WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690
231-267-5141 Phone

REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:
Chair DeYoung called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
A microphone check was done.
Public Attendance: 25 (approximately)

ROLL CALL: Secretary Peltonen called Roll.

Present:
Keith DeYoung, Chair
Rene Stratton, Vice Chair
Denise Peltonen, Secretary
Carl Wroubel, Member
Sadie Merchant, Member
Randy Mielnik, Township Board Trustee

A quorum was established.

Absent: David Boesler, Member (excused)

ALSO PRESENT:
Zoning Administrator Deb Graber
Recording Secretary Kay Held

SET/ADJUST AGENDA:
Add to Unfinished Business:
ROS/ROWG Report – Vice Chair Stratton

Board Action:
Mr. DeYoung made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Ms. Stratton seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Secretary Peltonen noted a possible conflict regarding the Wineries and Tasting Room Ordinance as she lives in an Agricultural District.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Chair DeYoung stated clarification of comments made August 14, 2025. One was concern about wineries with no protection for the people who may be affected regarding public health and safety. He noted there is consideration for health and safety regarding this matter.

A comment made about seven lawsuits the Township has put on STRs is incorrect. There were zero lawsuits pending at the time, and he believes that information to be the same today.

Mr. John Fitzgerald, 8649 Church Street, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Mr. Fitzgerald is in support of Case #2025-3 on STRs. He asked the Supervisor nine years ago if there were any restrictions on short-term rentals and was told there were none. Now it is the most restrictive and short-sighted in the Traverse City region. He spent two years completely renovating his property inside and out. He has received a Cease &

Desist from the Township attorney. If forced to do minimum 30-day rentals, his property will be untenable. He asked the PC to adopt the STR Ordinance proposal as written.

Ms. Julie Zenas, 9373 Skegemog Point Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Zenas opposes STRs and Case #2025-03. There are several shortcomings; i.e., enforcement, registration, permitting and community impact. The ROS was formed to evaluate impacts and regulatory needs surrounding STRs. It is premature to move forward. STRs are not appropriate in residential zones. Financial consequences must match the impact. A $100 fee will not cover the cost of oversight. Health and public safety impacts are unknown. There is also lack of accountability, premature timing, inappropriate zoning and insufficient enforcement. She asked the PC to not approve the Amendment.

Ms. Marcia Monks, 422 Island View Drive, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
She has heard STR supporters state economic benefits for themselves, but has heard none for adjacent residents. She lives in an R-1 zoned neighborhood. This Amendment would allow STRs in all areas of the Township, would lack consequence and alter the nature of the Township.

Mr. Mickey Dean, 4020 Farrell Road
He asked Mr. Fitzgerald if he has any action against him for an STR. Mr. Fitzgerald stated he received and responded to a Cease & Desist order. Mr. Dean asked the PC if there are any current law enforcement actions against STR owners and how many. He asked the PC if the Zoning Ordinance has changed with regard to rentals in the nine years since Mr. Fitzgerald was told there were no STR restrictions. He believes there have been no changes. He would like these answers publicly stated at the next meeting.

Mr. Mike Jacobson, 7301 Skegemog Point Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Mr. Jacobson supports STRs. It was irresponsible to hold two Public Hearings in the same meeting. The PC knew there would be many people wanting to be heard. Many of the people who wanted to speak about the 2nd Public Hearing did not get an opportunity to do so as the meeting ran so late.

The STR issue has been handled incorrectly. No one would submit an Ordinance of Amendment and not expect it to be tweaked. He was on the PC for a decade and never saw an issue come before the PC with no deliberation before sending it to the Township. The proposal is a starting point. The Master Plan supports an STR Ordinance.

He is against the Board and the PC having meetings during regular business hours when people with jobs cannot attend. He inquired why the sign-in sheet is here. Note: Chair DeYoung stated the Recording Secretary needs to ensure commenters' names get put in the Minutes correctly.

Ms. Kelly Jo Bowman, 5149 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Bowman is in favor of STRs. She is hearing the same things from both sides at every meeting. The proposed Ordinance is a great start. There are responsible renters that bring astounding amounts of revenue and people to the community through the horse show.

There is much blight from people who are long-term residents. Many STR owners have put money into their property and the community. It is sad there is no compromise based on four or five people who have bad neighbors.

Ms. Michelle Loeffler-Rohraff, 4536 Moore Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Loeffler-Rohraff is in favor of an STR Ordinance. She submitted over 26 letters from individuals and is speaking on their behalf. It is irresponsible to not make STRs an option for those who are responsible. It is in the best interest of all hosts who never received a complaint who are using funds in the community and maintain their home. They should not be forced to sell.

Ms. Karin Boyd, 6303 Baggs Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Boyd is not for or against STRs. She supports being able to use her property the way it was intended. The PC should not be able to tell someone they cannot rent out their home. Not allowing Zoom comments needs to change. Residents helped pay for it and should be able to take advantage of it.

Mr. Ryan Rieck, 8081 Hawley Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Mr. Rieck is pro-STRs. He didn't know it was illegal. He fully remodeled his home and rents it a little bit. He is close with his neighbors and never had an issue. It is interesting the support is 2:1 in favor of STRs. He referenced the Pledge of

Allegiance to the flag tonight and noted the ratification of the Constitution required a 2/3 vote. The survey referenced was also approximately 2/3 in favor. The proposal is a good starting point.

Ms. Connie Hymore, 6761 Baggs Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Hymore asked that Zoom Public Comment be restored. Her primary home is 300 miles away downstate, and she will be unable to be here in the winter.

Ms. Heidi Vollmuth, 8388 Winnie Lane, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Vollmuth stated STRs are a commercial business. The PC works for the public and should want to hear from every person. There are rules for property rentals including inspections and fines. The two-way communication is a service paid for by the taxpayers.

In 2013, 10% of waters are absorbing 10% of septic failure. 25% of the state's 1.3m septic systems are failing. There are still no boat washes. People are littering in the waters. Rules and regulations are needed otherwise people in the future won't see blue water.

Ms. Kim Mangus, 5101 Brown Bear Lane, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Mangus previously mentioned she misspoke. There are not seven lawsuits but according to last month's ZA report, there are seven properties in the process.

At the ROS last night, Ms. Stratton stated she doesn't want people to fear speaking up or feeling targeted. People who don't rent have received letters from the Township attorney.

She doesn't own an STR but there is one next door. She supports STRs. Mr. Fitzgerald directly improved the blight in her neighborhood. She agrees the proposed Ordinance is not ready and suggested the PC deliberate and fine tune it. It should not have gone to a Public Hearing yet. There were over 136 letters for last week's Hearing. If every one of them has not been read, it should not be discussed at this meeting. Chair DeYoung was correct in that one week was not enough time to process. She encouraged the PC to tell the Board they are not ready to make a recommendation.

Mr. Greg Morris, Skegemog Point Road:
Mr. Morris suggested putting some good rules in place, get rid of the bad apples and move on with it.

Mr. Eric Johnson, 320 Island Lake, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Mr. Johnson believes if people looked at their own interest and those of others, objectives would intersect a responsible regulation of STRs. He didn't anticipate the degree of privilege of an incumbent group would dictate the terms of this conversation.

Without middle ground, government is leveraged by those with special privilege. It is a weapon of discrimination. Instead of talking about being a responsible citizen, we've been compelled to discuss enforcement of the extreme. He anticipated this would be a conversation of how to work together as a community, but it has become a fight of the haves and have-nots. Primary goals of both sides can be achieved and would be an equitable solution.

At the last meeting Mr. Wroubel vocalized appreciation for a caller from Acme Township who warned that regulation would lead to complexity. The current process is so open ended it gives the PC power to make anyone guilty before proven innocent. He has received two letters; the first a warning and the second stating the ZA left a business card and that he violated the Noise Ordinance multiple times. His property hasn't been listed for the entire summer.

Mr. Lynn DeLong, 722 Island View Drive, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Mr. DeLong stated this Amendment would allow STRs in every district in the Township. He referenced the Michigan Court of Appeals decision that STRs are a Commercial Use even if the activity is Residential in nature. He noted that the Rules and Regulations require to register but don't address if someone doesn't register. There are many STRs operating in the Township. He restated inspection, health and safety requirements.

The Amendment does not place a limit on the number of STRs or require a signed contract regarding corrective action. The PC should evaluate the full ramifications of the proposal without concern for the pros and cons but in compliance with Section 21-5 Standards and Review for Amendment.

Mr. Tom Washburn, 536 Island View Drive, Williamsburg, MI 49690:

Mr. Washburn encouraged the PC to do its own research. The Ordinances and court record are clear. Some STR owners appear as victims. Someone cannot complain that the Township is enforcing what is on the books. He commended the Township for doing so. If people aren't complying now, will they then?

Mr. Randy Steelman, 7315 Crisp Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Mr. Steelman is pro-STR and this Ordinance proposal. It is a strong framework for what is to come, and 90% of it is there. A lot of research went into it. Attorneys should stop sending letters; residents are paying for that. It is scaring people as well as wasting taxpayer money. STRs have been going on for decades and never needed regulation, with almost no complaints. The Public Hearing was very good, and everyone got to hear the thoughts of a lot of people.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None. The prior Regular Meeting was cancelled.

CORRESPONDENCE:
Chair DeYoung received correspondence from Ms. Rachel Steelman. He restated Ms. Steelman submitted an application for a Zoning Ordinance Amendment regarding Short-term Rentals. The Planning Commission follows Article 21.03 Procedures Outline; Chair DeYoung read this aloud.

In response to Ms. Steelman's letter, he also noted the PC is only deliberating on the application itself and to make a decision if it moves forward or not. Comments have been made about personal criticism. The work of the PC is done by Ordinance, with information received and by deliberation. Statements made in Public Comment are not the views of the PC. In response to comments about the Good Friday Special Meeting; concerns should be directed to the Township Board. The PC will deliberate on the application and forward its recommendation to the Township Board.

Mr. Mielnik added that a statement made in Ms. Steelman's correspondence referenced personal interactions and comments made publicly and privately by PC Members. He stands by his public comments, is unsure what she is referencing regarding private comments and welcomes a discussion with her.

REPORTS / PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENTS:

Zoning Administrator – Deb Graber: ZA Graber's report was in the meeting packet. She additionally reported:
There were nine additional Permits issued during the month of July. Two Land Divisions were made last month, and two more applications have been received. Five Land Use Permit applications have been received. There was no ZBA appeal scheduled in August; she expects a ZBA Hearing at the September meeting.

Regarding Code Enforcement, she clarified her role as ZA is to enforce Ordinances on the books. She receives and investigates complaints. She specified five letters were sent in July/August and gave an update of any responses. Initiation of Township attorney involvement is made upon the Supervisor's approval to forward complaints to the attorney. No hearing date is set from the 86th District Court regarding a misdemeanor citation issued on 7/3/25.

The ZA Report cites Articles in the Zoning Ordinances defending short-term renting in Whitewater Township is not a Permitted or Special Use.

The Hutson John Deere dealer would like to amend Conditions placed on them in 1994 (as Classic Equipment). They were amended in 2006. The Condition limits the number of units outside of the building; they would like this lifted. She forwarded Hutson's correspondence to the PC Chair. Hutson is concerned that Ginop's had no restrictions on them, giving Ginop's an unfair business advantage.

Chair – Keith DeYoung: No Report.
Vice-Chair – Rene Stratton: No Report.
Secretary – Denise Peltonen: No Report.

Township Board Representative – Randy Mielnik:
The Township Board has moved to twice per month meetings:
The 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. meetings, for general topics and Public Hearings and input.
The 4th Thursday of the month, 9:00 a.m. meetings, for general business.

A Special Meeting regarding the Skegemog Point Drive Special Assessment District (SAD) will be held on 9/9/25, 6:30 p.m., at the East Bay Township Hall.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9/11/25, 6:30 p.m., at the Township Hall.

A Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9/25/25, 9:00 a.m., at the Township Hall.

A Special Meeting regarding the Civil Infraction Ordinance is scheduled for 9/30/25, 6:00 p.m., at the Mill Creek Academy.

The Board is interested in feedback on new Zoom system. The Board is reviewing By-Laws of the PC, ZBA and PRAC to identify if there are any conflicts or updates.

ZBA Representative – Carl Wroubel:
The last ZBA meeting included a training session from Attorneys Matthew Kuschel and Lindsey Gergel of Fahey, Schultz, Burzych, Rhodes, LLC. Their presentation was an overview of the ZBA's role and importance of maintaining proper records, documenting decisions and the process in doing so. A copy of their presentation can be made available.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Deliberation on Hearing #1 – ZA Case #2025-3 - Proposed Short-term Rental Ordinance:
Applicant: Ms. Rachel Steelman, representing Whitewater Residents for Responsible Short-term Rentals. There was discussion among Planning Commission Members.

Commissioner Wroubel:
Mr. Wroubel has reviewed copies of East Bay and Acme Township Short-term Rental Ordinances. Ms. Steelman's proposal is not complete and does not include what zones STRs should be in, how many may be allowed, the distance between them and other important information. There is controversy whether STRs in a residential district is legal. It is not compatible with STRs. He would not agree with a five-year renewal and believes it should be one year.

He believes looking at other STR Ordinances, contacting officials to learn what is and isn't working for them, and considering compromises need to take place. The ROS Group should perform their research and provide feedback before a determination is made.

Commissioner Merchant:
Ms. Merchant stated the applicant's proposal is a good starting point. It is not ready to be adopted, however. There is not enough research in the Township whether an STR would be the same for every district. The document needs more information; i.e., definition, safety, fire, local contact. She understands the concerns of lake property owners and opportunities for property owners to serve the horse show population.

Property renting is not going anywhere; however, people will. Not designing an Ordinance that can benefit people who permanently live here doesn't make sense and would not help the Township. Community support is important.

Vice-Chair Stratton:
Ms. Stratton noted the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance. Facilitating development of adequate systems for fire protection, education, recreation, water supplies and sanitary facilities as well as protecting fish and wildlife, water quality, historical and recreational value is needed. These items can be interpreted both for and against the proposal.

Ms. Stratton referenced other areas of concern including enforcement, fees, duration of permit, occupancy limits, and interior/site inspection. An STR Ordinance is difficult to enforce; a Civil Infraction Ordinance needs to be in place.

The written and verbal testimony received requires public input through workshops to be held by the ROS and more information gathering. She referenced data from a prior survey which stated 2/3 of residents supported STRs with/ without regulation. She does not believe the current proposal is in keeping with the Ordinance and Master Plan. It requires further research and public input. She does not support the proposal as written.

Secretary Peltonen:
Secretary Peltonen concurs with the comments of PC Members. It is easy to monetize the income from STRs; however, she would like to see the monetization value of the impacts of noise, traffic, activities and the effects to other homeowners in areas with STR activity.

Trustee Mielnik:
Mr. Mielnik stated the PC evaluates issues by facts. Case ZA #2025-3 was submitted by Ms. Rachel Steelman, representing Whitewater Residents for Responsible Short-term Rentals. However the names or numbers of parties represented are undisclosed.

As discussed at the Public Hearing, the Zoning Ordinance lists Permitted Uses in Article 4; rental homes on a short-term basis are not listed in all zoning districts. Similar Uses such as bed & breakfasts and hotels are listed. Whitewater Township does not permit short-term rentals.

Authority for final action on the Master Plan was granted to the PC by the Township Board on 2/10/25. The Master Plan survey showed 1/3 of residents supported STRs with regulations, 1/3 supported without regulations and 1/3 did not support STRS. The Township Board discussed STRs in 2/25, arranged for a joint Board/PC meeting in May and discussed creating an ROS, which was formed in August. Their first meeting was 9/2/25.

The PC held a Public Hearing 8/26/25 where the applicant introduced her proposal. The PC heard testimony for four hours both for and against STRs. Approximately 90 people were in attendance in addition to others on Zoom. There was much written correspondence received which has been placed on the website.

The proposed Amendment has technical shortcomings related to registration, permits, septic capacity, parking standards, enforcement, approval of a Site Plan and fire code compliance. Additional areas to consider are a limit on the number of rentals, whether owner occupied, and if properties may be purchased by individuals or corporations with the sole purpose of operating an STR. He also questioned how enforcement costs would be managed, whether the cost falls on all residents or STR owners. Considering zoning districts also needs to be reviewed. The ROS work group has been asked to learn more about resident attitudes. The proposal does not reference an ROS. It has been evidenced what STR owners want; more research needs to be done to learn what regulations citizens would want.

Rejecting it is not a vote to continue prohibiting Short-term Rentals. Mr. Mielnik proposed the Planning Commission reject the proposed Amendment. It offers only one solution and no options to consider.

Chair DeYoung:
In addition to comments made, Chair DeYoung referenced issues related to occupancy and septic as set by the State of Michigan Construction Code Act. There is also information on the Grand Traverse County website regarding STRs, septic and well records and inspection, and whether third-party inspections would be necessary.

He agrees the application is not ready, and many issues need to be addressed yet. It would a disservice to recommend it to the Township Board.

Mr. DeYoung detailed the correspondence received on this matter. There were 127 received. Against STRs was 78, against with restrictions was 3, for STRs was 34 and for STRs with restrictions was 12. He noted there were emails received from non-residents; 18 were for STRs with restrictions and two were against STRs. All correspondence received was scanned to the website and are available there.

Board Action:
Mr. Mielnik made a motion to recommend denial of ZA Case #2025-3 - Proposed Short-term Rental Ordinance based on the facts and findings listed and described, to the Township Board. Ms. Merchant seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Mielnik-Y, Merchant-Y, Wroubel-Y, Peltonen-Y, Stratton-Y, DeYoung-Y. Motion carried.

Deliberation on Hearing #2 – ZA Case #2025-4 - Application to Amend Whitewater Township Zoning Ordinance:

Mr. Mielnik: Mr. Mielnik explained the Township Fee Schedule in the Zoning Ordinance should have been removed from the Ordinance and published in a separate Fee Schedule by Resolution rather than amending an Ordinance each time there is a change. He noted the Fee Schedule has been recently approved. Prior to that, no updates had been made in 15 years. It is common to have the Fee Schedule outside of the Ordinance. Any debate about the fees themselves should be made to the Township Board.

Merchant: Ms. Merchant believes the case and explanation are straightforward.

Stratton: Ms. Stratton believes the proposed Amendment is the clearest route to take in the matter.

Peltonen: Ms. Peltonen agreed it is straightforward.

Wroubel: Agreed.

DeYoung: Mr. DeYoung doesn't believe Ordinances should have different fee schedules and should be brought in line with what the Township has approved.

Board Action:
Ms. Stratton made a motion to recommend approval of ZA Case #2025-4 making the change to 21.04b "Petitioner shall deposit with the Whitewater Township Clerk or Zoning Administrator the initial fee as stated on the Whitewater Township Planning and Zoning Fees Schedule toward payment of said costs." Ms. Merchant seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Merchant-Y, Wroubel-Y, Peltonen-Y, Stratton-Y, DeYoung-Y, Mielnik-Y. Motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance Assessment – Giffels Webster:
Mr. Andy Aamodt of Giffels Webster joined the meeting via Zoom. Giffels Webster provided a tracker with cost estimates and proposed bundles for service based on their prior audit of Ordinances and the weighted priorities determined by the PC. He projected the information onscreen and discussed each option with the Planning Commission. Mr. Aamodt explained the processes Giffels Webster approaches in terms of research, meetings, development of texts and assisting the PC.

There was discussion regarding the bundles, timelines, methods to work through them, etc. Some adjustments were suggested and corrections made. There was a consensus among PC Members with the revised bundle structure. A revised tracker will be forwarded by Mr. Aamodt including a rate structure.

ROS (Resident Outreach Sub-committee) for Research:

Motion creating the ROS as a research only sub-committee (Rene Stratton):
Vice-Chair Stratton is proposing a change to the name of the Resident Outreach Sub-committee as the term "sub-committee" may make it subject to the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and other requirements. The recommended title of the group is the Resident Outreach Work Group (ROWG). Meetings are open to the public; however, Public Comments will not be taken and Minutes will not be required.

Board Action:
Ms. Stratton made a motion that the Planning Commission establishes the Resident Outreach Work Group (ROWG, formerly the ROS) to gather and compile information regarding topics as set forth by the Planning Commission. This group is not delegated authority to deliberate, recommend or decide Planning or Zoning matters. Its sole role it to provide raw data and information back to the Planning Commission. Mr. DeYoung seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Wroubel-Y, Peltonen-Y, Stratton-Y, DeYoung-Y, Mielnik-Y, Merchant-Y. Motion carried.

The ROWG will meet the 1st Tuesday of every month and is on the Township's website calendar. Ms. Stratton provided informal notes from their initial meeting. The group reviewed how the ROWG works and discussed bias research and data collection. They plan to hold workshops with the public. The ROWG is under the direction of the PC.

Ms. Stratton provided the PC with a copy of ROWG's Municipality STR Ordinance Research Worksheet and outlined the strategy of researching similar communities and their STR Ordinances, Zoning Map, Definitions, Civil Infraction Ordinances and Police Powers. Members will contact Zoning Administrators and discuss prepared questions to gather information. Research will be presented to the PC.

ROWG Members have asked a Civil Infraction Ordinance be in place to support an STR, and Ms. Stratton would like Trustee Mielnik to bring that to the Township Board.

Ms. Vollmuth provided MTA seminar information, which Ms. Stratton shared with the PC regarding pros and cons on regulating or not regulating STRs and enforcement.

The ROWG wanted the PC to know they believe recommending Ms. Steelman's STR proposal to the Township Board would be premature as the ROWG is just beginning its research.

Ms. Stratton discussed with the PC procedures for any financial support for ROWG in terms of workshops and surveys. She will inquire with Giffels Webster and the Township Board. She was pleased with the ROWG's initial meeting.

Wineries and Tasting Rooms Ordinance:
Chair DeYoung encouraged PC Members to utilize the worksheet in the meeting packet as a method to track discussions and progress regarding specific topics. This approach will aid in keeping activities up to date and in order.

Ms. Peltonen distributed court rulings on wineries and tasting rooms.

There was brief discussion on items in the Ordinance the PC is working on. Additional research will be conducted and this subject will be revisited.

Outside Venue Ordinance Update:
Mr. DeYoung stated the material in the meeting packet on an Outside Venue Ordinance is for informational purposes.

Zoom:
The Township has agreed to allow the use of Zoom during meetings for viewing and Public Comment will be allowed during Public Hearings; however, not during regular comment sections of meetings. The Planning Commission will determine how they choose to move forward regarding Public Comments during Zoom.

Mr. Matthew Kern of LIAA (Land Information Access Association), who was managing Zoom functions for the Township in September, was asked for his input. He suggested entities have a dedicated individual to operate and control Zoom and any comment portions. He detailed technical aspects of it as well. Following discussion, the Planning Commission would like the Township Board to continue to offer the Zoom operator.

Board Action:
Mr. DeYoung made a motion to extend the meeting another hour. Ms. Stratton seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: 5 – Mielnik, Wroubel, DeYoung, Stratton, Merchant. NAYES: 1 – Peltonen. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Article 12, Site Plan Review: SPR Case #2025-03:
ZA Graber stated the Grand Traverse Plastics Site Plan Review was withdrawn from this evening's meeting as the Fire Department had not yet received a letter of approval for the site. Gourdie Fraser stated a culvert needed to be included and requested a couple of small changes. GTP is awaiting written authorization for water from the Tribe for fire suppression.

NEXT MEETING:
The next Planning Commission Regular Meeting will be Wednesday, October 1, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Kim Mangus, 5101 Brown Bear Lane, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Recommendations from the Work Group are to be made based on community input, and she asked what input they received on the urgency of the Civil Infractions Ordinance, considering last night was their first meeting. She believes the makeup of the ROWG is not balanced. She knows people were told in the past that STRs were not illegal and many are not intentionally trying to break the law. The PC should create a temporary moratorium on prosecution or temporary permit so that people are not afraid to speak.

Mr. Mike Jacobson, 7301 Skegemog Point Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
He asked if only emails regarding STRs were reviewed, as many people have written physical letters. Note: Chair DeYoung stated every form of communication was scanned and sent to him via email.

Mr. Jacobson is concerned he has heard the PC reference review of other townships' Ordinances. Whitewater Township needs to create their own, unique to its community.

Navigating Ordinances is very difficult and in some cases, they do not match Michigan law. The Fee Schedule issue is an example. The proposed STR Ordinance group worked hard to put it together; the fact they may have missed some things is not out of line and should be taken into consideration.

Regarding Master Plan information being inaccurate, he stated when he was on the PC it followed the rules and procedures for workshops and data collection. He had told the PC many people in the community were not represented. No one seemed to care then, but they do now that there is opposition to STRs.

The ROWG seems very one-sided with people against STRs; there should be equal representation. Few people can leave prejudice at the door, as Ms. Stratton has requested.

Zoom was previously used for Public Comment for a long time. It can be done, is a useful tool that people fought for and is being taken away. People want to give their input through comment.

Mr. Jacobson questioned whether Ms. Merchant is being treated differently for the sample Tasting Room Ordinance than the way Ms. Steelman is being treated.

Ms. Rachel Steelman, 7315 Crisp Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690:
Ms. Steelman thanked the PC for discussing the STR topic. She has read many emails about it. She would like to see temporary STR Permits put on the October agenda. It would build a lot of trust and make it safe for all voices to be heard.

PC DISCUSSION / COMMENTS:

Action Items for PC Members Reviewed (Discussion):
Secretary Peltonen would like to move forward with a Private Road Ordinance. She gave an example involving a potential easement. Chair DeYoung asked her to begin a project tracking worksheet.

Ms. Stratton stated the ROWG was not making any recommendations; it was a statement asked to be shared with the PC.

Ms. Merchant stated she did not come forward with a Winery Ordinance. She made a suggestion that it be worked on. Chair DeYoung clarified the Winery issue is and continues to be fact-finding. The proposed STR Ordinance was an Amendment request which required following the Ordinance.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action:
Mr. DeYoung made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Peltonen seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Submitted by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary