

# CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ALPENA PLANNING COMMISSION

## MINUTES – Regular Meeting

Monday, September 12, 2022

**MEETING COMMENCED: 6:00 PM**  
**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **THOSE PRESENT**

Corey Code, Larry Dehring, Chairperson Tom Hilberg, Delynn Pauly and Norm Poli

### **ABSENT**

Matt Radocy  
Vice-chairperson Michelle Woodruff

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Neal Bishop – Applicant  
Larry Clark  
Gary Partyka  
Nathan Skibbe – Township Supervisor via Zoom  
Samantha Nellis – Huron Pines via Zoom  
Abigail Ertel – Huron Pines via Zoom  
Lynn Daoust – Acting Secretary  
Kevin Pauly – Township Building Official

## **PUBLIC MEETING PARTICIPATION RULES**

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

L. Dehring made a **motion** to adopt the agenda, **supported** by D. Pauly. *Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

N. Poli made a **motion** to approve the August 8, 2022 minutes, **supported** by C. Code. *Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Larry Clark gave an update on the Southside Bi-path project from Island Drive to S. Partridge Point Road.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

a. Report #09-2022 – R. Deuell

N. Poli made a **motion** to accept and file all correspondence, **supported** by C. Code. *Motion passed unanimously.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Case #P-09-22, Michigan Electric Transmission Company (METC) requested a SITE PLAN REVIEW for an electric transmission substation. Property is located at the SE corner of Long Rapids Road and 4 Mile Road, Parcel No. 012-007-000-300-28 in a One-Family Residential (R-1) zone district.

### DISCUSSION:

Supervisor Skibbe explained that the deficiencies noted in Rick Deuell's report regarding vegetation buffers would be addressed by Neal Bishop, representative for METC. He added that our zoning ordinance is superseded by state and federal regulations and that our zoning ordinance was actually updated to accommodate this type of development.

Neal Bishop explained that they are constructing a new 138kv substation at a different location to replace the old existing 138kv substation which is located in a flood plain. After discussion with Supervisor Skibbe, ITC looked into a vegetation buffer but it was deemed not possible due to federal regulations. Trees cannot be planted underneath power lines, fences cannot be constructed for security reasons and no deep rooted vegetation can be near the substation. N. Poli asked if they can leave the existing vegetation that is there but Neal explained that they cannot. Overhead lines are very different from distribution lines because of the high voltage and cannot come into contact with trees or vegetation. However, some vegetation will be left because of its location and you will not really see the substation until you are right by it.

N. Poli asked if the old substation will be removed and if the new substation will be similar. Neal confirmed that they will be similar and both are 138kv. He also explained that it takes time to decommission a station, up to 10 months. Outages must be coordinated with Alpena Power and local industries to minimize disruption of production.

N. Poli also asked if the capacity of this substation will be able to handle what might come down the road later. Neal explained that this substation will have the same capacity as the existing one and that their company is regulated by rates and cannot overbuild beyond the rates to maintain it. However, if necessitated, they can build another substation similar to this one to accommodate growth.

Chairperson Hilberg asked if the area was wetlands. Neal informed that they are working with EGLE and is not aware of any wetland mitigation. Chairperson Hilberg inquired if there was a need to coordinate with the Alpena County Road Commission but Neal assured the commission that they will not be in the ROW, only up to it. Neal also confirmed that there will be no electronic waves, radiation, noise or danger to others.

A **motion** was made by N. Poli to grant the Site Plan Review for Case #09-22 based on the facts contained in Rick Deuell's report, **supported** by L. Dehring. **Roll call vote:** C. Code-aye; L. Dehring-aye; T. Hilberg-aye; D. Pauly-aye; N. Poli-aye; M. Radocy-absent; and M. Woodruff-absent. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**DISCUSSION** - Lake Huron Forever

Supervisor Skibbe introduced Samantha Nellis and Abigail Ertel of Huron Pines and explained how the program will tie in with the township recreation and master plan by identifying the township's sensitive areas and the need for the Lake Huron Forever initiative.

Samantha is the Water Program Director for Huron Pines and Abigail Ertel is the Community Program Director for Huron Pines which is a non-profit organization that works to conserve and enhance northern Michigan's natural resources. The Lake Huron Forever initiative aims to support community conversation and collaboration in the design and implementation of on-the-ground work to strengthen the health and well-being of residents, as well as natural resources.

The Pledge moves communities to make a commitment and take a pledge to the protection of Lake Huron and formulate their own call to action and road map. Huron Pines will work to develop the pledge, the road map and connect with other technical partners to help implement actions and provide a communication package. Samantha reviewed Au Gres's pledge and what it contained. She recommended that the township follow a similar format but to also integrate specific needs and goals of our community. The road map contains specific issues and goals such as stormwater, invasive species, etc. and then action steps related to each of them.

Chairperson Hilberg expressed concern on how action plans would be funded but Samantha explained that the road map would be more of a guide to help the commission incorporate these issues into the rec plan and not necessarily be mandated laws. Also, Huron Pines can help with upfront costs through grants and technical assistance.

Samantha invited the planning commission to attend a green infrastructure workshop with the City of Alpena on October 13<sup>th</sup> and would forward information to Supervisor Skibbe.

In closing, Abigail recommended that the commission compile a list of objectives and areas of interest that could be incorporated into a road map then reach back out to Samantha for the next step. Chairperson Hilberg suggested reaching out to Supervisor Skibbe to schedule a workshop to accomplish this.

**NEXT MEETING** – October 10, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned by Chairperson Hilberg at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Daoust  
Acting Secretary