

# Roscommon Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

December 20, 2021

**Meeting called to order by Chairwoman Barnes at 6:00 pm**

**Roll Call Vote of Members:** Leonard *absent*, Milburn *present*, Barnes *present*, Hines *present*, Andre' *present*.  
Zoning Administrator: Christian *present*. **Also in attendance:** None

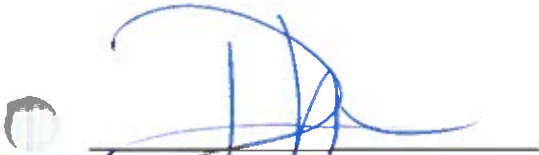
- **Agenda:** Chairwoman Barnes asked if everyone had a chance to review the agenda and asked if there were any changes or additions. **Motion by Milburn to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Hines, all ayes, motion carried.**
- **Minutes:** Barnes asked the commissioners if they all had a chance to look over the previous meeting minutes. **Motion by Barnes, second by Andre to approve the November 15, 2021 minutes as presented. Roll call vote: all ayes, motion carried.**
- Barnes stated the first item on the agenda is the Planning Commission Bylaws Draft Review. Zoning Administrator Christian presented a "draft" version of the updated bylaws to the Planning Commission based on discussions that had been had at the November 15th Planning Commission meeting. Christian went over each section of the bylaws that had changes, highlighted in red, and discussed the reasons for the changes. Barnes asked if there was a section that listed how the membership of the Planning Commission was determined. Christian stated that it was not listed in the bylaws or the Zoning Ordinance but that it was probably governed by State statute although he was unsure as to which one. Christian stated he would look into the question. Milburn agreed that it was probably governed by statute. Barnes stated that she was appreciative of record-keeping efforts and updates that are being done to ensure efficiency moving forward. Milburn suggested that a section related to "Conflict of Interest" be added to the bylaws. Christian stated that a section could be added and provided section 6 of the ZBA bylaws as an example. Commissioner Andre inquired as to what types of relationships could be construed as a conflict, using a future client as an example. Christian stated that previous discussion on the ZBA had addressed the same concern. Christian stated that as long as there is no active business transaction, a board member must preside even if the outcome could cause the board member to lose future business. Additional discussion ensued regarding the addition and subtraction of specific language. Christian stated that he would present another draft at the January meeting for Planning Commission review.
- Barnes stated the next item on the agenda is Berm Discussion and Sample Ordinance Review. Zoning Administrator Christian explained that resident Mike Chisholm had attended the last meeting with questions related to the regulation of "berms" within the Township. Christian stated he had included some sample ordinances that had been provided by Chisholm for the Planning Commission to review, with special emphasis on a sample from Alpena, Michigan that Christian explained provided a good example of a starting point if the Planning Commission decides to move forward on the issue. Commissioner Hines inquired as to the necessity of "berm" regulations moving forward. Christian stated that although he does not handle a lot of berm related issues, he could see some value in possibly incorporating berm regulations together with greenbelt requirements. Christian explained that although not a problem now, un-regulated berms could cause future headaches as land development in the Township has not slowed despite current economic conditions. Christian stated that he had included the steps necessary to adopt a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for review by the Planning Commission. Christian stated that further amendments to the Zoning Ordinance had been suggested and that it may be

appropriate to wait until all other proposed amendment suggestions had been considered before moving forward with this specific issue. Christian brought up that other amendments to the ordinance had been previously suggested, specifically pointing out the waiting period for re-application following the denial of a Special-Use Permit. Commissioner Hines agreed that changes could be warranted. Commissioner Andre agreed, stating a shorter “cool-down” period may be more appropriate. Christian stated that text amendments are relatively simple, while the addition of a completely new “berm” section would be more involved with regard to placement and function within the actual ordinance, stating that more actual “planning” would be required. Andre stated that he had some concerns for the amount of additional enforcement work that could be created by the adoption of berm regulations. Christian stated he would want something as definitive as possible to address any enforcement issues. Barnes pointed out that a change in the ordinance related to berms would not benefit the property owner who brought the issue to the board as there were grandfathering issues. Christian suggested there may be other avenues to address Berms within the ordinance, pointing to Site Plan Review as an example. Andre suggested berm regulations could be included as part of the “fence” section of the Zoning Ordinance as there are already similar regulations in place. Milburn agreed that including the information within the fence section would make sense but spoke of the need to review other areas of the ordinance that may need updating. Christian stated he would keep the issue of Berm regulation on the table and bring other sections of the Zoning Ordinance to the Planning Commission for review as discussed before deciding which direction to go. Andre asked if the same process would need to be followed if text is added to the current “fence” section. Christian stated that yes, all steps to change a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment would need to be followed because the “fencing” is addressed in the Zoning Ordinance and is not a standalone ordinance. Christian stated that new definitions would also need to be added to coincide with any proposed text amendment related to berms.

- During Public Comment (no public present) Chairwoman Barnes asked Zoning Administrator Christian about scheduling a meeting of the Denton/Roscommon Township Joint Planning Commission in the near future, stating that it had been awhile since the JPC had last met and reviewed the Master Plan. Commissioner Milburn stated that a review of the Master Plan is required every 5 years. Christian agreed to begin the process of coordinating a meeting of the Joint Planning Commission. Barnes pointed out the last meeting and review of the Master Plan was in 2017, 5 years ago. Christian stated that he would like to focus on more “planning” efforts moving into the new-year, stating it is easy to get caught up in endless Site-Plans and lose focus. Andre suggested obtaining feedback from Trustee Terry Dupuis due to his previous experience. Andre asked as to the timeline of any changes taking effect. Christian stated that it could take a few months to follow the process completely. Christian stated he would begin the process and report back to the Planning Commission. Christian proceeded to update the board on the status of recently approved Commercial Site-Plans at the request of Commissioner Andre. Updates were given by Christian on the recent Dangerous Buildings Hearing that had taken place on 12/15/2021. As result, brief discussion was had regarding lack of affordable housing in the area and unsafe motels being used for long-term housing.

**Adjourning Meeting: Barnes made the motion to adjourn, second by Hines, all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm.**

- **Next Scheduled Meeting Date: January 18, 2022 at 6:00 pm.**



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**Rachael Barnes, Chair**



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**Dave Andre, Secretary**

Prepared and submitted by Robert M. Christian