ownership to many with more limited means.

Charbonneau motioned to recommend the proposed language for Guest House, at this time, but strongly recommend that at least within one year the County should present Ordinance language to allow smaller single-family dwelling units, including tiny homes. Neeley seconded, and the motion carried by all those present.

3. Other community issues/activities: Township Community music events include Thursday, June 20th at 6:00 PM at the Township Hall, and the annual “Music in the Park” at the Trailhead Pavilion on Saturday, July 13th, at 4:00 PM.

4. Update on Otsego County Planning Commission (OCPC) and Parks and Recreation:

The OCPC held three public hearings: the first was for a large equipment dealer on M-32 for relocating some equipment which passed, the second was to change a lot with limitations to a PUD which failed, and a third was to reissue a mining operation which passed.

Parks and Rec held a successful weekend cleanup event. There is a beach area plan to put in 50-lb rocks to prevent erosion, however it is felt that larger rocks may be needed.

Comment: None

Adjourn: 8:13 PM. The next scheduled meeting is 6 pm on 06/24/2024