

Cato Township Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
December 14, 2022

The Cato Township Planning Commission met for a regular meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 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	3-year term ending December 2024
Brandi Clark-Hubbard, Secretary	3-year term ending December 2023
Quanah Striker, Vice Chairman	3-year term ending December 2023
Joe Main, Commissioner	3-year term ending December 2025
David Behrenwald, Cato Board Liaison	Board term ending November 2024

Joe Main was welcomed and sworn in by Chairman Morrow as a new commissioner.

**Others present:**

David Kelsey, Cato Zoning Administrator  
Danielle Bouchard, McKenna (land use planning firm)  
4 members of public (all from Cato)

**Approval of Agenda:**

Striker motioned and Behrenwald supported to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

**October 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes:**

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

**Public Comment:**

Morrow opened public comment at 6:05pm. The commission heard from the following:

- Ben Stout (Cato Township) thanked the commission for its work on the township's planning activities. He is excited for the future of Cato Township, and the Cato Citizens Alliance is working on new ideas focused on agriculture, sporting activities, lakes, and the master plan.

Morrow closed public comment at 6:06pm.

**Zoning Administrator Update:**

Kelsey provided the log sheets for August, October (no permits), and November 2022. September was provided at the prior commission meeting. The following permits were issued in August and November:

Dan Byler	6720 W Deane Rd	Replace barn 40x112
David Ross	11134 N Backus Rd	36x24 house, 8x8 & 12x16 sheds
Richard Shamp	11893 Birch Dr	10x10 covered porch (variance)
Zane Abberger	11818 Almy Rd	Pole barn 30x40
Cheyenne Rasmussen	11859 W Tamarack Rd	Home/attached garage
Shawn Fleet	7780 Cutler Rd	Garage & deck
Scott Smith	11872 N Bale Rd	Pole barn

Kelsey noted one permit application denied December 1, 2022 for 10182 Tamarack Rd because the proposed pole barn height exceeded 14 ft. Commissioners noted the township board approved the commission's proposed zoning text amendment to increase the allowed height for accessory buildings to 18 feet at their December 5, 2022 regular meeting. Kelsey will call both the applicant and township supervisor to cancel the zoning board of appeals hearing and refund the variance application fee.

### **Board Liaison Update:**

Behrenwald reported on the following:

- The township clerk will publish the township board's approval of the zoning text amendment for accessory buildings in the December 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Lakeview Area News.
- The township board approved Clark-Hubbard's request for a 1TB external hard drive to store commission records.
- The township board approved a \$100 bonus to commission members for their work on the wind ordinance as well as a \$30 reimbursement for members who attended the April 21, 2022 zoning seminar hosted by the Montcalm County Planning Commission.
- The township board approved a refund of Leon Thompson's special land use permit application fee.

### **Old Business:**

#### McKenna (land use planning firm)

Danielle Bouchard of McKenna presented an overview of the services they provide. They are one of Michigan's largest planning firms and have offices in Grand Rapids, Northville, and Kalamazoo. She is a senior planner with previous experience in Ottawa County regional planning and in zoning administration. Most of her clients are in West Michigan. She provides services for master plans, zoning ordinances, site plan review, and other planning areas. She noted a focus on striking a balance between agricultural preservation and development. Their services generally take place over 10-12 months with the first couple months dedicated to public engagement. Commissioners noted both the township and village should be considered during this process. The state is also given a comment period. Commissioners discussed the desire to have McKenna conduct a complete update of the existing master plan which has not been updated since 2010. Ms. Bouchard noted that there is still a lot of useable content in the existing master plan. She noted a ballpark cost between \$16,000 and \$22,000 for an extensive plan update, depending on the level of public engagement. Commissioners agreed to a set a goal of completing the master plan by the end of 2023. Ms. Bouchard will put together a proposal of services to be presented to the township board at their January 2, 2023 regular meeting.

#### Section 3.11 Accessory Buildings

One new page distributed for zoning books to reflect approved zoning amendment.

### Update on Commission Records

Clark-Hubbard reported progress in locating previous minutes of commission meetings. It is still a work-in-progress. There is also a need for organization of records for special land use permits and other zoning-related items. The goal is to get records scanned into electronic format.

### **New Business:**

#### 2023 Membership

Member terms are now listed in zoning books.

#### 2023 Meeting Dates

Motion by Clark-Hubbard and supported by Striker to approve the following 2023 regular meeting dates:

- January 11, 2023
- March 8, 2023
- May 10, 2023
- July 12, 2023
- September 13, 2023
- November 8, 2023

All in favor, motion carried. Clark-Hubbard will post in the window and on the website.

#### Solar Ordinance

Commissioners discussed the ordinance templates previously provided (one from Attorney Abdo, one previously worked on by the commission, and three samples provided by a member of the public). Commissioners agreed to use the template provided by Attorney Abdo as a starting point since it has already been through a level of legal review which will keep costs down. Commissioners agreed to come prepared to discuss the template in more detail at the January meeting.

#### Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the commission is a regular meeting scheduled for January 11, 2023.

#### Adjournment:

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

Recorded by:

Brandi Clark-Hubbard  
Secretary, Cato Township Planning Commission