

BENZIE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
AUGUST 14, 2008  
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Moorman, Damm, Graves, Pitcher, Ross, Roberts, Ralston  
MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tanner  
STAFF PRESENT: Neiger, Flynn  
OTHERS PRESENT: Matt Skeels, Marcia Stobie, Mark Evans

I. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER** Chairman Graves called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** **Motion** by Moorman supported by Pitcher to approve the agenda as presented Ayes: All Excused: Tanner Nays: None **Motion Carried.**

III. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FO THE JULY 10, 2008 MEETING** **Motion** by Pitcher supported by Moorman to approve the July 10, 2008 minutes as submitted. Ayes: All Excused: Tanner Nays: None **Motion Carried.**

IV. **PUBLIC INPUT – ITEMS ON THE AGENDA** None

V. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. ZONING ORDINANCE REWRITE COMMITTEE. Graves reported on the windshield tour, comparing the maps to actual. Next month will be focusing on wind energy – there will be a draft before the meeting. Platte Township is requesting that we start work on the zoning districts.

1. WIND ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT Graves reported that last month a subcommittee was created of himself, Pitcher and Roberts to create a message and contact the communities along the coast. Graves thinks we ought to wait until after the next ZORC meeting. Some discussion on whether wind farms protect or invade open space.

B. UPDATING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1. Committee Status Report Neiger reports that the committee met last month. Still needs 2 members from governments – Village of Lake Ann and Lake Township. The next item is the focus group on Aug. 20. Will result in a survey to be sent out. It is a collaborative effort between the summit committee and this committee. It will be a good way for the two committees to get to know each other. He explained that as a paper is reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee will edit and then forward to the government committee. The government committee review will be in terms of politics. Neiger explains that a good thing to come through the forestry and mineral committee is oil and gas wells. Reports on a MTA meeting where there was considerable discussion – the wells are being drilled here and pipe laid to connect with a pipeline in Manistee County. The MTA requested that we hold an educational meeting for landowners on this and Steve Fouché (MSUE) is working on getting this going. There is no date yet. Reports that the wind energy seminar will have a little on oil and gas but he would rather have something specific here for the landowners, the meeting may expand into Manistee County. Graves asks when the local stakeholders will get a chance to input. Neiger reports that they will be invited in after the government committee gets going. States he could notify the 70 interest groups of the government committee meetings. Isn't as big a process as the first because this is just an update. He reports the Socio-economic paper is the first paper to be updated and will go to the board of commissioners next week. Next is forestry and mineral extraction. He reports he has spent most of his time on the socio report and getting the government t committee up and running.

Graves asks what happens if the BOC sends the report back for whatever reason, before the public hearing. Neiger states he has written a resolution of support and it has a place to include changes if any.

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| 2. | <u>New Government Committee Update</u>     | Already talked about  |
| 3. | <u>Gas/Oil/Leasing Educational Session</u> | Already talked about. |
| 4. | <u>New Citizens Advisory Committee</u>     | None                  |

5. Implementation of Intergovernmental Strategies Ralston reports they met last week, and will put Graves and Moorman on the mailing list. The group discussion has been about the next summit and getting some advertising. Neiger added that they may go to the "Foundation" and the "Frankfort Rotary" for help with these expenses.

Pitcher asks if the agenda can be amended to let Matt Skeels for the Grand Vision go first. Graves says if there is a motion it's ok, but he would rather stick to the agenda. No motion

## VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. RFQ STATUS Graves reported that the committee had interviewed 4 consulting firms, and believes the committee unanimously recommended LSL Planning and requests action and a recommendation to the County Board. **Motion** by Pitcher seconded by Moorman to approve and forward with a recommendation to hire LSL. Pitcher reported on the selection of the Planning consultant. There was consensus that LSL was the best choice. Neiger corrects that LSL will be mostly to help Seger with rewriting the zoning ordinance. Graves agrees they will be only assisting with zoning amendments, in addition to attorney review. Graves also comments that the ordinance allows him to seek expert advice on land use permits and since Seger is already able to do that, our vote here is to get a consultant to help with zoning ordinances. Damm asks were the money comes to pay them. Pitcher comments that Seger requested 10,000 in his budget request and special land use application review will be paid by the developer. Neiger comments that 2 of the firms were firms that Seger had previously worked for and the other didn't have as much depth in planning. Ayes: All Excused: Tanner Nays: None **Motion Carried**

### B. PLANNING COMMISSION ORDINANCE AND BYLAWS DRAFT

Graves points out the County Board is the entity that appoints a planning commissioner to the ZBA not the Planning Commission and that was confirmed by the County Attorney. The Planning Commission appoints a member to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Planning Commission can advise the BOC. Neiger says there is similar language in the current planning act and the Planning Commission could make a motion tonight to rectify anything that needs to be corrected. Graves reviewed the changes that had been made to the first draft: On Page 1 eliminate the parenthesis in Section 2, Paragraph B.2 after the word Commissioner, Page 3, Paragraph 3, eliminate I.(a) and replace with 2.I.(a). Motion by Roberts seconded by Moorman to forward the ordinance to the BOC, with a comment that Dave could present it. There was some discussion on the number of members of the Planning Commission and that the BOC can change the numbers. Neiger comments that the way the planning enabling act was written you have to state a hard number (he states that Figura and MSUE agree on that). Graves comments that in the event the expiration staggering gets out of balance, we can appoint someone to a one or two year term to balance it out again. There was discussion on rotation schedules. Neiger comments that this gives the Planning Commission 3 years to come into compliance with the new law. Ayes: All Excused: Tanner Nays: None **Motion Carried.**

Bylaws changes: Pg 1 Paragraph 3.B end of first sentence add "for that calendar year", Pg 2 insert "appointed and serving" after the word membership in item C, (2) D.2, Roberts asks if there are rules of procedure? Graves responds that he will bring those to the PC when these are done. Ross questions Sec 5, E, line 3? Put "and" in front of the word chose. Neiger reports that bylaws are required by the Planning Enabling Act, and Figura agrees with that. **Motion** by Ross seconded by Roberts to approve the bylaws as corrected, contingent upon adoption by the BOC of the Ordinance. Ayes: All Excused: Tanner Nays: None **Motion Carried**

C. SETTING THE PUBLIC HEARING DATE FOR THE SOCIO ECONOMIC REPORT Neiger reports that the hearing has been scheduled for Oct. 1.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and Recommendation, Lake Township Master Plan Neiger reports that he included the Lake Township. Master Plan for review only, and he has some concerns about how its laid

out, and wants to hear back from the Township on this. One of Neiger's concerns is what act they are acting under, and have they included everything that is required by the new act. He says it might be a good chapter in a master plan. Neiger would like everyone to review, and he will send everyone a copy of the former act or he can cull out what he sees as problems. A big issue is there is no future land use map. He wants them to check with their attorney. This is not enough. There are no numbers, or projections.

B. Review and Recommendation, Manistee County Master Plan Neiger states this one looks pretty good, the future land use map and goals and objectives relative to oil and gas, they looked at the area south of Thompsonville where we have an urban services boundary and it's not on their map. Suggests the PC review it. He copied it including the color maps at considerable expense. Flynn to remind Planning Commission to bring their plans with them next month. Both will be action items next month.

C. Interlochen – Thompsonville Trail Connection proposal Neiger reports there is no proposal yet. They've been learning. Mentioned the members who were there and had a round table discussion. He reports that all the stakeholders were there and they talked about possible trail locations. The Benzie / Manistee snowbirds already maintain a parallel trail to the railroad. He reports that some of the land proposed are owned by Mr. Webber and people are going to find out if he would be willing to sell. A major issue is if there is funding for this. He reports that the DNR has submitted a grant proposal to build the trail from Manistee to Traverse City and the Conservancy has made this segment a priority. Everybody thinks it's a great idea. It is just a matter of buying Webbers property. The trail will go from Manistee to Interlochen and will connect there with the tart trail. He reports there is a statewide initiative started by the Governor to link all communities with a trail. He comments that there is a proposal to do work on the M-72 corridor, through the National Park on M-22 and then could include a link from Frankfort north. There will not be another meeting until the funding issue is settled or if there are willing sellers on the Pere Marquette section and he hopes that contacts from the community will help bridge the problems between Mr. Webber and the DNR. Moorman reports that Webber will be up next week and he hopes to be talking to him about the trail.

**VIII DIRECTOR'S REPORT** Neiger reports the Parks & Recreation Committee met with the person working on the plan. He is close to completion and ready with the update. He states he has talked to Ann Bourne about the cultural aspects to the plan, and this weekend he will be looking at all the facilities to make sure they are ADA compliant. If there are issues they will become a priority, but we don't have much that is developed. He states he will also be looking at township facilities. Met with many townships last month (half doz meetings) and got mostly good appointments for the Master Plan project. He passed out a calendar of meetings he attended last month and next months meetings he will attend.

**IX CORRESPONDENCE None**

**X PRESENTATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Grand Vision Presentation and Report Matt Skeels, director of TC Talus, local project manager for the Grand Vision. Handed out flyers on upcoming events and events specific to Benzie County. Reviewed the history, scope and funding of the project and thanked Benzie County for their participation. [www.thegrandvision.org](http://www.thegrandvision.org) is the website. He explained the site has maps that were developed at the meetings, and Benzie's will be on by next week. He reports there have been about 3,000 participants across the 6 county area. Commented on a value survey which was taken across the 6 county area and the results are very interesting, reported out by county. The final report will be ready soon and on the website. That info as well as the maps produced at the workshops will result in scenarios that people think they would like. It will show what the counties are doing and how that will effect each other. He commented that everyone needs to start thinking about shifting housing stock to complement the aging populations. Reported that the Aug. 20, 2008 meeting will have the results of the survey and a very rough draft of the scenarios. The consultant will not be at any of the update meetings. Reported that there will be a kickoff meeting in Benzie County on Oct. 14, 2008, and the

region will have one as well. He stated they will be mailing to every post office box in the 6 counties and are trying to get as many surveys out as possible and then they will come up with one “blended” scenario that is acceptable to most of the people in the 6 county area. About the fall of 2009 there should be a final grand vision. Graves asks about strategy to implement, is there a model that has proven to work as an implementation model? Skeels responds that they hope to have about 2 mill \$ left to implement the plan, and will be looking at master plans and zoning ordinances to see where they are going in relation to where the people say they want to go. They hope to utilize that as seed money to get money from foundations to expand the amount. Pitcher asks about a transportation planning component, commenting that we need help in figuring out US-31 in Benzonia, and can we get specific communities working on that. Skeels responded with options, and commented that specific plans could require an environmental study, such as a bypass around the villages, or increasing safety as the highway goes through the villages. Damm asks if we will have access to extensive computer modeling. Skeels responds that there is an “add on” to Arcview which can help identify the affects of land use decisions. It will be available, but is not sure exactly where.

**XI PUBLIC INPUT\_Items on or off the Agenda** Graves read the public input policy. Glen Puitt (MILU) adds their site is doing some research on the ballot and Benzie County citizens prefer paper ballots. They are also looking at quality of life issues. He states that astatistic in Benzie County is that 52% of the persons responding to the survey chose protecting the environment to economic development. He gave his website, [www.mlui.org](http://www.mlui.org). He commends all the commissioners for their support of the grand vision and has enjoyed watching you work.

Neiger reports that he handed out a corrected version of the Socio-economic report which is the one to review. He stated he has some copies for the Board of Commissioners

**XII ADJOURN Chairman Graves adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted:

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Kathy Ralston, Secretary

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Christi Flynn, Recording Secretary

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