

Cato Township Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
October 12, 2022

The Cato Township Planning Commission met for a regular meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at the Lakeview Community Center.

**Meeting called to order:**

Chairman Morrow called the meeting to order at 6:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Members present:**

Phil Morrow, Chairman  
David Behrenwald, Cato Board Liaison  
Brandi Clark-Hubbard, Secretary  
Quanah Striker, Vice Chairman  
Joe Sweet, Commissioner

**Others present:**

David Kelsey, Cato Zoning Administrator  
10 members of public (including 6 from Cato)

**Approval of Agenda:**

Striker motioned and Clark-Hubbard supported to approve the meeting agenda as presented with the addition of 2023 proposed meeting dates per Morrow request. All in favor, motion carried.

**August 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes:**

Sweet motioned and Striker supported to approve the August meeting minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

**Public Comment:**

Morrow opened public comment at 6:03pm. The commission heard from the following:

- Jamie Snyder (Cato Township) asked that the commission consider the 3 sample solar ordinances she previously sent. She noted that percentage of land coverage is a main priority in order to preserve farmland as well as setbacks from neighboring properties.

Morrow closed public comment at 6:05pm.

**Zoning Administrator Update:**

Kelsey provided the log sheet for September 2022 zoning permits issued. He will provide the August log sheet at the next meeting. The following permits were issued in September:

Benjamin Shetler	59-004-026-006-00 N Backus Rd	Farm shop
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Clark Hubbard asked if the township enforces any lake association regulations. Kelsey noted the township only enforces what was added to the zoning ordinance specific to Honeymoon Heights in Section 7.04. Morrow asked about zoning for pole barns that include residential space. Kelsey

noted that a regular zoning permit would be required as well as building permits from the county. The property would be taxed accordingly by the assessor.

#### **Board Liaison Update:**

Behrenwald reported on the following:

- No further communication from Rowe or McKenna related to Master Plan assistance. Morrow will contact Attorney Abdo to see if she has any other recommendations.
- The board would like the commission to provide a recommendation for a commissioner bonus for the extra work done on the wind ordinance. Commissioners decided they'd rather the board determine an amount based on the budget. Behrenwald will report back to the board.
- The clerk would like the commission to consider the previously drafted solar ordinance worked on in 2020. Clark-Hubbard will send a copy to commissioners.
- Blight – Going forward, Kelsey will contact the Montcalm County Sheriff for enforcement with repeat offenders or safety concerns.
- Clark-Hubbard requested Behrenwald ask the board to approve the purchase of an external hard drive to store an electronic backup of the commission's records.

#### **Public Hearing – Zoning Text Amendment on Accessory Buildings:**

Morrow opened the public hearing on the proposed zoning text amendments to Section 3.11 Accessory Buildings at 6:35pm. The following public comments were heard by the commission:

- Jeremy Kwekel (Cato Township) asked for confirmation of the changes which include revising and clarifying the size, lot coverage, and height requirements in A-R, R-R, S-R, M-R Districts.

Morrow closed the public hearing at 6:37pm.

#### **Old Business:**

##### **Zoning Ordinance Section 3.11 Accessory Buildings**

Clark-Hubbard motioned and Striker supported to adopt the resolution recommending approval of zoning ordinance amendment as presented. Roll Call Vote: Sweet – YES, Striker – YES, Clark-Hubbard – YES, Behrenwald – YES, Morrow – YES. Motion carried. Clark-Hubbard will send the resolution and proposed zoning amendment to the county planning commission, township clerk, and all commissioners.

##### **Former VFW Hall**

Commissioners discussed correspondence received from Attorney Abdo which opined that the township's zoning ordinance does not allow the proposed use of a stand-alone bar/restaurant or party store as either a permitted or special land use in the A-R zoning district. Commissioners concurred with her opinion, and therefore cannot consider the previously submitted special use application by Leon Thompson. Motion by Sweet, supported by Striker to recommend the township board refund Mr. Thompson's application fee. All in favor, motion carried. Behrenwald and Kelsey will bring this up with the board at their November meeting.

##### **Update on Commission Records & Email Address**

Clark-Hubbard reported the commission's new email address is: [Catotwp.planning@gmail.com](mailto:Catotwp.planning@gmail.com). This is posted on the website. She also contacted Dr. Bill Winget who served as the commission's secretary through October 2016. Dr. Winget provided

copies of all minutes during his tenure. Clark-Hubbard and Behrenwald will work on locating remaining missing minutes. The goal is to get records scanned into electronic format.

### **New Business:**

#### Master Plan

Tabled until Morrow follows up with Attorney Abdoo.

#### Member Terms

Clark-Hubbard reported that after going through the previous commission minutes provided by Dr. Winget, commissioners have the following terms:

▪ Morrow	Term ending December 31, 2024
▪ Striker	Term ending December 31, 2023
▪ Clark-Hubbard	Term ending December 31, 2023
▪ Sweet	Term ending December 31, 2022
▪ Behrenwald	Term concurrent with township board term ending November 2024

Clark-Hubbard will forward documentation to commissioners for review and will request to be on the agenda at the November township board meeting to go over with the board. Going forward, commissioner terms will be documented at the top of all meeting minutes.

#### Solar Ordinance

Commissioners agreed to come prepared to discuss solar regulations at the December meeting.

#### 2023 Meeting Dates

Morrow provided a tentative schedule of meeting dates for 2023. Commissioners will discuss and approve at the December meeting.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the commission is a regular meeting scheduled for December 14, 2022.

### **Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the commission, a motion was made by Clark-Hubbard and supported by Striker to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:15pm. Motion carried.

Recorded by:

Brandi Clark-Hubbard  
Secretary, Cato Township Planning Commission

NOTE:

The following was provided to the commission by members of the public:

- Sample solar ordinances from Jamie Snyder: Seville Township (Gratiot County), Sidney Township (Montcalm County), Almer Township (Tuscola County).