



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

Stronach Township Planning Public Hearing River Access Property – September 23, 2020

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

Present were: Carl Lacki, Ann Hooghart, Bob Rishel, Connie Tewes, Phil Landis. Larry Thompson, Zoning Administrator.

Motion made to accept the meeting agenda as presented for September 23, 2020. Motion made by Hooghart with a second by Landis. Motion carried. Motion made by Lacki to accept the September 2, 2020 planning meeting minutes as presented. Second by Hooghart and motion carried.

Introduction

Meeting was opened by Chair Bob Rishel with a brief explanation of the information gathering purpose of the hearing. The audience was invited to share perspectives and ideas on how best to use the Township owned property by the river originally received from Martin Marietta Inc.

Public comment

Terry Lindeman, the chair of the river access property committee began public comment with a request that meeting attendees write down their ideas and contact information for the committee's review. He also gave more background on the boundaries of the property.

Public comments:

Wayne Lindeman had several concerns - public safety due to the upcoming closure of the M-55 bridge, riverbank erosion, and a potential need for the Township to have the responsibility of regular maintenance of the property if improved. He noted traffic through Stronach is expected to increase by at least 3,000 vehicles per day going past that property as well as the playground. He proposed that the access road be closed off until bridge construction is completed and potentially gate it off. Wayne is not in favor of the option of turning the property over to the DNR as it would likely then be posted on the DNR's website and have increased traffic to add more risk of erosion. He felt the focus should be decreasing soil erosion and simple road improvement and evaluating for other issues over time.

Tom Waldon responded to the DNR website comment by noting that the Little River is already promoted in recreational magazines. The promotion of recreation in Stronach is good for business within the Township. He is in favor of cleaning the area up while being mindful of residents on neighboring properties.

Larry Thompson noted that the permits the Township has now only allow rejuvenation of the area and realistically, the Township should already be maintaining the property. Due to having a setback from the river, the issue of riverbank erosion is not under the Township's control.

Bob Rishel asked Terry Lindeman about parking. Would there be parking right by the access point or in a separate parking area? Terry responded the committee had considered limiting how many vehicles would be allowed for parking, but said it seemed to be working itself out currently as drivers do not want to get stuck.

Steve Blank felt the property was good for kayakers and canoeists but did not feel that it would require regular maintenance and associated cost.

Elaine Waldon was also concerned about safety of kayakers and canoeists as there can be some difficulty getting out of the water – perhaps a ramp could be considered? Currently there are issues with high water – could signs be posted? She would like to see the road improved (gravel on the sand) and have a turn around.

Bob Jados had no objection to the improvement of the road. He asked about perhaps having a dock with a handicap lift. Terry Lindeman replied that Stronach Township can only go to the water's edge, not into the water.

Mike Walters asked if the Township needed to consider ADA requirements. Larry Thompson that it would not be an issue if improvements were not too advanced.

Dorothy Batzer commented parking by the access property is used by more than kayakers and canoeists – she had also seen fisherman parking there. She added that improvement is part of the Township's Master Plan. Phil Landis noted that Rob Carson of County Planning had offered to help with grants for that purpose.

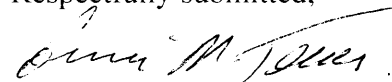
Chair Bob Rishel took an informal survey of audience members interested in improving the property in the near future vs taking more time and waiting for several months. The audience was almost evenly divided at 6 in favor of moving ahead soon and 5 against.

Conclusion

Terry Lindeman stated he would meet with his committee and draft option from ideas from the hearing and bring to the next regular planning meeting on October 7th. The board reached a consensus to move forward with cleanup and Larry Thompson would contact the contractors who had volunteered to help with cleaning up the property. Bob Rishel closed the hearing with a word of thanks to all who attended and a reminder to please submit ideas to Terry.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Connie M. Tewes

Stronach Township Planning Commission Secretary