

Rutland Charter Township

Regular Board Meeting

March 9, 2022 / 7PM

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Watson at 7pm. Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call Members Present:

Gene Hall, Sandy James, Sandy Greenfield, Larry Watson, Robin Hawthorne, Brenda Bellmore, Stacey Graham

Others Present:

Pat Sharpe, Dave Jackson, Audrey Burton, Eugene and Mary Alber, Tim and Jessica Luntsford, Robbin Nichols, Sandra Freese, John Underwood, Tom Kramer, Bob Teunessen, Dave Lekta, Robert Foster, Larry Hayes, Stacy Kensington VanDam, Brian VanDam, Arthur Kensington, Ryan Davis, Dan and Pat Lipstraw, Les Raymond, Steve and Susan Pachulski, Nickie Haight

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by James, seconded by Greenfield. Roll Call: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Watson - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Graham - Yes. Motion passes.

Guests:

Audrey Burton - RCT Library Board Representative:

Audrey shares her report and points out the highlights

Open Comments:

Joel Ibbotson asked when the public will get 3 minutes on the Blight Ordinance and Watson answers during that agenda item.

Hunter Clap introduces himself as someone that works with Angela Rigas. He hands out fliers and business cards.

Pat Sharpe thanks the board for the Algonquin Lake Agenda items.

Consent Agenda:

Motion by Hawthorne to accept the consent agenda, seconded by Graham. All ayes, motion carries.

Supervisor:

Watson shares that some Algonquin Lake residents started a petition to ask for their roads to be paved. However, they were already on the schedule for this year. Watson will work with the Road Commission to see if there is something different the Algonquin Lake residents want.

Clerk:

Hawthorne says her clerk report is available and board members have it. She shares that the Hastings School System will have a millage on the May 3rd ballot and Absentee Ballots will be available to go out March 19th.

Treasurer:

Greenfield shares that a copy of her Treasurer's Monthly Report is on each board member's desk.

She says unpaid taxes were sent to the county this past Monday. She has 93% paid here and the other 7% will now have to pay at the county.

Trustees:

Hall says that he visited a micro business in Lowell and it was very clean and secure. He sees no problem with a facility like that.

Graham asks about the bids received for the roof, cemetery, and landscaping. Watson tells her there is one bid on the cemetery but that is it. The deadline is April 5th.

Commissioners Report:

Dave Jackson

Jackson shares that there will be a Saint Patrick's Day parade on Thursday the 17th. The Barry Roubouix is on the 26th.

Consumers Energy will be doing a system upgrade in RCT. Watson says they knew about the tree trimming but that was it. Jackson says it will be a 2 year project. Sharpe asks when and if residents will lose power. Jackson says they would be notified ahead of time and it could be a year or so from now.

He says the broadband report is complete and he will send a copy to Hawthorne to share with the board. He says they are learning from the mistakes they made in the first round and working on ways to handle the second round. He says someone will be communicating to local governments.

Unfinished Business:

Second reading of the Ordinance 2022-179 Rutland Charter Township Anti-Blight Ordinance:

Supervisor Watson opens the floor to the public:

There are many RCT residents and non RCT residents in attendance. The majority in attendance are against what they see as an ordinance that is too strict and too overreaching. Some residents understand the need for an ordinance but still think this one could use some work.

The board tries to explain to the crowd that they are only trying to clean up the township. The zoning code officers need to have an ordinance to back them up when they are attempting to get a resident to clean up a blight situation.

The public asks a lot of "what if" questions that did not pertain to the blight ordinance. The majority of the public in attendance did not understand that. Watson tried to explain to them that these situations would fall under different ordinances, such as the Dangerous Building Ordinance, and were not necessarily blight situations. The crowd yelled at him that he cannot pick and choose on who should follow the rules. Watson and the board assure the crowd that that will not be the case.

Many in the crowd comment that they are worried about the economy and people that cannot afford to clean up or fix what might be a blight situation. Others think this ordinance will set neighbors against neighbors and cause further problems. The board explains that they have always been based on resident complaints and improving this ordinance will not change that. The board tells the public that they receive dozens of complaint calls about rats and trash and things that are detrimental to everyone's property values.

Some residents think the proposed blight ordinance is too vague and others think it is too detailed. The board explains that that has been an ongoing problem and they are doing their

best to support both beliefs. Most of the board believes the existing ordinance is too vague and they are attempting to clarify it with the updates.

Residents urge the board to consider the future and future board members and township leaders that may not interpret the ordinance the same way.

Watson closes the public comment portion of the meeting and asks the board for comments.

All of the board members feel that the existing ordinance needs work. They all appreciate the public coming and voicing their opinions. They urge the public to get involved earlier in the process because the time for public input was during the public hearing and meetings in past months. The board explains that this is not something they just decided to do and that many residents want this as well.

Greenfield makes a motion, seconded by Bellmore to postpone the adoption of Ordinance #2022-179 and send it back to the board for further consideration.

First reading of Ordinance 2022-180 Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to Marihuana Business Land Use:

Hall says that Attorney Rolfe suggested an additional note about how to handle two applications at the same time within the 500 buffer that was added. Since it could take over a month for the SLU process to be completed, Hawthorne says it would be a footnote that the first one is pending.

Motion by Bellmore, second by Hall, to accept the recommendation from the Planning Commission Public Hearing and accept first reading of Ordinance #2022-180. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Watson - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Graham - Yes. Motion passes.

First reading of Ordinance 2022-181 the Marihuana Business Licensing Ordinance:

Hall says Attorney Rolfe advised that the state is changing some of the licensing rules. Hawthorne says it will be the same as a liquor license, where the applicant will go through the state first before they come to the township for a permit. She says that Rolfe does not want them to change the ordinance but instead just add a note.

Ibbotson credits the board for visiting marihuana businesses. He also says that he prefers to let the free market decide instead of limiting the number of businesses allowed.

Pat Sharpe asks if the board is planning to move ahead with the marijuana ordinance. Hawthorne says the first reading is tonight which means they would potentially be adopting it next month.

Motion by Bellmore, second by Hall, to accept the first reading of the marihuana business licensing ordinance #2022-181 with the added notation from Attorney Rolfe. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Watson - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Graham - Yes. Motion passes.

New Business:

Algonquin Lake Fireworks Hold Harmless Agreement and Permit:

Sharpe explains that this is needed for the July 3rd fireworks display at Algonquin Lake. He says they will use Wolverine Fireworks.

Greenfield makes a motion, seconded by James, to accept the hold harmless agreement and permit for the Algonquin Lake fireworks display. All ayes. Motion passes.

Algonquin Lake Weed Petition:

Pat Sharpe (President of the ALCA) says this is the 7th year of the current contract. There is a new petition circulating and lots of hard work still needed. He says a 10 year contract is the plan.

James makes a motion, seconded by Greenfield, to accept the weed petition for a new special assessment for weed control at Algonquin Lake for another 10 years. All ayes. Motion passes.

Open Comments:

Nathaniel Bruce voices his opinion against marihuana establishments in RCT. He says he has seen these types of businesses take over and get their fingers in every area of a community.

Ibbotson commends the board for listening to the residents and offers his help in working on the Blight Ordinance.

Adjournment:

Motion by Bellmore to adjourn at 9:12pm, seconded by James, all ayes. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Nickie Haight, Recording Secretary