

TOWN OF HOWARD PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Planning Board members present: Andrew Burdin, Josh Ferguson, Jim Fodge, Barry Kidder, Robin Phenes, William Thew (Chairman)

Absent: Shane Slayton, Sean Turner Excused: Brad Laverty

Guest: Gary Rice, Liaison to the Town Board, Marcia Patrick, Richard Stewart

William Thew called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm.

The draft minutes from the August 2024 Planning Board meeting were not available for review, so the Planning Board will review them at the October 2024 meeting.

Training: William Thew will make contact for 3 more hours of training for planning board members.

Community Park Discussion: Barry Kidder indicated some residents were upset because we did not have the public meeting for the community park and suggested it is important that we host a public meeting at some point. Andrew Burdin stated that if the Town Board wants to have a meeting, they should schedule it, since they will ultimately make the decisions about the community park. Jim Fodge suggested that if we mailed a survey to all residents or landowners in the town, we could mention in the survey there will be a public meeting in the future. Gary Rice indicated that when he spoke with Don Evia, Don wanted to make it clear that we wouldn't promise anything to residents about the community park at the public meeting and that the purpose of the meeting would be to gather information from the public. We could get a list of everything the residents want in case funding does become available. The Town Board is going to ask the wind company to provide funds for the park improvements. There is also \$100,000 of FEMA funds set aside. Park improvements will need to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Community Park Survey Suggestions:

1. Include contact information for Rob and Dawn Patrick on the survey in case residents want more information about the summer recreation program
2. Include a question about whether residents are aware the park exists.
3. Do you currently use the park? Match responses to a number on the mailing list.
4. Obtain the mailing list from the assessor. Steuben County may be able to print labels.

Salt Storage Building Discussion: Because the Planning Board did not require a site plan, nor was it included in the permit for the salt storage building, the Planning Board probably cannot hold the Town Board responsible for planting trees for a visual barrier. Gary Rice did indicate

that he took water samples from 5 or 6 residences within 300 feet of the salt storage building and received results from Life Science Laboratories. These tests will be the baseline, and if residents believe there is a problem with their water due to the salt storage, we can run the tests again for a comparison. The test results are on file in the Town Hall.

Public Comment: Richard Stewart acknowledged there is some sentiment among residents that the current park and playground is sufficient for the needs of the town. Some residents do not use the park, so there is a small segment of the community who will benefit from park improvements. At a previous Town Board meeting, one town councilman indicated park improvements should be funded by a grant and not by tax dollars.

The May-June issue of Talk of the Towns includes an article about organizing volunteers and Barry Kidder pointed out that community volunteers could save the town money for installation and maintenance.

Barry Kidder noted that in the Southern Tier Visitor and Resident Guide, the community park location is not clearly listed. Jim Fodge made a motion, seconded by Robin Phenes, for Barry Kidder to call the publisher of the Southern Tier Visitor Guide to make the correction for the next printing. Carried: Carried: Burdin, aye; Ferguson, aye; Fodge, aye; Kidder, aye; Phenes, aye; Thew, aye.

Marcia Patrick suggested a brief history of the park be included at the top of the community park survey, including the efforts to maintain the park over the years. Marcia provided a list of survey suggestions.

Marcia also suggested that if neighbors to the salt storage building wish to have trees planted on their own property for a visual barrier, the Town of Howard could help pay for the cost to put trees on their property, but landowners would be responsible for tree maintenance.

Richard Stewart suggested that to avoid this issue in the future, the planning board should require a performance bond if there are specific conditions of a permit that must be met.

The Planning Board members suggested that in the future the Planning Board Chairman will have to review the permit before it is submitted to ensure completeness.

William Thew indicated the changes the Planning Board made to the local laws have been submitted to the Town Board twice, but they have not yet gone to public hearing. If we need to make more changes, now would be the time to do that and we could add the performance bond requirement to the Land Use Law.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held on October 17, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall.

Barry Kidder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 pm, seconded by Andrew Burdin. Carried: Burdin, aye; Ferguson, aye; Fodge, aye; Kidder, aye; Phenes, aye; Thew, aye.