MINUTES OF THE AUGRES TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
1st Quarterly Meeting DRAFT
(rescheduled from March 3rd)
March 26th, 2025
9:00 A.M.

IN ATTENDANCE: Chairman Jesse Young, Robert Cotter, Patricia Tremble, Donna Wilson, Auretta Gates and Zoning Administrator Art Gallop.

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE: (in order of sign in sheet) Ron Ancel, Jim Herzog, Brent Adam and Michael Oxley.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:00am with the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL of AGENDA: Motion made by Patricia Tremble to approve the agenda. Motion supported by Donna Wilson. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. Agenda approved.

APPROVAL of the MINUTES: Motion made by Tremble to approve the minutes of the December 2nd, 2024 Planning Commission meeting. Motion supported by Wilson. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. minutes approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairman Young stated 2-minute limit per person or group. No interruptions while another person is speaking.
Clerk Oxley apologized to the board for not having the agenda packet/handouts to the board members earlier than today. Explaining that the past two weeks had been training on the new BS&A accounting system. Young, with nod to all that the clerk has to do, quipped 'Go forth, and sin no more'.
Oxley stated that the packet included a cover article on Solar from the January MTA magazine, and a sample solar ordinance to read from the MTA website.

BOARD COMMENT: Oxley requested of the board, to speak at length as board comment - reporting on Supervisor Jim Herzog and his meeting with Robert J Eppert, township attorney. (granted).
Oxley, had many issues with the Blight Ordinance and Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance sent to the township board for adoption by the planning commission on December 2nd, 2024. These issues were discussed by the township board at a special meeting on February 5th, 2025. It was decided to table the ordinances and meet with the township attorney to discuss the issues.
From that meeting Oxley presented three points Eppert discussed:
1.) These ordinances are intended as guidelines to be applied at the township's discretion.
2.) A resident cannot sue the township on the grounds that he/she is being singled out (while a neighboring property may be just as blighted).
3.) The Abandoned Vehicle ordinance, which Eppert wrote for the township, was intended as a cookie-cutter ordinance (to use sections that applied and remove those which did not suit the township).
Oxley ended by stating that these clarifications by Eppert eased his concerns about adopting the proposed ordinances (with changes). Speaking for himself, not for any other township board members.

Board members comments:
Tremble presented color photos of examples of the type of blight which the ordinance intends to address, not a simple pile of lumber or bricks.
Gates - added that applying the ordinance cannot be personal, cannot pick and choose.
Tremble - a signed complaint comes first, then Herzog or our OEO officer delivers a letter, which often is enough incentive for a resident to clean up their property.
Gallop - has explained to callers that we do not have the right to go onto a person's property for clean-up.
Cotter - His neighbor Schwiderson asked what is allowed with non-tagged vehicles (i.e. farm equipment).
Gates - vehicles which are 'licensable'- maybe the ordinance could include a list of examples.

At this time is was decided to move onto the next agenda item. A meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 14th, 2025 at 9:00am to work on the Blight and Abandoned Vehicle ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS:

a) Solar 'community farms' 5 Megawatt or smaller.
Mr. Ron Ansel with property on Noggle and Crawford Roads had requested to speak with the Planning Commission. He has been approached by Pivot, a solar company about putting a solar farm on 35 acres of his 100-acre parcel. Leasing the property, not selling it. Electricity produced is to go to the Twining substation. A bond, held by Arenac County to cover decommissioning of the instillation is part of the package. Mr. Ansel attended the meeting in order to find out what rules the township has in place? He does not plan to move ahead on this without knowing, and pointed out that he has two years on the agricultural exemption to consider as well.
Cotter asked about how the structure would wrap around his neighbor (Tony and Vera Smock) property. The facility will be fenced in and mandated setbacks (x number of feet?), would be in place around the neighbors (or any adjoining) property.
Cotter was also concerned about a bond held at the county, what about inflation over 35 years.
Ansel replied that there was a 2.24% inflation rate figured into the bond. Ansel has run several businesses during his lifetime, and has thought Pivot's proposal out very well - again, here at the meeting to see what rules the township has on solar farms. He does not expect to be alive in 35 years, thinking of his kids. Was contacted several times by Steve Rogers (Pivot), and only replied after he did a lot of research on solar.
Ansel to contact Pivot, give them zoning administrator Gallop's and clerk Oxley's contact information.
Motion made by Tremble to table this discussion for a future meeting. Motion supported by Cotter. Voice Vote: All Ayes, No Nays, Motion. Meeting time to be scheduled following contact by Pivot.

b) Glorious Canna (2497 E Huron marijuana grow facility) odor discussion following a chat-session with owners of the facility, Au Gres City manager Dale Wiltse, Patricia Tremble, Robert Cotter, Jim Herzog and Keith Dewald (walleye tournament).
Cotter reporting: March 24th was the 2nd scheduled discussion of the odor issue, unfortunately no one from the facility attended the meeting. After back and forth amongst the attendees, it was decided to have the township attorney send a letter which gave the facility 60 days (from receipt of the document) to correct the odor problem or have their permits revoked by the township.

Oxley asked if carbon filtration was in place (per ordinance), Cotter, having toured the facility, stated, yes but instead of venting to the outside, the filters were just blowing back into the facility. Cotter further pointed out, that odor is only when the plants are flowering, the plants themselves are not offensive as they grow. However, the facility has many rooms and harvesting is virtually continual per their operation. Cotter suggested revisiting the ordinance, with perhaps a $100 fine per day when an issue is ongoing.

BOARD COMMENT: Jesse Young thanked everyone for attending. And agreed with Cotter's suggestion, that the marijuana ordinance should be revisited some time in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Art Gallop expressed his opinion that he did not want to see solar panels taking over fields in the township (such as the miles and miles of them you see on M-30). And is concerned on clean-up years from now (like was done with coal 50 years ago). The township needs strong rules and guarantees to clean up (former) sites.

ADJOURNMENT: TIME – 10:05am. Motion made by Tremble to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Wilson. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes approved at the Planning Commission Meeting _____

Jesse Young, Chairman _____

Michael Oxley, Clerk _____