

**Elk Rapids Township Planning Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes – November 14, 2023**

The meeting of the Elk Rapids Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Shen Smith at 1:30 PM at the Government Center, 315 Bridge Street, Elk Rapids, MI 49629.

**Present:** Shen Smith, Emile Sabty, Zach Amos, Gary Pepler, Jim Lundy, and Matt Soper.

***(Quorum Established)***

**Absent:** Tom Crandall.

**Also Present:** Larry Nix, Zoning Administrator and William Derman, Township Attorney.

**Audience:** Four audience members signed in.

**Approval of Agenda:** **Motion to approve the November 14, 2023 Agenda.**  
**MOTION/S: Sabty/Amos** **Motion Carried.**

**Public Comments:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:** **Motion to approve the September 12, 2023 meeting minutes.**  
**MOTION/S: Sabty/Lundy** **Motion Carried.**

**Township Zoning Administrator Report (Larry Nix)**

- Larry Nix mailed a letter to Township business owners regarding signage that was also copied to the Commission. He has been taking pictures and will be following up on the concerns he has received from citizens regarding the growing number of signs placed along the roadway. Smith inquired about the setback which is currently 50 feet. Some of the existing signs that are closer may be pre-existing to the zoning ordinance. After discussion, the Planning Commission has come to the agreement that the current ordinance is appropriate and will be monitored for enforcement.
- Mr. Nix said that there is a two-sign limit per property. Additional signage seems to increase in the summer months. Mr. Nix said the letter seems to have curbed the issue for now. He will be enforcing it uniformly.

**Township Legal Staff Report (Bill Derman)**

- Mr. Derman gave a brief update that the Village has provided information that the spillway is not in imminent danger of failure. The Village will be repairing the tubing by relining it next year.
- The Cairn Highway Sewer Special Assessment District lawsuit has been settled and the property owners have until June 30, 2024 to hook up without the \$4,000 increase in price.
- Mr. Derman mentioned that the Tart Trail has made a presentation to Torch Lake Township. He has encouraged the Elk Rapids Township Board to request an annual update from the trail committee. It has been approved by the MDOT right of way, so the best thing to do is stay informed.
- The Renewable Energy Bill has been passed and so Mr. Derman suggests that if the Township wants any say in the ordinance they should review and amend their ordinance which will need to conform with the state mandates and regulations.

- Bill Derman also informed the Planning Commission that he has been told that there will be another 5 percent increase in property value, per the inflationary factor which exceeds the 5 percent but is capped at that number.

**Unfinished Business:**

- Master Plan draft review had a few cosmetic changes and there are a few more formatting issues that will take place before going to print.
- Mr. Nix suggested sending the draft of the Master Plan to the Township Board for review and approve for distribution. The Notice Group has a two-month period to provide comments on the draft document. The Planning Commission can conduct the required public hearing on the Master Plan and consider adoption. Once the Planning Commission adopts it, with or without changes, it goes to the Township Board for their adoption process.
- Sabty read a list of the formatting changes that will take place before the printing of the Master Plan.
- Smith asked for public comment on the draft of which there was none.
- Smith held a roll call vote to see opinion of the Commission to send the draft to the Township Board:

Crandell -Absent  
 Soper – Yes  
 Pepler – Yes  
 Lundy – Yes  
 Amos – Yes  
 Sabty – Yes  
 Smith - Yes

**Motion to Accept the Master Plan Draft:**

**Move to accept the Elk Rapids Township Master Plan Draft as presented with the suggested additions, corrections, and deletions, and forward it to the Elk Rapids Township Board for their review and authorization to distribute the Master Plan to all Government Entities and Utilities previously noticed.**

**MOTION/S: Sabty/Lundy  
 ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**Motion Carried.**

**Crandell – Absent  
 Soper – Yes  
 Pepler – Yes  
 Lundy – Yes  
 Amos – Yes  
 Sabty – Yes  
 Smith – Yes**

**Chairman Smith wanted thank Larry Nix, Williams and Works, Bill Derman and Emile Sabty, for all their work to get the Master Plan ready for approval.**

**Other Items Discussed:**

- Review ordinance draft for a Point-of-Sale Inspection of Septic Systems within Elk Rapids Township.
- Questions on how the ordinance will get distributed to residents and real estate agents was addressed by Bill Derman that agents are aware of the septic ordinance.

- Sabty has 5 typographical corrections that he presented to the Commission and it was agreed that they will be corrected before sending to the Township.
- Nix has made the changes mentioned above and is recommending it to the Township Board for consideration.

**Consensus to send the Ordinance to the Township Board for their consideration roll call vote:**

- Crandell -Absent
- Soper – Yes
- Peppler – Yes
- Lundy – Yes
- Amos – Yes
- Sabty – Yes
- Smith – Yes

Minor discussion regarding septic versus sewage requirements was addressed by Nix. Smith also inquired about the spreading of sewage on the Elk Lake Road site. Supervisor Dorance Amos in the audience informed the Commission that permitted land was being used properly.

**There will not be a meeting in December.**

**New Business: None.**

**Public Comments:**

- **Carol Brady expressed concern that the Renewable Energy Bill did not include the gravel pits in the area.**

**Member Comments: It was discussed that a recommendation would be made to the Township to include the new septic and sign setback reminders with the township taxes.**

**MOTION/S: Lundy/Peppler Motion to Adjourn.  
Motion Carried.**

**Adjournment: 2:36 PM**

*(An audio tape of this Planning Commission Meeting is available at the Township Office  
(AMENDED DRAFT November 21, 2023 as of 1:00 pm)*