



**TOWNSHIP OF STRONACH**  
**Planning Commission**  
**(Manistee County)**  
**2471 Main St RR3**  
**Manistee Michigan, 49660**

**Public Hearing for proposed ORV Ordinance – Aug 26, 2020**

Call meeting to order with pledge at 6:30 pm.

Present were: Carl Lacki, Ann Hooghart, Bob Rishel, Connie Tewes, Phil Landis, and Larry Thompson, Zoning Administrator. Motion made by Lacki to accept the hearing agenda for August 26, 2020. Second by Landis and motion carried. Motion made by Hooghart to accept the August 5th, 2020 regular planning meeting minutes as presented. Second by Landis with motion carried.

**Hearing:** Chair Bob Rishel opened the hearing explaining the purpose of the hearing to be on a proposed ORV ordinance for Stronach Township. He noted that Scott MacNeill, State of MI conservation officer and Brian Gutowski of the Manistee County Sheriff's Dept. were present.

**Public Comment:**

Scott MacNeill opened the comments with some personal perspective gained during his work as a conservation officer. He noted that ORV activity is easier to enforce when there is an ordinance in place. An ORV license is not the same as stating that Stronach Township has ORV trails. The license puts the ORV owner in compliance with State requirements and rules. It allows an ORV to be legally operated as a vehicle on roads as permitted by an ordinance or by the State of Michigan and Manistee County Road Commission. ORV use is not permitted on US Forest Service land or roads designated as closed by Manistee County.

Dan Mikulewicz asked if ORVS would be allowed to operate on M-55. Brian Gutowski answered that ORVs are only allowed to cross M-55 at appropriate intersections, not drive on it or on its shoulders. There was also a question regarding driving on private property. That is only legal if the owner of the property gives the ORV driver permission to do so.

Gloria Voight asked if it would be permitted to drive on 2 track Forest Service roads near her residence on 6 Mile Bridge Rd. It would only be permitted if the 2 track was a County Road as well as a Forest Service Road.

Ken Howell asked for clarification that having an ordinance would help authorities be able to do a better job of enforcing ORV activity. Scott MacNeill answered that having an ordinance publicizes ORV rules and regulations. This may also lead to law-abiding ORV users assisting with community policing of bad behavior.

Deputy Brian Gutowski was asked for his perspective. He noted 12 out of 14 townships currently have an ORV ordinance. The Sheriff's Dept has not encountered any significant issues related to their OR ordinances. One issue that can be challenging is any differences

between the 12 ordinances – that can make it a little difficult to know for sure if someone is violating that particular Township’s ordinance.

Scott MacNeill added the comment that it is best to keep an ORV ordinance as simple as possible – that enhances enforcement.

**Closing Remarks:**

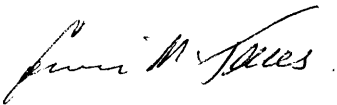
From the board members: Carl Lacki -- would like to move forward with the ordinance as he has seen several instances of ORV use locally with no problems caused. Connie Tewes agreed with Carl Lacki having experienced the same things. Annie Hooghart was not comfortable with the ordinance being able to adequately address the age restriction of ORV drivers and the fact that many roads in the Township are closed for ORV usage. Phil Landis noted he had gone to the State of MI’s website to research information on ORV usage. He felt that the proposed ordinance for the Township aligned with the State’s guidelines and supported adopting the proposal.

Larry Thompson, as zoning administrator was asked for his perspective. He commented that there are bad actors who abuse the privilege of operating an ORV, but that activity exists anyway. Larry agreed that an ordinance was appropriate. Bob Rishel felt it was also important to consider the liability aspect of the Township and wished to make sure that all residents of the Township were protected, not just those who were in favor of the ordinance.

After determining that discussion had ended, Bob Rishel asked the board whether to move to accept the proposed ordinance or wait to discuss the issue more at another meeting. Phil Landis moved to accept the proposed ordinance. Carl Lacki seconded his motion. Roll Call vote: Carl Lacki – yes, Bob Rishel – no, Phil Landis – yes. Ann Hooghart – no, Connie Tewes – yes. Motion passed 3-2.

Hearing adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Connie M. Tewes  
Stronach Township Planning Commission Secretary