

## ONEKAMA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

### SPECIAL MEETING FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 3:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chairman Jim Trout.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Members present: Al Taylor, Jon Phillips, Beata Hunt, Robert Blackmore, Tom Volkema, Roger Cody, Trout. Also present: Zoning Administrator Kris Philpot, Recording Secretary Mary Lou Millard, Robert Gezon/Windfalls Landing, LLC, developer of Portage Point Inn.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Attorney Kristyn Houle, representing the Concerned Citizens for Portage Lake, submitted a written public comment—a summary of concerns-- on the “expert” reports submitted regarding Windfalls Landing ,LLC’s Special use Permit.

**MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2017 REGULAR MEETING:** Motion by Taylor, second by Cody to delete reference to Article 10, Section 1012 C (11) from the May 18, 2017 minutes. Motion carried.

**VOTE ON ORDINANCE AMENDMENT:** Motion by Volkema, second by Blackmore to delete Ordinance Amendment Section 1012 C (11) from the Onekama Township Zoning Ordinance. Motion carried.

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD:** Chairman Trout read a Statement for the Record outlining the process and history thus far by the Planning Commission on the request to amend the Portage Point Inn Special Use permit. He also submitted a list of 44 documents for the SUP application which were reviewed by the Planning Commission. **(Both the statement and list are attached to the original document of these minutes).**

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD:** For more than one year the Onekama Township Planning Commission has been working on the request from developer Robert Gezon/Windfall Landings, LLC to amend the existing Special Use Permit for operations at the Portage Point Inn. We have received many opinions and input both pro and con from the public.

The Planning Commission has held a Special Public Hearing devoted to receipt of public input and comment on the proposal-attended by over 125 persons, had numerous open meetings where comment on the proposal was received from the public in attendance, and also considered public comment in the form of USPS letters, e-mail, and reports from a person represented as an expert in this area-the latter submitted by those in opposition to the proposal to amend the existing Special Use permit.

Speculation and alarming scenarios have been presented by a few opposed to approval of the SUP amendment request. Extreme environmental damage due to “huge” dredging projects, erosions of shorelines, destruction of habitat, pollution, overcrowding of Portage Lake due to the modest increase

in boat slips, and carnage on Portage Point Drive because of a supposed enormous increase in vehicular traffic have been predicted by opponents.

Our initial review of the request to amend the Special Use Permit, included several revisions to the site plan, restrictions on charter fishing operations from the marina, strict language restricting use of the boat ramp to the “shoulder seasons” of early Spring and after Labor Day plus bonafide emergencies, outdoor lighting requirements, mandating berms and landscape screens, and many other things to address concerns of Commissioners and of the public. Following the inclusion of language to address the many initial concerns and questions a draft amended Special Use Permit *subject to legal and other review* was approved on August 3, 2016.

As part of the further review of the draft amended Special Use Permit and in consideration of the concerns raised by certain members of the community opposed to the amended use, the Planning Commission decided to hire recognized, nationally known experts in the areas of Marina and Marina issues (Greg Weycamp-Edgewater Associates, St. Joseph, Mi.), Traffic (Peter LaMourie-Progresive/AE, Grand Rapids, MI.), and Planning (Suzanne Schulz-Head Planner, City of Grand Rapids, MI.) to study and report on those issues. The “expert” reports were finalized in early May, 2017 and are available for review on the community website.

The Planning Commission is having this Special Meeting to review the “Expert” reports and other information that has been generated, including public comments and other input received during the process of careful consideration of the request to amend the existing Portage Point Inn Special Use Permit (SUP).

We intend to look at the Expert reports-Marina, Traffic and overall Planning- and other information to ensure that the Commission has fully factored all aspects of the proposed project before making any decision on the application for amendment to the SUP. Applicant Bob Gezan/Windfall Landings LLC will be present as it is likely that a revised and FINAL site plan and narrative will be necessary in order to reflect the changes and requirements that may be imposed in any final amended SUP that may be approved by the Planning Commission.

I note that the Experts’ reports were almost universal in finding that the proposed amendment to the existing SUP would result in very little, if any negative impact on the community or Portage Point area and any changes deemed necessary by the Planning Commission as part of any approval would be minimal when looking at the overall proposal. Jim Trout, Chairman

**REVIEW EXPERT REPORTS:** (Note: The reports from Peter LaMourie of Progressive/AE, Greg Weycamp of Edgewater Resources and Suzanne Schulz, Head Planner for the City of Grand Rapids, are attached to the original document of these minutes and are also on the Onekama Township website).

**PROGRESSIVE/ AE REPORT-SITE PLAN AND TRAFFIC REVIEW:** Trout discussed the “Expert” report from Peter LaMourie, Lead Civil Engineer for Progressive/ AE. Gezan stated that the end of the primary road ends at the center of the Inn site. Planners discussed an increase in traffic; which they pointed out goes

beyond the Inn. For example: Langland, Yacht Club—this traffic is not applicable to traffic to the Inn. Trout said a large portion of traffic surveyed on Portage Point Drive was to Little Eden.

Trout said with a guest population of close to 400, Little Eden generates perhaps 1/3 more of the traffic counted by the Portage Point Road traffic survey. The latest traffic count—in the Spring of 2016—shows a maximum of 905 trips in a day, slightly more than the 2013 count. This is on a road rated at 1,000 trips an hour. Traffic expert LaMourie based his calculations on increased use of the road due to activities at Portage Point Inn should the amended SUP be approved, the restaurant open, etc. His professional opinion is that the largest driver of increased traffic due to the PPI would be restaurant patronage by local residents, “peak time” would occur on Saturday afternoons. This would result in a maximum net increase of 26 trips-insignificant on a roadway designed to carry over 1,000 vehicles an hour and currently carrying a counted maximum load of 902 trips a day. **(Note: The 2016 Traffic Count and 2016 Hourly counts by MDOT are attached to the original document of these minutes).**

Taylor said the state police won’t change the speed limit or put signage on Portage Point Drive. He would like Gezan to go to his architectural firm and see if the road can be straightened.

Hunt read the summary from LaMourie: “Based upon our review of the allowed existing uses and proposed redevelopment elements, we do not see any significant issues from a traffic standpoint if the noted design issues are addressed. If approved and completed, there will certainly be more traffic in the area of the Inn than has become the norm over the last few years, but not significantly more than if the Inn had continued to be used as it was capable of doing given past approvals.”

**Motion** by Phillips, second by Blackmore to accept for the record the “Expert” report dated April 28, 2017 from Peter LaMourie of Progressive AE titled: “Onkama Township-Portage Point Review, Site Plan and Traffic Review”. The Onkama Township Planning Commission generally accepts the recommendations made by Mr. LaMourie, excepting certain other alterations to the site plan that may be made by the Planning Commission. Such alterations may include changes to modify ingress/egress to parking areas as recommended by Mr. LaMourie and other changes to the site plan as the Planning Commission may determine are necessary for an approved Special Use Permit. Motion carried.

**MARINA TECHNICAL REVIEW:** Trout discussed the Marina Technical Review from Greg Weycamp of Edgewater Resources and read Weycamp’s comments on boats present. Weycamp said “the number of boats present on Portage Lake is very low compared to other similar lakes, referring to Muskegon and Lake Macatawa with densities more than twice and more than five times, respectively of Portage Lake. It has been suggested that a presence of an additional 32 slips in the proposed facility would create a potential hazard to children sailing from the sailing club further down the point. In comparison the Spring Lake Yacht Club regularly is home to dozens of boats in all classes; they host sailing classes, and regattas for fleets of over 30, all within a shared waterway as narrow as 1,000 feet and no more than 2,000 feet. When compared to the open waters of Portage Lake, these narrows with a boating density nine times that of Portage Lake suggest that any safety concerns related to increased boat traffic from an additional 32 vessels is unfounded.”

On the issue of potential “stray electrical current” affecting proposed swimming areas, Gezan said he is going to install extremely sensitive ground fault systems that monitor water, piers, boats, and will comply with all requirements by Electrical Codes, State of Michigan and Clean Marina standards.

**Motion** by Cody, second by Volkema, to accept for the record the “Expert”: report dated March 3, 2017 from Greg Weycamp of Edgewater Resources titled “Portage Point Inn Marina Technical Review. The Onkama Township Planning Commission accepts the recommendations made by Mr. Weycamp with the exception of mandating elimination of the proposed swimming areas from the plan due to concerns about possible ESD due to “stray electrical current”.

The Planning Commission fully recognizes the concerns expressed by the report but shall defer to the stated requirements of the NEC2017, the judgment of State of Michigan Electrical Inspections authorities, or other lawful authorities on this issue.

The Planning Commission shall require that the developer/applicant and all subsequent owners/heirs/assignees fully comply with the recommendations of the Edgewater Resources Marina Review report of March 3, 2017 and all requirements imposed by applicable Electrical Codes and State of Michigan authorities as well as Clean Marina standards. Failure to comply with any of these requirements shall be grounds for immediate suspension or termination of the Marina operation portion of the Special Use Permit for the Portage Point Inn, at the sole discretion of the Onkama Township Planning Commission. Motion carried.

On an issue of claimed hazard to navigation by PPI docks due to position on the lake, for the record, Trout said he laser sited private sailboats and other buoyed dockages both north and south of proposed PPI docks and found a number of anchorages that were well over 100 feet beyond any proposed PPI docks.

Taylor said there are three guiding documents with township board approval: the Master Plan, Watershed Forever Plan and the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan. All suggest the need to have more access to the water.

A short recess was taken at 4:25 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 4:35 p.m.

**SITE PLAN AND LAND USE REVIEW:** The report by Suzanne Schulz was discussed. Trout said reference to a gazebo structure setback of 50 feet is incorrect; the correct setback is 40 feet according to the zoning ordinance.

Gezan was asked about the doll houses. Gezan said he plans to move them to the ballfield as a buffer to the boat barn. He said if the commission doesn’t want them there, he can “X” them out. Or, he could keep the grade lower, spot the doll houses among the trees on the Portage Point Drive side and create a berm on the Seymour Road site.

In answer to a question from Taylor on how did he arrive at the 49 foot height of the boat barn, Gezan said eave height needed is 39 feet, the door header is three feet (for a total of 36 foot door height.) The standard height is 50 feet; this building's peak height is 49 feet (there is a 10 foot pitch to the eave).

In summary, Trout said a high berm and green belt would be on Seymour. Consensus is that the Planning Commission is agreeable to accepting the original siting of doll houses with the doll houses screening the building.

The commission also agreed to: do and ingress and egress for the doll houses, remove seven parking places on the south side of the Inn, do ingress and egress in front of the hotel. If the parking lot on the south end of the hotel is within the setback, it needs to have a pervious surface. The commission asked Gezan to put these points on the site plans.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:** Trout discussed the issue of gas tanks at PPI : He said gas tanks at the new store in downtown Onekama are 60 feet from Portage Lake water by laser sighting and also below the level of lake water. The PPI tank location is 200 feet back from the high water mark (laser sighting) and 15 feet above the high water mark.

Trout said to the best of his knowledge not a single member of the group organized to save the lake and opposed to the PPI amendment attended the public hearing or spoke in opposition to the downtown tanks. Chris Grobbel, the person hired to do the negative assessment on environmental impacts of the PPI amendment was also hired by the Village and found the downtown gas tank issue to be without serious issue and recommended an OK despite the very close proximity to lake water and marsh.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Comments received from Martin Aschauer, Kristyn Houle, Tenley Lippie, Judy Spohn.

In response to questions from the audience, commissioners asked Gezan to provide information on the proposed dredging. Gezan said the area is clean bottom land and the permit allows dredged material to be placed directly on the shoreline as beach replenishment because it consists basically of sugar sand.

**ADJOURN:** 5:48 p.m.

Submitted by

Mary Lou Millard, Recording Secretary

---

Jim Trout, chairman

---

Tom Volkema, Secretary