

**MINUTES
ALPINE TOWNSHIP BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 15, 2010**

10-11 REGULAR MEETING

The Alpine Township Board held a regular meeting on Monday, February 15, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at the Alpine Township Hall, 5255 Alpine Avenue, Comstock Park, Michigan, 49321. Board members present were Supervisor Alex Arends, Clerk Jean Wahlfield, Treasurer Jim Townsend, Trustees Ron Cordes, Jim May, Bill Schweitzer, and Ted Wallace. Also present was Planner Sue Thomas.

Supervisor Arends called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Arends stated that under Pending and New Business Item 6-F be stricken from the Agenda. Treasurer Townsend requested that Item 6-C also be removed from the Agenda.

A motion was made by May, with support from Wallace, to approve the Agenda with Items 6-C and 6-F to be removed. Motion carried 7-0.

10-12 CONSENT AGENDA

Board members reviewed the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Townsend, with support from Schweitzer, to approve the Minutes from January 18, 2010 as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

Supervisor Arends reviewed the Revenue and Expense Report noting that revenue is lagging and that the Township has received 41% of anticipated income and 51.73% has been expended in seven months.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, with support from May, to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried 7-0.

**10-13 PUBLIC HEARING-ALPINE TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY RECREATION
PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #10-05- ADOPT 2010-2014
APLINE TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN**

Supervisor Arends stated that Trustee Ted Wallace is the Township Board liaison to the Park and Recreation Committee. Wallace introduced Committee Chairperson Don Bigger, Vice Chairperson Paul Waldron and Treasurer Bob Holman who were present in the audience.

Planner Thomas provided background information and highlighted the process that the Park and Recreation Committee utilized in creating the proposed plan. She explained that in order to be eligible to apply for State recreation grants, the Township must have an approved recreation plan in place which is less than five years old. The Planner noted that a community recreation survey was

completed during the process. In addition, meetings took place in order to gain input on the Township parks from all three local school districts, church officials, large employers, and organized sports teams that have used the fields. She noted that top responses from the survey favored activities involving walking (71%) and biking (52%).

Planner Thomas explained the two categories for which recreation grants are usually available is the purchase of property or for development. She stated that major projects discussed in the Plan are the purchase of the Mabel-Laman Trust property and improvements at the Alpine Sports Complex. Once the Community Recreation Plan is approved, the Township will explore the opportunities for grants.

A motion was made by May, with support from Townsend, to open the Public Hearing for the proposed 2010-2014 Community Recreation Plan. Motion carried 7-0.

Terry Hill, 3964 York View Drive, questioned if the Township expects money from the State and if taxes would be raised in the Township if the Plan is approved.

Grace DiBenedetto, 5427 Division Avenue, had several questions regarding the Plan and the parks within the Township. She wanted to know if the primary purpose of applying for grants was to obtain new ground or to improve parks. She provided comments on accessibility, ownership of the parks, and the possibility of obtaining grant money.

Fritz Wahlfield, 730 Marlene, discussed his desire to add an additional mile of walking path to Wahlfield County Park.

Jerry Shuker, 6783 Fruit Ridge, pointed out that if a grant was obtained, the Township would likely have to provide matching funds.

A motion was made by May, with support from Wallace, to close the Public Hearing for the proposed Community Recreation Plan. Motion carried 7-0.

Supervisor Arends noted that the by adopting the proposed Plan the Township will gain the ability to apply for grants and have a Plan that is in compliance with application requirements. In order to be considered for money, the Township must have a current plan in place

Townsend discussed the condition of the tennis courts at the Alpine Sports Complex and the need for basketball courts in the Township.

A motion was made by May, with support from Cordes, to approve Resolution #10-05 to Adopt the 2010-2014 Alpine Township Community Recreation Plan. There was no further discussion and the motion carried 7-0.

The Supervisor thanked all the individuals who helped with the 2010-2014 Community Recreation Plan.

10-14 PUBLIC COMMENT

Terry Hill, 3964 York View, expressed his concerns about the increase in his quarterly sewer bill and wanted to know why the quarterly sewer bill was raised.

Supervisor Arends explained that the quarterly sewer rate went from \$63 last year to \$70 as of January 1, 2010. The increase covers the cost of operating the system in addition to setting aside funds for emergency repairs and future improvements to the system.

10-15 COMMISSION REPORTS

Planning Commission - Cordes: In January, the Commission approved a Special Land Use at 4790 Alpine Avenue for a car lot at the old Alpine Yamaha building and extended for one year the site plan approval for Williams Form & Engineering located on Rusche Drive. In February, Gracewil Golf Course is requesting rezoning from agriculture to R-1, low-density residential. The Planning Commission will conduct a site plan review for a building addition at the Fruit Ridge Apple Company located at 4110 10 Mile and for a funeral home on Alpine Ave just south of the Choice One bank location.

Zoning Board of Appeals - May: The ZBA met last month with Township Attorney Jeff Sluggett for a training workshop session. No meeting is scheduled for the month of February.

Historical Committee - Schweitzer: The Committee held their election of officers last month in which all the officers were re-elected. The Committee decided to purchase a scanner to convert slides to digital disks. An open house was held on Sunday February 21, 2010.

Sewer & Water - Arends: Board members received portions of the NKSA Infiltration & Inflow Analysis that pertain to the Township. Alpine experienced a reduction in flow in certain parts of the system but a concern about the age and accuracy of the meter monitoring the flow was explained. Supervisor Arends suggested scheduling a meeting to further discuss the details of the analysis.

Parks & Recreation – Wallace: Wallace thanked everyone for the comments on the Recreation Plan and the Board for approving the Plan.

10-16 CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 10-01-MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS, LICENSES, OR APPROVALS FOR THE SALE OR DISPENSATION OF MEDICAL MARIHUANA.

Board members received copies of the Township Attorney's letter dated January 19, 2010 explaining the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act and the proposed Ordinance to impose a 6 month moratorium. Planner Thomas explained that the moratorium would allow time for review of potential amendments to the zoning ordinance. Treasurer Townsend commented that although the Township cannot outlaw particular items in the Act, some restrictions can be placed to control the sale and dispensation of medical marihuana.

A motion was made by May, with support from Wallace, to approve Ordinance No. 10-01 to Impose a Moratorium on the Issuance of Permits, Licenses, or Approvals for the Sale or Dispensation of Medical Marihuana and order for publication in a roll call vote 7-0.

10-17 CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE NO.10-02 ALPINE TOWNSHIP SEWER ADMINISTRATION ORDINANCE

Supervisor Arends stated that the Township has had a sewer ordinance in effect for many years. The existing sewer ordinances have been updated to remove the references to the Grand Rapids system and reflect that the NKSA wastewater treatment plant is operated by the five NK communities. The updated ordinance has been reviewed by the Township attorney as well as the North Kent Sewer

Authority attorney and is recommended for approval. The updated ordinance is similar to the one adopted by Plainfield Township.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, with support from Cordes, to accept and approve Ordinance No. 10-02 the Alpine Township Sewer Administration Ordinance as presented and order publication. There was no further discussion and the motion carried 7-0 in a roll call vote.

10-18 AMEND RESOLUTION NO 10-02 SETTING ZONING AND LAND
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FEES

Townsend reviewed his memo dated February 10, 2010 and explained the difficulty with the way the current resolution is set up with regard to the payment of escrow fees for sand mining operations that need to be inspected. The mine operator is responsible for the cost of the engineering inspection. Currently the policy states that the applicant must maintain a minimum balance in their escrow account. Townsend stated that he talked to Trustee Cordes about this issue prior to the meeting. Trustee Cordes owns and operates a sand mine operation in the Township and he suggests that the Township send the engineering bill after the inspection instead of keeping money in an escrow account for a lengthy period of time. Townsend noted that some people may not pay.

Townsend would like to send an estimated bill for the cost to the sand mine operator 60 days before the inspection takes place. If the applicant does not pay in a set amount of time, the Township may take action to revoke their Special Land Use Permit.

Board members discussed several items connected to the escrow issue. The consensus of Board members was to further discuss this topic next month.

10-19 DISCUSSION - POTENTIAL YORK CREEK APARTMENT SPECIAL
ASSESSMENT DISTRICT (SAD)

Treasurer Townsend reviewed his memorandum to the Township Board dated February 12, 2010 about a potential special assessment district for York Creek Apartments. He noted that his calculations for police and fire services are \$879,406 or approximately 31.2% of the Township budget when the expense for the new fire pumper truck is removed. Townsend explained that his analysis found that an average single family residence in the Township pays \$54.60 per year for police and fire services. His analysis for the York Creek Apartments found that the per household amount is \$12.65 and on a per person basis is \$5.04. Another analysis he performed was to see where the police and fire services were going. Townsend found that 40% of the patrol officers were going to York Creek, 23% to businesses, and the remaining 387% to the rest of the 9,000 residents in the Township. His memo included information on his conversations with Alpine Fire firefighters, an excerpt from a article on fire districts in Michigan, emails with Lt. Brown, and a page from the Township Master Plan. He commented on the costs for staging done by the fire department. Townsend stated that he would like the Board to take the first steps towards creating a Special Assessment District. If York Creek can decrease the amount of time which the fire department and sheriff spend in the apartments and drive the numbers down, then the amount of money they paid should also decrease. Townsend stated that he feels that the York Creek Apartments should pay their share of what is fair as they are reaping an enormous benefit in terms of fire and police services.

Supervisor Arends stated that his primary goal is to unify the Township and the issue of a potential special assessment district for police and fire services for York Creek Apartments seems to be pulling the Township apart. He commented that York Creek residents have as much right to the fire and police services as the rest of the residents in the Township. The Township has a responsibility to protect the residents. Arends touched on some of the things York Creek have been implementing, including the Multiple Housing Crime Prevention Program, criminal history checks on residents, private security service through the apartment complex, plans for a playground, and smoke-free apartments. He thinks that the Township needs to concentrate on supporting businesses such as York Creek. Arends noting that he had supplied a spreadsheet comparing dispatch calls at the last meeting. His analysis is that 28% of all calls went to York Creek Apartments and 38% of the residents in the Township live in York Creek with \$332,000 received by the Township through state revenue sharing. Arends stated the Board needs to do everything we can to keep this Township together.

Trustee Wallace suggested that the Township look into the possibility of contracting an ambulance service to possibly cut down on costs of certain types of medical fire runs.

The Board Members discussed information received and commented on the great job the Kent County Sherriff Department does in the Township.

The York Creek property owner was requested to provide comment at this time.

Dan Hibma of York Creek Apartments commented on the information presented by Treasurer Townsend. He strongly encouraged the Board Members to not approve any special assessment districts for York Creek Apartments. Hibma stated that the apartments have been in existence since 1986 and that the York Creek property was zoned for apartments in the Township Master Plan at the time it was purchased. Hibma provided the Board with a packet of information which included copies of the York Creek tax bills paid in a year in the amount of \$1,408,229.57. He noted that the Township received approximately 31% of its revenue from property taxes but a greater amount of revenue comes from state revenue which is distributed on a per person basis. \$332,000 of the \$876,000 of State funding received by the Township comes from the population of York Creek and Alpine Slopes apartments. York Creek pays the full 18 mills as compared to homes and farms with the homestead exemption. Hibma commented procedure for the staging of fire departments calls means different things to different departments. He believes that York Creek pays their fair shares of taxes to the Township and feels that the residents do not overburden the fire and police departments with calls. Hibma urged the Board to vote against a Special Assessment District for York Creek Apartments.

The Board further discussed the information received. Members of the Kent County Sherriff Department in the audience were questioned on the amount of time spent on a variety of different calls that they response to and those specifically pertaining to York Creek Apartments.

A motion was made by May, with support from Wallace, to obtain public comment on the topic of a proposed Special Assessment District for York Creek Apartments limiting each individual to five minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

Grace DiBenedetto, 5427 N Division Ave, provided several comments and expressed her many concerns about residents in the community picking up the extra costs for the police and fire services in York Creek. She had several questions for the Board members about having the public involved in this process.

Ellen Shuker, 6783 Fruit Ridge, thanked the Treasurer for bringing the topic to the public's attention. The information provided by Townsend may get everyone working together to clean up the apartments. She thanked Supervisor Arends for his comments.

Larry Orłowski, 6588 Lonnee Court NW, provided several comments and noted that he had voiced his concerns about the amount of time spent in the York Creek apartments when he was a Sheriff patrol officer and in other department positions. He provided his hand out to the Board which lists crimes that require a multi patrol car response and consumes a large portion of Sheriff officers time. He suggested that the Board concentrate on the types of complaints he listed.

Andy Milanowski, 4261 Fink Ave, stated that he is a police officer and provided comments on utilizing the Special Assessment process. He thinks that more than 28% of police calls are in the York Creek apartments and that Townsend has raised a great issue. He explained that just because most of the people of Alpine Township live in York Creek doesn't mean that the police should spend all their time there. The police are supposed to protect the whole community and not just one area.

Jerry Shuker, 6783 Fruit Ridge, stated that he has felt for a long time that taxpayers are subsidizing the fire and police calls made in the York Creek apartments. Taxpayers are not aware of the high number of calls which the fire department responds to in York Creek.

The Board discussed the comments that were made by the public and a lengthy discussion took place. Cordes suggested that the topic of a special assessment district for York Creek apartments be tabled.

A motion was made by May, with support from Wallace, to hold a public hearing on the topic of a special assessment district for the York Creek apartments. Board members discussed the motion and May rescinded his motion.

A motion was made by May, with support from Wallace, to call a Town Hall Meeting in April to obtain comments from the public on the topic of a creating special assessment district for fire and police services for York Creek Apartments, that additional information on the topic will be gathered, and that a specific date for the town hall meeting will be set during the March 15, 2010 regular meeting of the Township Board. The motion carried 7-0

10-20 SUPERVISOR'S REPORT AND BOARD COMMENTS

Supervisor Arends commented that even though the members on the Board may not agree on everything he respects individuals and the comments offered at this meeting. The last few months have been going very good in the office.

May thanked everyone for their comments and for attending the meeting. He encouraged those present to attend future meetings to express their concerns.

Cordes commented that the public may not agree on the way the members vote, but he feels the Board is doing a great job.

Wahlfield provided comments encouraging participation in the 2010 Census.

Townsend commented on the strip mall near Art Van and the number of vacancies.

Wallace stated that there may be different options in regards York Creek and he would like to hear what the public thinks about the issue.

A motion was made by May, with support from Townsend, to adjourn meeting at 9:54 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Jean Wahlfield, Clerk

Alex Arends, Supervisor

Erin Randall, Recording Secretary