



ST JAMES TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
CHARLEVOIX COUNTY, MICHIGAN
SPECIAL JOINT BOARD MEETING WITH
ST JAMES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 20, 2024, AT 5:30 PM
BIHS PRINT SHOP CONFERENCE ROOM

APPROX. TIME	Minutes and Notes
5:30 pm	Call to order Welke: St James Township Board – 5:30 pm Call to order Taylor-Blitz: St James Township Planning Commission – 5:30 pm Attendees: Township Board: Bobbi Welke, Diane McDonough, Paul Cole (ex officio PC) Planning Commission: Lori Taylor-Blitz, Vic VanDeventer, Mark Engelsman, Cynthia Pryor By Zoom: Zach Sompels – Housing North, Brooke Milbrandt – Township Assessor Public Present: Pam Grassmick, Vicki Smith, Ernest Martin, Ed Wojan, Dave DeRosia, Angel Welke Public Comment - none Opening Remarks – Welke: Looking at possibilities on Small Housing (400 sq ft) Overlays in the Township with R2 District. Taylor-Blitz: Need to understand terms and impacts of overlays Planner Presentation of Beaver Island Housing Quick Facts – Zach Sompels: Sompels presented an overview of Affordable Housing -vs- Attainable Housing and gave a Quick Definition of Terms regarding Housing Types such as Tiny Houses, Modular Homes, Manufactured Homes/Mobile Homes etc. and statistics regarding Beaver Island Demographics and stats on average household costs over the past decade and average needed earnings for affordable housing for Beaver Island. Assessor Presentation of Assessment of Vacant Residential Parcels – Brooke Milbrandt: Milbrandt had worked up a series of color-coded maps depicting vacant property assessed values of all vacated lots across St. James Township. Group discussed potential impacts of small housing (400 square ft) on existing and future housing assessments and values. Milbrandt indicated that a formula of Class of Construction x Square Footage is used to determine assessed building values. Her role is to keep Township assessments in line with Market Values. Township Board Concerns: Engelsman asked that the Township Board members articulate any concerns they have with the Small Housing concept. McDonough: Struggles with notion of small housing on lakefront – will drive land values down and impact tax base. Also concerned with where people will put their “stuff” as smaller homes have less storage area. She advocated for an overlay scenario in some less developed areas of Port St. James Association. Welke: Would not like to see small housing overlay on Lake Michigan lots due to assessment and value impact– advocates for “red” lots on Milbrandt map indicating those lots assessed from 0 to \$18,000 value to be used for Small Housing, as these are smaller lots which are scaled for a small home footprint.

Cole: Advocates for the future decades that would allow young people to afford housing on Beaver Island. Does not wish a “blanket” R2 overlay over all 576 R2 lots in township.

Action Plan Discussion/Approvals – Sompels indicated there are two options:

Plan A: Text Amendment for all R2 in Township

Plan B: Create Overlay within R2 for Small Housing on targeted areas within Township

After discussion, Pryor noted that a compromise solution could be to allow square footage down to 400 Square Feet on all R2 lots in St. James Township with the exception of all Lake Michigan Frontage, Font Lake Frontage and Critical Sand Dune Area lots. The excepted lots would still carry current zoning requirements of housing down to 600 Square Feet.

The group agreed. Next steps: Planning Commission will hold a special meeting on August 27th, 10:00 am at the St. James Township Hall with Zach Sompels who will be prepared to bring a text amendment template for group discussion. Planning Commission will move forward as needed with Public Hearings, etc., after template has been shared with Township Board and received their comments.

Public Comment: Favorable comments

Adjournment Motion of Planning Commission by: Engelsman 2nd: VanDeventer. All in Favor – Approved 7:01pm

Adjournment Motion of Township Board by: Welke 2nd: McDonough. All in Favor – Approved. 7:01pm
