WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690
231-267-5141 Phone / 231-267-9020 Fax

SPECIAL MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES
Monday, October 19, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:
Chair Stratton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
A microphone check was done.

Public Attendance On-site: 1 (approximately)
YouTube Live Stream View: 32 (approximately)

ROLL CALL: Secretary Peltonen called Roll.

Present:
Rene Stratton, Chair
Denise Peltonen, Secretary
Scott Trumbull, Member
Michael Sherman, Member
Rod Rebant, Member
Randy Mielnik, Township Board Trustee

A quorum was established.

Absent: Sadie Merchant, Vice Chair (excused)

ALSO PRESENT: Recording Secretary Kay Held

SET/ADJUST AGENDA:
Correct "Next Meeting" section to also include:
Special Meeting, Thursday, 11/12/216, 6:00 p.m. Joint Township Board/PC Meeting

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

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Heidi Vollmuth: She referenced topics of land division, fence heights, Supply Road setbacks and agri-tourism. STRs are commercial business and should be treated as such. The Master Plan supports preserving rural character.

She asked the PC to consider rural character, whether the current Ag Zoning of 40,000 sq. ft. protects it and to consider increasing the minimum acreage from 40k sf to 10 acres as well as the impact of 10 acres vs. dozens of one-acre parcels. Additionally, there is no infrastructure to support that. Land Use policies should protect long-term interests. She distributed training materials from MSUE and Michigan Municipal League for consideration of PC Member training.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Chair Stratton read aloud correspondence that was received; however, will no longer be doing this in the future do to time constraints. She confirmed all correspondence is distributed to Planning Commission

Members, is posted on the PC page of the Township's website and is maintained as a permanent record in the Township Clerk's office.

Correspondence received from: Gary Clark-STR, Mark and Maria Taylor-STR, Steve and Kate Bell-STR, Donald Bonato-STR, Beth Beitel-STR, John King-STR.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bundle #2 Zoning Ordinance Amendment - Mr. Andy Aamodt, Giffels Webster:
Mr. Andy Aamodt of Giffels Webster jointed the meeting via Zoom. Mr. Aamodt and the Planning Commission reviewed a broad scope of information for Bundle #2's structure of the following topics:

-Land Division Act Amendment and Private Roads
-A-1 District Dimensional Standards and Permitted Uses
-Agri-Tourism Update
-Rezoning of R-1 District Boundary
-Supply Road Setback Requirements
-Fence Heights

Mr. Aamodt had also prepared and reviewed a detailed memo with the PC. Definitions and terms between Ordinances will also be a focus.

There was extensive discussion between the PC and Mr. Aamodt. Key points in summary include:

2.A.: Land Division Act Amendment and Private Roads.
Discussed State of Michigan Land Division changes, which will go into effect 3/27. They also discussed division of parcels, how it may affect residential development and the important aspect of access primarily via private roads. Division of parcels and how it affects residential development was discussed.

Mr. Mielnik reported a Private Road Ordinance has been drafted in consultation with Gourdie Fraser, forwarded to the Township Board and reviewed by legal. It is a concern that no Private Road Ordinance exists.

"Bonus Parcels" were discussed, which could ultimately result in 11 properties from a 10-acre parcel split. Giffels Webster is researching this and their firm is preparing "Best Practice" information which he will provide to the Township.

2.B.: A-1 District Dimensional Standards and Permitted Uses.
The cumulative nature of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Permitted and Special Uses will be investigated; cumulative zoning can be problematic. Regulatory tools should be in place to preserve rural character. The Future Use Plan will review the 40k sq. ft. minimum lot area and may be increased in light of the new Land Division Act.

PC Members were in agreement that all districts, particularly Ag Districts, should be considered when making any new land division determinations. Mr. Mielnik referenced a related section in the Master Plan survey. There was community support to increase minimum parcel size. It was noted surrounding townships have five-acre minimum requirements or more.

Mr. Aamodt will prepare a graphics document for visual review of lot sizes 2 or 2.5 acres up to 5-acres for review at the next meeting. Ms. Peltonen addressed setback consideration in the event of future road widening.

Mr. Rebant referenced a new Whitewater Township residential development on Supply Road which closely mirrors tonight's discussion. It was originally approximately 100 acres and sub-divided into approximately 12 lots. He believes it to be a good representation to review residential design, particularly in preserving rural character and determining other factors such as lot size, road layout and frontage, drainage, etc. Mr. Aamodt will research and provide the PC with additional information.

2.C.: Agri-Tourism Update.
The Township needs to determine if agri-tourism uses should be permitted By-Right or Special Use.

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Additional discussion included terminology, definitions, use-specific requirements (minimum lot size, setbacks, parking, hours of operation, Noise Ordinance standards, and event regulations). For the purpose of this discussion, wineries, cideries and micro-distilleries were referenced examples.

2.D.: Rezoning of R-1 District Boundary.
Regulatory tools should be in place to preserve rural character. Eliminating the R-1 District along creeks and tributaries was included in the material. The Single Family Suburban/Lake Residential future and use designation supports this.

The PC reviewed the R-1 District and Zoning Map. Environmentally-sensitive areas will also be addressed. These items will be reviewed in Bundle #3.

2.E.: Supply Road Setback Requirements.
Required Supply Road setbacks need to be updated to accommodate new Grand Traverse County Road Commission road classifications. Consequently, future Rights-of-Way will also need consideration. There was additional conversation about County regulations and drone routes.

2.F.: Fence Heights: Per past discussion, there are numerous considerations in determining fence height regulations. These include definitions, permit requirements, entry gates, allowed materials, zoning, etc. Mr. Aamodt will provide a boilerplate sample document to serve as a foundation for customizing guidelines related to fence heights. Contents and verbiage will be reviewed and edited at the next Bundle #2 meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

Regular Meeting: Wednesday, 11/4/26, 7:00 p.m., Whitewater Township Hall.

Special Meeting: Thursday, 11/12/26, 6:00 p.m., Whitewater Township Hall.
Joint Township Board/Planning Commission Meeting to discuss STR regulation.
(Joint Meeting to be held immediately prior to the Board's Regular 6:30 p.m. Meeting)

PC Members are asked to provide Chair Stratton by 10/27/26 their recommendations, as well as cite supporting materials, suggesting where STRs may/may not be allowed in the Township.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

PC DISCUSSION/COMMENTS:
PC Secretary Denise Peltonen announced her resignation from the Planning Commission effective today, 10/19/26. She thanked her fellow PC Members and expressed thanks to members of the public, encouraging their continued community involvement. The Planning Commission thanked Ms. Peltonen for her contributions to the Township both on and off the Planning Commission. Her term expires 12/31/26.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:58p.m.

Submitted by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary

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