

AU TRAIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION – SPECIAL MEETING

June 29, 2023 – 6:00 PM – AU TRAIN TOWNSHIP HALL

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance:

Meeting was called to order at 6:08 PM and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Jason Cain, Secretary; Matt Lang, Chair; Jake Miller, Trustee; Bill Weisinger, Vice chair. William Gramm arrived at 6:11 PM due to a late release from his employer.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Ashley Eaton; Scott Smith; Peggy Smith; Heidi Wiitanen; Kathleen Lindquist, ZA; Donna Shields; Michelle Doucette, Township Supervisor arrived at 6:51 PM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion: To approve as written.

Moved: Cain

Supported: Lang

Motion Carried Unanimously

Approval of Minutes from April 20, 2023 Regular Meeting:

Motion: To approve as amended.

Moved: Lang

Supported: Cain

Motion Carried Unanimously

Review/Approve of Minutes from March 9, 2023 Special Meeting:

Motion: To rescind originally approved minutes.

Moved: Miller

Supported: Cain

Motion Carried Unanimously

Motion: To pass amended minutes from March 9, 2023

Moved: Miller

Supported: Lang

Motion Carried Unanimously

Public Comment:

Scott Smith, of Perry Road in AuTrain, spoke of a general reduction of rentals for his property this year, and was concerned there is an oversaturation of rentals in the area. He asked the planning commission to not approve additional rentals. He also stated that rentals change the community if all houses are rentals.

Matt Lang read an email submitted by Mr. Duane Newton. Email is attached.

Public Hearing:

Conditional Use Permit – Heidi Wiitanen for a short-term rental on parcel 001-257-003-00 at N6806 AuTrain Forest Lake Road, Au Train MI 49806.

Chair Lang opened the hearing at 6:23 PM.

Heidi Wiitanen stated she was born and raised in the Eben area, but currently lives elsewhere in Michigan. She acquired the property in question in September 2022. She would like to rent it until her family is able to move here permanently.

The property is a 1 level, 3 bedroom, 2 bath house that will be rented to family and friends.

The property is located on 3 lots north of the Superior Times resort. The local contact will be Heidi's father. She will be operating it and cleaning or will hire a cleaner.

Dates of rental will be Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Chair Lang opened public comment at 6:31 PM.

No public comment for this hearing.

Chair Lang closed public comment at 6:32 PM.

The planning commission asked a series of questions regarding the operation of the property as a rental.

Chair Lang closed hearing at 6:36 PM.

Motion: To approve with no further conditions.

Moved: Gramm

Supported: Lang

Ayes: Gramm, Lang, Weisinger, Miller, Cain

Nays: None

Motion Carried

Conditional Use Permit – David Charlton for a short-term rental on parcel 001-332-008-00 at E5295 Grove Street, Au Train MI 49806.

Chair Lang opened the hearing at 6:41 PM.

Ashley Eaton spoke for David Charlton.

Four tiny homes exist, Mr. Charlton is requesting to add 4 additional tiny homes for short-term rental.

There are lofts in the larger tiny homes, 6 total renters per larger home. 4 total renters per smaller home.

Ashley or David will be operating, managing, and will be the on-site local contact.

Chair Lang opened public comment at 6:46 PM.

No public comment for this hearing.

Chair Lang closed public comment at 6:47 PM.

Chair Lang closed the hearing at 6:48 PM.

Motion: Made to approve with no conditions.

Moved: Miller

Supported: Gramm

Ayes: Miller, Gramm, Lang, Weisinger, Cain

Nays: None

Motion Carried

Conditional Use Permit – Erin and Jacob Miller for a short-term rental on parcel 001-400-009-00 at N7623 Arbutus Street, Au Train MI 49806

Chair Lang opened the public hearing at 6:49 PM.

Jacob and Erin Miller purchased the store and property formerly known as Zaf's Party Store. They plan to make improvements to the store and operate it as a store, as well as operate the house as a short-term rental. The property has a combined .6 acres.

Erin Miller will be the local contact.

Jacob and Erin Miller own and operate the Northwoods Resort.

The store and home have been on the site since 1940, well before zoning was implemented. The owner understands the property setbacks cannot be made to conform to current zoning.

Matt Lang had questions about switching it from a non-conforming use to a different non-conforming use without asking the township lawyer for a legal opinion.

Chair Lang opened public comment at 6:55 PM.

Michelle Doucette stated she is the neighbor directly to the north of the store in question and that she is thrilled to have Jacob and Erin take over the property and operate it as a store and a short-term rental. There is plenty of buffer in between neighboring properties and the property in question. She said she has absolutely no issues with this plan at all.

Chair Lang closed public comment at 6:57 PM.

Chair Lang closed the hearing at 6:58 PM.

Motion: To approve with no further conditions.

Moved: Gramm

Supported: Weisinger

Ayes: Gramm, Weisinger, Lang, Cain

Nays: None

Abstains: Miller

Motion Carried

Correspondence / Announcements:

Chair Lang stated he had a lengthy conversation with Mr. Delisle relating to his CUP approval.

Next Meeting: Next meeting is a Planning Commission regular meeting set for August 17, 2023.

Public Comment:

Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist stated she has three CUP applications ready for August 17, 2023.

Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Miller

Supported: Lang

Motion Carried Unanimously

Chair Lang adjourned the meeting at 7:06 PM

Submitted by Jason Cain, Secretary, Au Train Township Planning Commission