



# DEXTER TOWNSHIP

## PLANNING COMMISSION

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VACANT  
**CHAIR**  
MARTY STRAUB  
**VICE CHAIR & ZBA REP.**  
TOM LEWIS  
**SECRETARY**  
KAREN SIKKENGA  
**EX-OFFICIO TWP. BRD.**  
CHANDRA HURD  
CHRISTINA MAIER  
KIMBERLY MARINELLI  
BOB NESTER  
**COMMISSIONERS**  
  
JANIS MILLER  
**RECORDING SECRETARY**

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### THE PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

#### Tuesday May 11, 2021

Present: Marty Straub, Chair; Tom Lewis, Secretary; Chandra Hurd, Bob Nester, Christina Maier, and Kimberly Marinelli. Absent: Karen Sikkenga.

Also present: David Rohr, Director of Zoning and Planning; and Janis Miller, Recording Secretary.

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairperson Straub called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Chairperson Straub opened the meeting noting it was a Work Session under the current Bylaws the body is restricted from making approvals or recommendations. The intent of the Work Session is to have less formal and less restrictive discussion of general issues.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance:** Omitted due to teleconferencing.
- 3. Conflict of Interest:** None.
- 4. Approval of Agenda:**  
Chairperson Straub stated the ultimate goal for the meeting was to develop a draft [Bylaws] that could be distributed for approval at a future meeting. Consensus of Commissioners on a 9 PM meeting time limit tonight.  
  
*Without corrections or additions, Mr. Straub declared the agenda approved as presented.*
- 5. Public Comment:** (non-agenda items)  
Opened 7:04 PM No public comments. Closed 7:05 PM
- 6. Action Items: Review of Planning Commission Bylaws**  
Chairperson Straub noted that the Bylaws need to be reviewed in context of what's normal, i.e., abnormal circumstances the past year meeting on ZOOM. Would like to discuss the Zoom specific issues as non-Bylaw accommodations or procedures that we will agree to follow during Zoom meetings.

#### Article 2: Membership

- A) Members: Capitalize Board in introduction.
- A) Members: Consistent language using "Planning Commission Ordinance" and "Ordinance #38" in the introduction and in B) Terms and in E) Removal.
- C) Resignation: Consistency of "shall" vs "may" in Article 2 and Article 4.

### **Article 3: Ethics & Code of Conduct**

- F) Decorum: 3) Addressing Speakers: Zoom specific, no change to Bylaws, full names of Commissioners should appear on the screen.
- F) Decorum: 3) Addressing Speakers. The Recording Secretary would like to drop the titles (Mr., Ms., Mrs.), and only use last names in the minutes. This would be consistent with ZBA minutes and Township Board minutes.
- B) Ex-Parte Contact: 3) Share: Add “the” before Planning Commission Chair. Possible examples of what not to do within improper discussions with someone else, clarifying discussions between PC members does not constituting ex-parte contact. Attorney Mariah Fink stated that it was important when a decision was made, everyone has the same information in front of them in order to make that decision. This is why the recording section (Share) is so important to divulge contact(s), especially at the public meeting. Discussion of incorporating language of D) Conflict of Interest into B) Ex-Parte Contact. Use ZBA Rules of Procedure to clarify who determines (vote of members) conflict exists. ZBA Rules of Procedure states “Members should avoid ex-parte contact with interested parties concerning petitions before the Planning Commission whenever possible”.
- C) Ex-parte Contact: 6) Staff: Clarification of “between members of Planning Staff”. Discussion of deliberations of fewer than a majority (quorum), i.e., informal polling of members to line up votes. Decisions should not be made over email, or other social media platforms.
- J) Accepting Gifts: Discussion of potential problem with the broad statement “from any party associated with an application that is presently or which may come before the Planning Commission”. DPZ Rohr suggests narrowing the statement to “application that is presently before the Planning Commission”. Attorney Mariah Fink stated that all contact with applicants should be disclosed, to avoid appearance of impropriety.
- H) Personal Gain:

### **Article 4: Duties of All Members**

- H) Training: Discussion of how to know when training opportunities arise, formal training, self-monitored training, Township funded training, free training, reporting training time to comply with 2) Annual Training “at least four hours per year of training”. DPZ Rohr stated he will forward training opportunities from MTA, Michigan State (Citizen Planner), MML, and APA. Discussion about “if the adopted Dexter Township budget for that year includes funds to pay for training”, and whether free training is excluded. Attorney Mariah Fink said from a legal standpoint that if you don’t have the money [in the Township budget], you don’t have to do the four hours of training. Lack of a procedure to report training time. It is not the pervue of the entire Board of Trustees to determine PC training.

### **Article 5: Officers**

- D) Chair Duties: Change the “Director of Zoning and Planning” to “Director of Planning and Zoning” throughout the Bylaws document.

**Article 6: Meetings**

- K) Public Participation 2) Identify: Attorney Mariah Fink confirmed that you cannot require a person to identify themselves to attend a meeting but you can require a person to identify themselves when addressing the body under rules established by the public body.
- L) Order of Business and Agenda: Delete #8 “Election of Officers”, #10 “Zoning Board of Appeals Update”, and # 12 “Review of Bylaws” from the regular agendas and add a commentary explaining when they are scheduled on the agendas.
- B) Work Sessions: Discussion of suspending the rules to allow “approvals and recommendations” during a work session. The Township Board sets the calendar with two Planning Commission meetings a month, one a Work Session and one a Regular Meeting. Consensus to strike the last sentence that prohibits approvals and recommendations at Working Sessions.

**Article 14: Review of Bylaws**

- C) Annual Review: Remove requirement that the review be at the first meeting of the calendar year.

**Discussion:** Review of Dexter Township Ordinance #38 (Planning Commission, adopted 5/18/2010). DPZ Rohr stated that amendments to Ordinance #38 can be recommended to the Dexter Township Board. Attorney Mariah Fink noted that amending Ordinance #38 should reflect current practices. Question of consistency, between Bylaws and Ord. #38, on required number of meetings per year. Attendance addressed inconsistently between Article 2: C and Article 4: F2.

**Article 2: Membership** C) Resignation: Attorney Mariah Fink concurred that striking the last sentence would remove redundancy with Article 4: F2.

**Discussion:** Article 3: Ethics and Code of Conduct D 2 d: Leave the table when on a Zoom call. Discussed issues as non-Bylaw accommodations or procedures.

**Public Comment on Bylaws Review:**

Opened 8:33 PM No public comments. Closed 8:34 PM

**7. Approval of Planning Commission Minutes:** No minutes.

**8. Election of Officers:** No action

**9. Township Board of Trustees Update:** No report.

**10. Concerns of Commission Members, Director of Planning and Zoning, Supervisor, and Recording Secretary:**

**Maier** asked about Article 12: Planning Responsibilities especially “The Planning Commission shall review all adjacent or contiguous local government Master Plans when submitted to Dexter Township by those governments.” She wanted to know how it worked and who was contacted in surrounding municipalities. DPZ Rohr said he would get a notification that a

*Documents regarding the agenda items can be obtained at the Township Hall during normal business hours, the Townships website: [www.dextertownship.org](http://www.dextertownship.org) and can be viewed on [ew.livestream.com/dextertownship.org](http://ew.livestream.com/dextertownship.org).*

surrounding community was updating its Master Plan and he would pass it on to the Planning Commission. Dexter Township would send its Master Plan to surrounding communities when completed.

**Chairperson Straub** asked about a future meeting schedule for the next several months.

**11. Review of Bylaws:** See Action Item above.

**12. Public Comment:**

Opened 8:45 PM

Steve Burch, former Planning Commission Chair

He complimented the Commissioners on the remarkable Bylaws Review and noted they had done a good job.

Closed 8:46 PM

**13. Future Agenda Items: June 22, 2021**

Possibly 1 or 2 applicants.

**14. Adjournment:** Motion by Maier to adjourn. Motion second by Hurd. **Motion carried by voice vote.** Meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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Tom Lewis, Secretary

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Janis Miller, Recording Secretary