

Wyckoff Recommendations Implementation Status

Revised July 2008

The following text is directly extracted from the Benzie County Analysis. Comments provided in *italics* explain progress to date toward implementing the recommendations.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Acting in a timely manner does not mean rushing to act. Proper deliberation involving all the affected townships and stakeholders should occur first. These issues need to be reviewed from the perspective of the best interests of the whole County over time, and not just of those people in the room making the decision, or those that happen to hold jobs in the effected departments at that time. But, because of erosion of confidence, decisions cannot be delayed for very long. Following is a recommended list of actions that should be taken immediately (or very soon if so indicated):

1. The County Board, County Planning Commission, and County staff (County Administrator, County Planner, County Zoning Administrator, and County Building Code Department staff) should immediately commit to building the best rural Michigan County Planning, Zoning and Building Code program that the County can afford (in light of competing responsibilities and in consideration of the fact that these are not state mandated activities).

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners has committed to creating the best Planning, Zoning and Building Code program in Northern Michigan. This was done on February 19, 2008 when the BOC unanimously approved the following motion:

Motion by Pitcher, seconded by Sandman, that the Board of Commissioners commit to building the best rural Michigan County Planning, Zoning and Building Code program that the County can afford. Motion carried. Ayes: Damm, Kelley, Pitcher, Roper, Sandman, Smeltzer and Walterhouse Nays: None

2. The County Administrator should immediately send a copy of this report to all the townships, cities and villages in the County, as well as to major stakeholder groups, and make it easily available (on a County website, in the County library, etc.).

The Zoning Department mailed out the Benzie County Analysis to the above noted individuals and boards on July 15, 2007.

3. The County Administrator should immediately schedule a joint meeting between the County Board, County Planning Commission and townships
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presently under County Zoning, or ask to be a part of the next Benzie County Chapter of the MTA gathering in the County. At that meeting the County Board Chairman should ask for validation of the problems, findings and recommendations in this report and for township input on key options. In particular, ascertain under what circumstances, if any, townships that have proposed leaving County Zoning would change their minds and stay.

Representatives from the Board of Commissioners and staff have met with the Benzie County Chapter of the MTA on [DATE], [DATE] and [DATE]. A commitment has been made by the Board of Commissioners to increase communication with the MTA and to regularly attend local meetings.

4. The County Administrator should immediately arrange for training of the new County Zoning Administrator with Kurt H. Schindler.

A curriculum for the County Zoning Administrator has been established based on direct input from Mark Wyckoff, Dick Figura (County Attorney), the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP), the Michigan Townships Association (MTA), and a number of veteran zoning administrators from other municipalities. Training has commenced with the Citizen Planner program and continuing education seminars and conferences.

5. The County Board should immediately instruct the County Planner and County Planning Commission to process the remaining major amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance with a recommendation for adoption of the major amendments (see discussion above) within the next six months.

Responsibilities for completing the Zoning Ordinance has been given to the zoning administrator. The Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee has adopted, and will continue to maintain, a scheduled plan for completing the Ordinance update. Two ordinance updates have been adopted in 2008 and a third is scheduled for December.

6. The County Administrator should immediately instruct the Director of the County Building Department to set up a meeting with contractors, builders and the County Building Code staff to go over existing, new and any proposed new regulations, procedures and fees and ask for input on ways to best ensure smooth implementation. Considerably more effort will be needed to notify, and encourage attendance (e.g., provide dinner).

The County Building Department held a meeting in June of 2007 with contractors, builders and County Building Code staff to enhance communication. In addition, the State of Michigan conducted an

audit of the Building Department.

7. County Zoning, or ask to be a part of the next Benzie County Chapter of the MTA gathering in the County. At that meeting the County Board Chairman should ask for validation of the problems, findings and recommendations in this report and for township input on key options. In particular, ascertain under what circumstances, if any, townships that have proposed leaving County Zoning would change their minds and stay.

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Motion by Moorman seconded by Damm that the current organization of the Planning and Zoning Departments remain in place until such time as new information is available to consider changes as appropriate after proper consultation and when the right opportunity presents itself.