

Town Board Meeting
June 19, 2018
7:00 pm
Special Township Board

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order** by **Manigold** at 7:10 pm
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** Present: **Manigold, Bickle, Achorn, Westphal Wunsch, Wahl, Sanger**
Also present: Gordon Hayward, Planning and Zoning, Christina Deeren, Zoning Administrator, Greg Miehn, Attorney
4. **Approve Agenda**
Motion to approve the agenda as presented by **Bickle**, with a second by **Wahl**. **Passed Unam**
5. **Conflict of Interest** None
6. **Business**

A. Interview Candidates for Position of Planner

1. **Randy Mielnik – Applying for the position of Planning Director/Senior Planner.** Gave presentation that reviewed his background and history of employment in planning. Recent position as a consultant with Poggenmeier, a three state private consulting firm specializing in planning and design. He spends the bulk of his time working with clients and determining the client’s needs with regard to zoning. His resume indicates a broad understanding of planning based on lots of experience over the course of career. He has moved up the career ladder in his firm through the years, which has given him experience in personnel and project management. In his opinion, each client and every project presents with different challenges and opportunities. He sees his strengths as having a future focused agenda, while taking time to understand current circumstances. He doesn't move into a situation quickly, but likes to gather information from public input, Planning Commission and peers before taking action. He recognizes that different people can contribute by way of their skills, talents, responsibilities. He likes to take ownership of his work.

Wunsch: What do you view as simple challenges with the Township?

Mielnik: Updating the Master Plan with a stronger document to guide it. Conducting surveys and holding public forums and interviews to get constituents engaged. Clarification of where planning comes from and trace ideas to better understand its relevance today. Continue to keep zoning relevant. Feels Peninsula Township is world class as far as the landscape is concerned.

Wunsch: What tools would you use to engage community interactions?

Mielnik: Three main tools: surveys, public meetings, and interviews. He would ensure that common themes be implemented with the Master Plan, and would use the American Planning Association (APA) tools and advisements to keep the Plan relevant. He spoke about similarities between Peninsula Township and California, and recommended that “Best Practices for Zoning and Planning” as provided by the APA, should be implemented here.

Wunsch: Being a consultant for many communities must involve constant juggling among activities.

Mielnik: Yes, it does.

Bickle: The township just published the Networks Northwest report on their website. Bickle thought it was a well done report. Bickle thought it placed the burden on the Planning Commission to move those issues forward. New Planner needs to hit ground running in terms of those issues.

Mielnik: A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) needs to be created. Zoning code is supposed to match the Master Plan. Large wholesale changes in the Master Plan need to be done before Zoning Ordinance changes. Survey is only one type of community engagement.

Westphal: What did you do to prepare for this interview?

Mielnik: Watched several meetings, particularly the meeting in which Networks Northwest gave their presentation. Feels he has a good understanding of the circumstances within the Township and the direction for the Planning Department.

Achorn: Employee pay and rates. Would you be willing to accept a pay scale that is less than that of the private sector?

Mielnik: Acknowledges that the pay is not what it would be in the private sector and is aware of Township and the local pay scales.

2. Kyle Storey – Applying for the Assistant Planner Position. Gave presentation of background and history of employment. Availability is not on a full time basis because he is still working on his planning degree. He can be available for season employment. He stated that the Township is missing a Capital Improvement Plan, and he feels that this is vital for the Township to understand where money is going. It gives a clear outlook for the community. He also recommended following lead planners in the field, in terms of advice that they have expertise in. One of his strengths will be communication with community residents and members of the agricultural community in the Township. Another of his strengths is juggling different jobs, calendars, and time lines. He is good at organizing studies and is steadily paced when conducting them.

Westphal: what did you do to prepare for this interview?

Storey: Read documents on strategic planning. Defined a short term outlook at community. Organized different projects – noteworthy in document. Felt the recommendations from Networks Northwest were spot-on.

Manigold: Applied for Assistant Planner position. Networks Northwest recommendations are to select Planner so that he/she may assist in the hiring of the Assistant. Is that all right with you?

Storey: Certainly. The Senior Planner should be able to pick his/her assistants.

Westphal: What would you do the first month on the job?

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Storey: First month on job I would work towards getting comfortable with the surroundings. Develop survey and work towards Capital Improvement Plan. Review mapping systems and make himself available to the public.

Achorn: Keep organized. How well are you at dancing on your feet?

Storey: I will be focusing on what is coming first while maximizing time. Pressing issues will fall in that order.

Westphal: What did you do to prepare for this interview?

Storey: Great talent and skills make up the PC, Township Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and staff. Essential first step is getting to know these individuals. Code Enforcement Officer, Planner, Assistant Planner and Zoning Administrator are the four individuals that really need to move forward as a team.

Wunsch: How will you manage walk-in's?

Storey: I will take ownership of priorities. Staff members take ownership of projects and keep time lines advancing forward.

Sanger: Observed that the candidate had a job as a server; Sanger noted that small wait staff is challenging and thinks it could help in efforts with public.

Storey: I learned hospitality and dealing with people and their needs. Helps open communication between parties.

Manigold: Observed that we are a small community and all have to work together. He believes we have lost our edge. We are trying to get this back.

Storey: Lots of exciting things happening here with PDR and re-write. It will be an exciting place to work.

Wahl: How many credits are you lacking?

Storey: Thursday would be only day that I would be able to work because the Township is closed on Friday's. I have 4-5 classes to complete degree. He then asked the Board: "What do you feel is the biggest challenges that the Township currently faces?"

Bickle: We all ran as a team and were brought in by the voters as one. The township has grown over the past 5, 10 and 15 years. We know our hands are full with different components and anticipated growing needs. The team will support plans that are laid out successfully for the future in term of business and housing needs.

Wunsch: He observed that he started in 2014 with the Township as a planning commissioner; he was able to stay ahead of projects. Big challenge now is how to move issues along more quickly.

Bickle: Networks Northwest was brought in with a specific scope for the report because we were in the process of hiring a new Planner, and there were other issues that needed to be addressed. We needed to broaden the scope to tell us what we did not know about the Planning Department.

3. Susan Cronander, Candidate for Assistant Planner. Cronander informed the Board that she had accepted a job position elsewhere. She was conflicted on what to do, but had to make a choice. She presented the Board with some documentation that she created to hopefully help the Board down the road.

4. Brent Boncher, Candidate for Director of Planning, Senior Planner. Boncher gave a presentation on his back ground and history of employment as an attorney. He sees the need for change and new ideas. He is an attorney for the past 15 years from downstate and has connections with the area. The primary focus in his legal work is litigation, including construction and property line disputes. He has lived in Portland Township which is a suburb of Grand Rapids area. He has experienced development pressures first hand, and sees the peninsula as a unique situation. He feels the need to preserve what is here and for it to be done in a way for preservation. He also sees a need to balance safety and the needs of the public. He has a lot of experience in drafting bylaws for associations. He has no experience as a township planner, but feels he can contribute by addressing and drafting documents to protect the Township. The township planner needs to take into account the public's positions by having community involvement. He believes most people care and want to be involved.

Wunsch: We are experiencing unique challenges with short-term rentals and pressure to convert agricultural properties and making things safe for residents.

Boncher: Things just don't always fit into the cookie cutter. Need to identify issues with properties and owners and gather public input; this is done through workshops, going to meetings, and talking to people. Survey can be done on-line to find out the average wishes of residents, including older retirees. Responsibility of the planner is to get everyone's voices heard. As an attorney litigator, he is dealing with fires burning all the time. He stated that he is good at delegating with assistants; he believes the core is communication with whom you work, manage, and supervise.

Wahl: Multiple career interest, would you be fully satisfied with being a Planner?

Boncher: I liked teaching; I taught English in Japan for a year and found it to be a great experience. I'm open-minded to new ideas. I am strong in Real Estate Law.; I'm a licensed real estate agent. In my personal life I have experience buying, selling and renting homes, which I think is helpful for a job like this. I've done remodeling of homes and rentals, and I have a general interest in properties.

Bickle: How would you envision changes?

Boncher: I am not a partner in a law firm so could disengage from it and transition. I live in Grand Rapids currently, but would be interested in the possibility of relocating. I have flexibility in meeting obligations and employee hours.

Bickle: Have you reviewed the documentation from Networks Northwest?

Boncher: Looked at the Townships Ordinances and looked at past issues via the

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Record Eagle. Put into perspective as to what is most important.

Westphal: What would the first month of your employment look like?

Boncher: First thirty days is primarily listening and finding the key to what citizens want to do. Listening to what fellow board members have to say. All parts of spectrum of citizens should be served.

Westphal: Monday's, we work 7:30am-6:30pm; so your first day in office would look like what?

Boncher: People working with what they are trying to do in their jobs. Part of being an employee is that you rub elbows with the staff. Trust building on Day One, would be an important task; as well as gaining perspective on developing a plan; becoming educated. He questioned the Board on addressing the Master Plan.

Wahl: Needs to be updated.

Wunsch: We need survey data on what residents feel are the big issues facing the Township today. Eight to ten years ago we had an active plan on where the citizens within the Township were and what issues they felt were important. We need better insight today on where how we need to move forward as a Township.

Boncher: Voice is being heard. PR portion of the job is to communicate to people on what is going on. What is the biggest threat to safety?

Bickle: Individual concerns, we need to know what our residents feel and what are their concerns. I would not be objective if I tried to answer this question.

Wunsch: The pace of development has increased over past four to five years. We need insight on the policy changes residents would like to see implemented.

Westphal: There is a tremendous opportunity in the resource base of this township, which is underutilized at times. We have not utilized technology as much as we could. There is good overlap of talents in our staff. We need to maximize some of the talents that we have. We are finally getting to a point where some of the practices that have hampered our ability to make good decisions are identified and tied up.

5. Nikki Lennox, Candidate for Assistant Planner. Gave presentation of back ground and history of employment. Resident of Peninsula Township for past 11 to 12 years. Worked for Acme Township. Currently teaches painting and cooking at NMC. Thought this was a great opportunity to apply for the position of Assistant to the Planner.

Wunsch: What do you feel the biggest issues facing the Township are?

Lennox: Growth control and erosion are big issues. I live on the corner of Bluff and Boursaw and I am seeing what is currently going on there. With all my experience and training, she

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feels that surveys and meetings are ways to engage residents. Meetings with different agencies around TC, old Board and new Board. Worked with John Sych of Networks Northwest.

Wunsch Multiple projects and how to prioritize?

Lennox: Created check list systems so every part of a procedure was accounted for. Once the check list was completed the project was completed and then you were ready to move onto the next item of business.

Bickle: What was your work structure in Acme Township?

Lennox: Had to get creative to meet irate residents who were coming in and yelling at me. Worked on site plans, LUP's; the Township had a contractual Planner that was used and a contractual Attorney. Worked in-house and was the only one available. She went downstate for work because she did not want a lapse in employment or work history after working in Acme Township. She could not get a job in the northern portion of the State. She worked in Rutland Township; then took a job in Beulah Township just to get her foot in the door. Pay was poor and was not worth the sacrifice of driving back and forth. She did review Networks Northwest report. Thought that they did a great job of outlining some guidelines for the Township.

Westphal: Were you employed with Acme Township when the new Meijer store was being built?

Lennox: My name is on the permit. Was familiar with working with Meijer prior when employed downstate. Was hired in Acme during the time that this development was being established, towards the tail end of the development.

Westphal: What was your experience with Meijers?

Lennox: Two different experiences when accommodating corporations. Walmart wanted to come in and bully their way through the process. She was dealing with attorneys and engineers in that case. Luckily, she knew some of the engineer's and had something in common with them.

Westphal: What did you do to prepare for this interview?

Lennox: Read the letter created by Westphal. Admitted that she has not paid much attention to local government. She was amazed with all the things going on within the Township and the new Board. Familiar with the Architectural Committees within the Township's neighborhoods. Deals with conveyance.

Westphal: What would your focus and target be on the first week on the job?

Lennox: Reviewing projects already in process and assist the PC or ZA with projects that have already been applied for. Interested in the position for Assistant to the Planner and Zoning Administrator.

Achorn: Are you currently employed?

Lennox: Part-time. I am an independent contractor; this interested me to come back into Township Government on a part-time basis.

Achorn: You were the Constable in ___? Township?

Lennox: Most of the authority was taken away by the Sheriff's Department, but I mostly conducted inspections for the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, and have worked in Pontiac and Chesterfield.

END OF INTERVIEW SESSION WITH CANDIDATES

Manigold: Two of the candidates have applied for the position of Director and the other two have applied for the Assistant position. Thought everyone was qualified; would recommend going with Randy and setting something up with the Personal Committee to see if they could work out an agreement.

Achorn: Keep focused on the position for Planner.

Manigold: Assistant would be hired as a group effort.

Bickle: Would like to know if Planning Commission members or residents would like to weigh in on the hiring.

Manigold opened the meeting to PC members and residents in audience for comment.

No comments were made.

Bickle: Randy would bring to the table everything that Networks Northwest has recommended. Figure out a plan to complete chores and duties of the position.

Sanger: Top priorities--updated Master Plan and then the Zoning Ordinances.

Wahl: Pro-attorney. He felt that Boncher gave an excellent presentation, but feels Randy is more up to speed and ready right now for the position.

Westphal: Agreed with Sanger in terms of priorities. Next step once Senior Planner has been established, would be to select candidates as Assistant Planner. Randy is seasoned enough and Mature; he understands the dynamics of running an office. Kyle has good energy and enthusiasm, but lacks experience. Would be a good candidate for Assistant.

Achorn: Feels Randy is willing to do work in the trenches with the rest of us.

Wunsch: Also impressed with Boncher's presentation.

Manigold requested a motion for the personal committee to secure contract with Randy Mielnik.

Motion by **Wunsch** to hire Randy Mielnik and for the Personal Committee to work with securing a contract for employment, seconded by **Westphal**.

Pass Unam

7. Citizen Comments:

Monnie Peters; 1420 Neahtawanta Rd., Traverse City, MI 49686; The Township has been under-staffed for nine to ten months. Would like to see minimal delay in this process as possible.

Donna Hornberger, 6730 Mission Rd., Traverse City, MI 49686; Ditto, we really need to fill these spots as soon as possible.

8. Board Comments: None

9. Adjournment

Motion by **Bickle** to adjourn, seconded by **Wahl**.

Pass Unam

Adjournment: 9:18 pm