

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ALPENA
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MINUTES – Special Meeting

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

MEETING COMMENCED: 6:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THOSE PRESENT

Corey Code, Larry Dehring, Chairperson Tom Hilberg, Delynn Pauly, Norm Poli, John Stender and Vice-chairperson Michelle Woodruff

ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Lynn Daoust – Acting Secretary	Dave & Rose Szydowski
Jeremy & Nanci Baldwin – Applicants	Kate & Adam Szydowski
Mary Lewandowski	Erwin Lewandowski
Doris F.	Jean Storey
Sue & Dennis Wagner	Barbara & Bobby Rigg
Desiree Lipski	Jennifer Szymanski
Kevin Szymanski	Sue Szymanski
Monroe Baldwin	John Williams
Heather Williams	Jess Stauffo
Deb Fleming	Reed & Linda Woodruff
Nathan Skibbe – Township Supervisor (via Zoom)	Nico Tucker - NEMCOG

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

D. Pauly made a **motion** to approve the September 11, 2023 minutes, **supported** by Vice-chairperson Woodruff. *Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

a. Findings of Fact Report #10-3-23 – D. Cline

Vice-chairperson Woodruff made a **motion** to file all correspondence, **supported** by D. Pauly. *Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Case #P-06-23-R, Northeast Sanctuary, requested a SPECIAL APPROVAL USE for a child care center/nursery school. Property is located at 745 Thunder Bay Avenue, Parcel No. 018-405-000-408-00 in a Mixed Residential (R-3) zone district.

Vice-chairperson Woodruff made a **motion** to open the Public Hearing, **supported** by D. Pauly. *Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

Applicant Nanci Baldwin was present to address this case. The property currently has two buildings and they would like to use the existing building north of the church as a child care center. She pointed out that according to the Findings of Fact report, all standards had been met. She addressed neighbors' such as increase in traffic, road condition, lack of a play area, speed of traffic and lack of parking by referencing those items in the Findings of Fact report. There will be an 84' x 24' grass play area enclosed with a 4' fence behind the proposed child care center.

Jessica Stauffer – Is the director of the proposed child care center and wants to provide the safest and highest quality child care. All requirements for licensing have been met. She cares about having a relationship with the neighbors and asked for support of the child care center.

Desiree Liske – Works for Great Start to Quality Northern Resource Center which is a grant funded program that supports licensed child care providers. Expressed the strong need for child care in Alpena County and that it is lacking 469 slots for child care.

Barbara and Bobby Rigg, 740 Thunder Bay Avenue – Barbara questioned why the case was being reheard. They are still concerned with traffic, road conditions and child safety. Bobby asked how many days the child care would be open, how many employees will park in the parking lot, and if there will be bussing because there does not appear to be room for a bus to turn around. Jessica Stauffer answered that the day care will be open Monday – Friday, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm and closed on holidays. Four (4) employees will park there and they do not anticipate bussing at this time. Chairperson Hilberg expressed it is unfortunate no speed limit signs are posted but that is not for the planning commission to decide nor is it the applicant's fault. Road signs are between the township and road commission.

Jessica Stauffer reapproached the commission and added that a licensed state child care has to follow all of the laws and regulations and is all about children's safety. They are starting with only 15 children to keep the ratio smaller and give children the attention they require. The fencing will help the child care center and children of the church stay safe. As far as traffic goes, they will work with residents and law enforcement, whatever it takes to keep people safe.

Susan Wagner, 606 Thunder Bay Avenue – Her main concern is the amount of traffic and speed. She would like to see a 25 mph speed limit sign posted and urged the township to work with the road commission to obtain it.

Supervisor Skibbe was present via zoom and explained that the case was brought forward again because it is an allowable use in an R-3 zone district. He has been requesting various road signs and speed limit signs from the road commission and will continue to fight for those. He pointed out that animals and people walking on the road have no bearing for denying this case. Roads are for vehicles, not people or animals. He reiterated that the commission needs to base their decisions off of Ordinance No. 142 and review the Findings of Fact report submitted by Denise Cline.

Adam Szydowski – He has walked the grounds and feels his 14 month old will be very safe at the child care center. There is a huge shortage of child care facilities and has witnessed people quit their jobs because they could not find daycare.

Jennifer Szymanski – Future parent of the child care center thanked the applicants and asked the commission to consider the need for child care in the area.

Jean Storey – Both she and her husband work and have two children needing child care. Has been on countless waiting lists and is thankful for this opportunity. She has no doubt it will be a well-run and safe establishment.

Kevin Szymanski – Thanked Supervisor Skibbe for refocusing the meeting on the facts and also Northeast Sanctuary for doing a great job and meeting all requirements. He is confident in the staff's ability to provide safety and care for his daughter and is in support of this drastically needed day care.

Bobby Rigg reapproached the commission. He cited safety concerns based on an occurrence in California with a pool and children. Barbara Rigg asked if the applicants will pay taxes but Vice-chairperson Woodruff said it is not the Planning Commission's concern.

Vice-chairperson Woodruff made a **motion** to close the Public Hearing, **supported** by L. Dehring. ***Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.***

Chairperson Hilberg read the Findings of Fact report in its entirety.

D. Pauly made a **motion** to approve the proposed Special Land Use for the Northeast Sanctuary Child Care Center at 745 Thunder Bay Ave, Alpena MI 49707 based on the findings of fact contained in Report #10-3-23 and to have applicant and community work with Supervisor Nathan Skibbe to obtain road and speed limit signs, **supported** by N. Poli.

Roll call vote:** C. Code-aye; L. Dehring-aye; T. Hilberg-aye; D. Pauly-aye; N. Poli-aye; J. Stender-aye; and M. Woodruff-aye. **Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Supervisor Skibbe will continue to follow-up with trying to obtain road and speed limit signs for residential areas. He will also look into training opportunities for the commission.

Recreation Plan Update – Denise Cline of NEMCOG was in attendance via zoom and introduced Nico Tucker, who will be reviewing the rec plan with the commission. She added that the Alpena County Planning Commission would like to hold a meeting with other planning commissions in the county to discuss recreation on a broader level, tentatively November 9th. Nico asked the commission to review the survey results and see what the public is interested in. Items that need to be addressed include inventory, goals, objectives and action plans. Goals should be more vague and long-term in vision where action plans should be specific. The rec plan needs to be adopted by February 1, 2024 if applying for any grants.

NEXT MEETING – The commission decided to cancel the regular October 9th meeting but will schedule a special meeting to work on the recreation plan.

ADJOURNMENT – Vice-chairperson Woodruff made a motion to adjourn, supported by D. Pauly. Meeting adjourned by Chairperson Hilberg at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Daoust
Acting Secretary