

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
Joint Meeting

BOARD OF TRUSTEES/PLANNING COMMISSION/ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

6:00 pm

Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333

MINUTES

MINUTES
Page 1 of 6
YS Joint Meeting
January 24, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Supervisor Rob Heethuis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

Roll Call:

Board of Trustees: Mike Cunningham, Larry Knowles, Rob Heethuis, Dave VanHouten, Deb Mousseau (All Present)

Planning Commission: Shana Bush, Ryan Craven, Frank Fiala, Lee Kooistra, John Frigmanski, Larry Knowles (Present)

Absent: Rich Beukema

Zoning Board of Appeals: Jake Welch, Mike Boysen, Tom Mawson, Ron Heilman, Dave VanHouten, John Frigmanski (All Present)

Staff Present: Dennis Buist, Brad Williams, Sandy Marcukaitis

Visitors: 6

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:

Motion by Cunningham with support from VanHouten to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; Knowles: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Cunningham: yes.

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:

Sandy Marcukaitis – Zoning Assistant
Brad Williams – Code Enforcement Officer
Mark Doster - County Commissioner
Catherine Getty - County Commissioner

Absent: Joe Shea, Zoning Administrator; Catherine Kaufman, Township Attorney; Rebecca Harvey, Professional Planner

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Limit 3 minutes)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

ROLL CALL

\\

MOTION TO ACCEPT AGENDA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ron Heilman (ZBA member): Kudos to Joe Shea and the job he is doing. He's done such a good job that we haven't had a meeting in such a long time we want to have a reunion at Branns.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

Annual Report – Board of Trustees - 2023 Accomplishments and 2024 Plans

BOT ANNUAL REPORT

2023 Accomplishments

- Report Card for 2023:
 1. Complete the hall/office renovation and expansion project. ✓
 - a. Pay off the IPA loan if desirable. **High interest rates make this undesirable.**
 2. Complete the park parking lot project. ✓
 3. Formalize more township committee structures. ☹️
 4. Work with/assist the township committees to plan and accomplish goals. ✓
 5. Complete ARPA funds spending. **Fire truck spending will complete this in 2024.**
 6. Continue to research funding methods for expanding the capacity of the Township water system to meet current and future needs. ✓
 7. 2023 Township Spring Cleanup Day. ✓
 8. Continue to improve the incorporation of the CIP into the township budgeting process for fiscal 2023/2024. ✓
 9. Monitor the new fire truck manufacturing, approve additions as needed and make initial payment. ✓ **Initial payment expected 1/31/2024.**
 10. Create and revise township policies and procedures. ☹️
 11. Re-incorporate in-house Zoning Administrator. ✓
 12. Complete the Fire Services Contract revision/approval process. ✓

- Extra Credit:
 1. Hall meeting audio equipment project started/completed.
 2. Excellent Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies.
 3. Park Family Fun Fest – Reading program – Information Kiosk
 - a. Pickleball/basketball grant application and approval.
 4. STR permitting/ordinance reappraisal started.
 5. Zoning enforcement related to junk cars.
 - a. An agreement was reached with the owner on M179 to have junk cars removed and property brought into compliance with township ordinance within two years.
 - b. The township will be monitoring progress every six months.
 - c. Mr. Frigmanski asked if there was anything in the agreement about refurbishment of the land after the cars are removed. Per the Board there is nothing in the agreement on that and they believe that to be a DEQ/EGLE issue.

- 2024 Plans:
 1. Monitor the economics of paying off the IPA (hall/office renovation) loan.
 2. Conduct four elections – February 27th Presidential Primary; May 7th TK Schools; August 6th Primary; November 5th General Election.
 3. Start and complete the park pickleball/basketball courts project.
 4. Formalize more township committee structures (Fire committee and Veterans committee).
 5. Work with and assist the township committees to plan and accomplish goals.
 6. Complete ARPA funds spending.

2024 Plans

7. Continue to research funding methods for expanding the capacity of the Township water system to meet current and future needs.
8. 2024 Township Spring Cleanup Day.
9. Continue to improve the incorporation of the CIP into the township budgeting process for fiscal 2023/2024.
10. Continue to monitor the new fire truck manufacturing, approve additions as needed and take delivery.
 - a. Mr. VanHouten will provide a detailed update at next BOT meeting.
 - b. It is approximately 50% complete at this time.
11. Create and revise township policies and procedures.
12. Complete the kitchen renovation project. Will be started in March 2024.
13. Start the restroom renovation project.
14. Start and complete a fire station storage addition project.
15. Monitor STR (short term rentals) and Zoning enforcement.
 - a. The current moratorium on STR will be over in April and the new ordinances are expected to be in effect by then.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT
REPORT**

Code Enforcement Report

- A little bit busier in 2023 than the previous two years.
- Bringing the zoning team together helped have a better connection with the residents and resolve some problems without actual complaints.
- Portable signs: Collected 25 signs that were not allowed. All businesses were contacted and made aware of the ordinance. This will be an ongoing process.
- Recycling bins: A township resident who has passed away used to come and tidy the bins and keep the area clean. Township employees have taken it upon themselves to clean the area up. The recycling committee is working on the problem and monitors and helps with cleanup.

PCI BUILDING REPORT

PCI 2023 YST Building Report and County Total/Trends

- Total permits issued by PCI in 2023 for YST was 200 which was the highest of the townships in Barry County that work with PCI.

ZBA ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Report – Zoning Board of Appeals

- 2023 Accomplishments
 - 6 meetings were held in 2023. Improved communication with residents has seemed to decrease the number of ZBA cases.
 - Joint meetings held with the various boards.
 - Completed ZBA duties with minimal expense to the township.
 - Increased participation of members in learning opportunities.

2023 Accomplishments

- 2024 Plans

2024 Plans

1. Encourage attendance at educational and training workshops, including MSU Citizen Planner sessions.
2. Provide feedback to the Planning Commission on frequent requests for interpretation or variance approval.
3. Continue to strive for complete application submissions in support of achieving accurate ZBA findings.
4. Support fair and consistent enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. Attend and participate in scheduled joint meetings with the Township Board and

Annual Report – Planning Commission

PC ANNUAL REPORT

2023 Accomplishments

- 2023 Accomplishments
 - 13 meetings were held with a strong attendance.
 - Worked on many Special Exception Use cases and site plan reviews.
 - Addressed requests for rezoning.
 - Zoning amendments sent to the Board of Trustees included:
 - Article II definitions; Article XII general regulations; Section 12.4 Required Setbacks
 - Home Occupation – Section 4.2 and 4.3 – Annual Inspections to change “shall” to “may” and “at least once a year” to “annually”.
 - Drafted solar energy ordinance to propose to the BOT.
 - A total of 93 permits were issued.
 - Heard 3 rezoning requests.
 - Heard 6 SEU requests.
 - Heard 2 land development/splits.
 - The population has remained steady.
 - Expenses from both the planner and attorney were down from last year.
 - Everyone on the PC completed some educational training with some people taking multiple courses.

2024 Plans

- 2024 Plans
 1. Continue to strongly encourage all Planning Commissioners to attend Michigan Township Association, Michigan State University and Michigan Planning Association training opportunities – especially those needing continuing education credits to maintain Master Citizen Planner credentials. Encourage Master Citizen Planner Accreditation.
 2. Develop and execute a plan to complete a review and update of the Yankee Springs Township Master Plan.
 3. Assist the Township Board to undertake a “Strategic Planning” effort that conducts:
 - a. Identification of major goals and establishing priorities.
 - b. Prioritize implementation of those goals.
 - c. Assign goals to specific township officials for leadership.
- Planning Commission Work Plan for 2024
 - Review and propose a modification to the existing Short Term Rental ordinance.
 - Look at wind energy standards and potential ordinance.
 - Review potential of a burn ordinance.
 - Timely preparation of Capital Improvement Plan review.
 - Work on Master Plan review and updates.
- 2023-2029 Capital Improvement Plan was reviewed.

Motion by Cunningham with support from Mousseau to accept receipt of the 2023-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as presented by the planning commission. Discussion: The Board is acknowledging receipt of it, not approval. This is not a budget; it is a plan of ideas.
Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; Cunningham: yes; Knowles: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT
RECEIPT OF THE CIP AS
PRESENTED**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

Training

- Last year the Township spent approximately \$15,000 on training.
- Training is important for new and experienced township officials.
- The registration process for most of our training resources is set up for individual registration.
- Members should plan to register and pay for training individually in 2024 and turn in receipts for reimbursement to the township.
- Individual registration will reduce the chance of not getting registered and should ensure that training details go directly to the person being trained.
- The clerk’s office will continue to provide assistance with registration as needed.

TRAINING

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Robin Laansma (Payne Lake Road): Thanked all of the board members for their dedication to Yankee Springs Township.

Pat Jamison (S. Bowens Mill Road): Brought up a few concerns. The proposed trail from the park to the state park goes through flood plains and wetlands and he feels it is not good for the environment. Mentioned that our County Commissioner is the director of Blue Zones, and it is an outside organization and health care initiative and he doesn’t feel that YST should be involved with it. With regard to the Chamber of Commerce, he feels that the Boards listen too much to outside influences instead of the residents. Instead of cameras for the recycling area they should put them in the hall for these meetings.

Sandy Marcukaitis: Kudos to Jake Welch and the Road Commission for doing a great job keeping the roads clear during this terrible snow.

Catherine Getty: Extremely proud to serve YST and impressed with this meeting and how inclusive it is for the residents to hear the accomplishments and goals. There is a solar forum being put on by the County Commissioners on February 13 at 6:00 PM at the Hastings Performing Arts Center regarding wind and solar, what is going to be coming down from the state, and what the county will be allowed to regulate. It is an opportunity for the township to learn more as they are putting together their thoughts on wind and solar ordinances.

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT:

Jake Welch: Happy to serve and appreciate the work that is done. From the Road Commission view point the Board is fantastic to work with and appreciate the value that is contributed to the roads in our township. Thank you all and appreciate the appointment.

Ron Heilman: The PC has a full plate and he appreciates that they are working on the STR ordinance during the moratorium.

Tom Mawson: It’s a pleasure to work with Mike on the Recycling Committee. Appreciate the opportunity to be involved.

Brad Williams: It’s a great place to work and likes the way things are going. The township has the best and cleanest recycling spot in this part of Michigan.

Ryan Craven: This is my first year and it has been tremendous. It’s a great group to work with and appreciates the enthusiasm.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT

Frank Fiala: Thank all the groups here for the cooperation and the things we see tonight and all year long. Special kudos to Deb Mousseau for keeping the minutes for the PC. If a case goes to court it's very important to have an accurate report on these meetings. Also a super job on the ZBA minutes.

Shana Bush: Agrees with what everyone says. Everyone works together as a team and while we don't always agree on everything, but we're able to hash things out and we get great support from the Board on all that as well.

Lee Kooistra: Very happy to be here and part of the solutions rather than the problems. It's a great team to work with and hope for another great three years.

John Frigmanski: Happy to be involved with the township. Last year was a good year and I am looking forward to 2024 and even more being accomplished.

BOARD COMMENT:

BOARD COMMENT

Mousseau: Thank you to everyone here and taxes are due on February 29th. We'll be open from 9 to 5 that day.

VanHouten: Enjoy being on a winning team. Thank you very much.

Cunningham: Would like to invite everyone to the Board meetings to see what is going on. The state board of canvassers approved some petition language – there's a group putting out a petition to be on the ballot to restore the local control for the renewable energy siting. If you see anything about this petition it may be one, you'll want to sign and maybe if that works, they will do one to get rid of Proposition 22-2.

Knowles: Proud of everyone and all our employees, especially the Zoning Department.

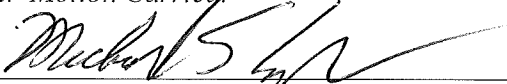
Heethuis: Like the communication we have and enjoy attending the different meetings to see what is coming. I hope you all come to our meetings too. I appreciate all of you.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Mousseau with support from Cunningham to adjourn the meeting 7:20 PM.

Approved by all. Motion Carried

Approved by: 
Michael S. Cunningham, Township Clerk

Date: 2/22/2024

Respectfully submitted by:
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
January 25, 2024