

SYLVAN LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of the March 10, 2015
Regular Meeting

REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Jim Endres called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 and presided over the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONERS

Each Planning Commissioner introduced themselves and a little background.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Bill Brundage, Vice Chairperson
Graham Cousens
Jim Endres, Chairperson
Dave MacGillis
Michael Menuck
Russell Meskin – Council Rep
Ed Robbins
Pete Shelters
Megan Zumbach

ABSENT

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Brundage, seconded by Meskin, to approve the agenda as presented.

Yes: All
No: None
Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Brundage, seconded Shelters, to approve the minutes of November 11, 2014 as submitted.

Yes: All
No: None
Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR BRIEF COMMENT

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Chairperson Endres opened the meeting to the public for brief comment. Mayor Bob Dzenko thanked the Planning Commission for serving and welcomed the new Planning Commissioners.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers.

Chairperson Endres opened the nominations for Chairperson.

Moved by Meskin, second by Zumbach to nominate Jim Endres for Chairperson.

Moved by MacGillis, second by Brundage, to nominate William Brundage for Chairperson.

Those in favor of Brundage: 3

Those in favor of Endres: 6

MOTION CARRIED

Jim Endres elected Chairperson for 2015.

Chairperson Endres opened the nominations for Vice-Chairperson

Moved by MacGillis, second Zumbach, to nominate William Brundage for Vice-Chairperson.

Yes: 9

No: 0

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

Chairperson Endres opened the nominations for Secretary

Moved by Brundage, second Shelter, to nominate Megan Zumbach for Secretary.

Yes: 9

No: 0

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

B. Planning Commission By-Laws.

Chairperson Endres and Martin asked the City Attorney to create new by-laws for the Commission .

Martin stated the original by-laws for the Commission were probably written in the 1960's. Although Planning Commission is not real busy with big projects, it is important that we still follow strict guidelines. The new proposed by-laws are lengthy but will get us current with new laws and regulations. Planning Commission asked if we could touch on the main items. Martin went through many of the sections

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emphasizing several of them. It redefines the officers/members and the duties of officers and members which are very important and the importance of Planning Commissioners not discussing meeting matters, or pending matters outside of the meeting. Section F. Conflicts of Interest is very important. The by-laws address conflicts of interest and what may constitute a conflict and the threshold for a potential conflict of interest is much lower than most people realize. The reference to planning administrator and zoning administrator is him (Martin). These and other similar items will be discussed under the next agenda item, ethics. Martin explained there are now references in the document to a Planning/Zoning Administrator. Martin is currently the certified Planning/Zoning Administrator. It was not listed as City Manager because the next City Manager may not hold that title.

Meskin asked about meeting notices if we could send out newsbytes about the meetings. Martin responded that we can notify in any additional way we feel is helpful, but you don't want to make them a requirement. We publicize the meetings on the website and calendar and send newsbytes if there is something out of the ordinary on the agenda. Planning Commissioners agreed that the proposed meeting notification is adequate.

The Regular Meeting schedule was explained. We are required to hold a minimum of four meetings per year so there are four dates set for regular meetings. The months were chosen based on elections and holidays. Those dates may be changed or additional meetings may be held following the guidelines under Special Meetings.

The number of absences is now two (2) unexcused or three (3) excused absences in a calendar year may result in dismissal from the Commission. The number of unexcused was reduced from three to two because we may only hold four meetings in a year. The three excused absences was added because if a commissioner is absent, even if excused, for three meetings they are not contributing to the commission.

How items are placed on the agenda was discussed. The Planning/Zoning Administrator formalizes the agenda with conversation with the Chairperson. Agenda items are usually not added by a simple request. If a Commissioner wants to bring up a topic, they may do it under the Planning Commissioner comments on the agenda. If an item is added to the agenda at the request of a Commissioner, all supporting information should be to the Planning/Zoning Administrator at least a week in advance for review.

The remaining items in Section V Meetings, is how we currently run meetings, this puts the process in writing.

Commissioner Responsibilities were discussed. An example of the site plan review process was discussed along with what Planning Commission has the authority to make decisions, versus a recommendation to City Council.

Meskin asked if approval of the by-laws could be tabled until the next meeting so everybody could review the document.

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MOVED by MacGillis, seconded by Brundage to approve the City of Sylvan Lake By-Laws and Rules of Procedures as presented.

Yes: 8

No: 1(Meskin)

Absent: 0

MOTION CARRIED

C. Planning Commission Purpose, Etiquette and Ethics refresher

Chairperson Endres introduced the next topic. Last year we had a 2-hour training session put on by the City Attorney. Since we are discussing and approving by-laws we thought it would be a good time to have a quick refresher on ethics. Martin explained normally this is a PowerPoint presentation but he didn't think it needed to be that in depth. Martin shared his credentials and history with the City. Our current planning commission makeup is actually quite young. Most of the members are new. Several examples were discussed for ethics and etiquette, what you can and cannot do in the way of presentation or conversation at a meeting. It is important to remember that as a Planning Commissioner, you are always a Commissioner while in office. You cannot take your Commissioner hat off and be "just a resident." This holds true in public and in private, and social media. He discussed being a part of the government and following the policy, procedures and guidelines given. If you don't know something, don't pretend like you do know. Giving wrong information could be harmful. Public trust, need, standards and perception was discussed. The purpose of a public hearing was explained. It's ok to change your mind based on new information received at a public hearing. You should not participate in discussion if you are not prepared.

How information is sent to Commissioners was discussed. We are in a paperless society. We try to do everything electronically unless it is too large, etc. Many things, minutes for example, that are sent in the packet don't really require a paper copy. It is just information to review. Commissioners are welcome to print copies of items they would like.

OLD BUSINESS – None

City Manager Comments

Martin thanked everybody for coming and welcomed the two new Planning Commissioners. We have a really good group and will hopefully accomplish a lot. The vacant school property project is still moving along but very slowly. We are working on a program to repair sections of the roads, updated them on the SAW grant work for inspecting and mapping the sanitary and storm sewer systems. Ellen's is still in the permit process, Martin is not sure what the holdup is with approvals.

City Council Comments

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Meskin questioned if the SAW grant was for mapping both sanitary and storm? Yes.

Planning Commission Comments

MacGillis thanked the Council for reappointing him to Planning Commission and is looking forward to being busy again.

Shelters welcomed the new members. He mentioned that he looked at the Michigan Association of Planning website and felt there was very good information and guides. He thanked Martin for the presentation.

Cousens thanked Council for the appointment to the Commission and is looking forward to the year.

Brundage is happy to be on the Commission and is also excited to be working this year.

Menuck is glad to have the by-laws to state how the meeting will be run and for the ethics discussion.

Zumbach agreed with the prior comments and is happy to be here.

Robbins is happy to be here and looking forward to serving on the Planning Commission

Endres is happy with the Council appointments to the Commission. We have a very good group of people here. Thank you for making me Chariman. Thank you to Martin for the work on the by-laws and the presentation.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:29

John Martin, Acting Recording Secretary