

**Lake Township Planning Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**April 12, 2025**  
**Minutes**

1. **Meeting called to order** by Chairperson Fox at 10:00 a.m
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call Members present:** Ruth Fox, Neil Lynch, Kris Zeinstra, and Dana Lugten. John LaPointe absent-excused
4. **Approval of agenda:** Motion to approve agenda as presented by Lynch, 2nd Lugten. Motion carried
5. **Approval of Minutes** from Feb 1,2025 meeting. Motion to approve as presented By Zeinstra, 2nd by Lynch. Motion Carried
6. **Public comments:**
  - concern about licensed, operational car in yard getting tagged and citation issued
7. **Old Business**
  - Camping ordinance:**
    - A. Chair Fox introduced Lake Township Attorney Cliff Bloom to talk about camping ordinance. Attorney Bloom stated that most townships are reviewing camping ordinances. Most townships don't allow year round camping, depending on township, they may allow 21,30, or 45 days, sometimes longer for non-commercial camping. He wants to work with the planning commission to find a middle ground and to update current ordinance for camping while not allowing RV's to be used as homes, cabins or cottages
    - B. **Public comments on Camping ordinance:**
      - The township currently has a camping ordinance explicitly stating what can and can't be done, and how to go about getting something "grandfathered" in? Attorney Bloom stated a recommendation would be no year round camping. If a camper has well and septic already, they may be "grandfathered" in, but you can't expand to add. If expanded and if a well and septic was added, it wouldn't count as being "grandfathered" in
      - disagreed with Attorney Bloom about not allowing campers to have a well and septic system. Feels it would be a good thing for the township to allow.
      - The Chain O' Lakes has verbiage about camping. Its lots are too small to build, and ordinance would make it hard to enjoy property. Attorney Bloom stated that some lots are not usable, therefore owners need to buy enough lots to meet requirements to build

-Allowing campers to stay year round will lead to them becoming dilapidated. Feels bringing back camping permits is a great idea, it worked well for him in the past

-is this for seasonal when guests come? What if a camper already has a well and septic and is just waiting for hook-up? What if using temporarily for a build and the build gets postponed?

Attorney Bloom stated Typically very few townships allow year round camping. Townships don't want tents, or campers to become a cottage or home. If a camper is being used temporarily for a build and the build gets postponed, camper may continue to be used to completion of build

-The township had an ordinance in the past, but someone recommended removing it. Just wanted to state for public record

-Timing of days on a camping permit, would they be consecutive

-Is the problem with campers that are caving in? This should be under a blight ordinance. ( Zoning administrator responded that there is a blight ordinance that hasn't been enforced but will be moving forward

#### **Barndominiums:**

A. Attorney Bloom said they are allowed, but need to meet code. Generally, with steel siding, it's hard to regulate aesthetics, but components of it must comply (i.e. must not have osb outside partially covered) Size, setbacks and other codes can be regulated.

#### **B. Public Comments:**

-Once you have a massive barn, it opens up to storage of big, sometimes commercial equipment which affects home values. Therefore Barndominiums shouldn't be allowed around lakes. Attorney Bloom responded that using a residential property for commercial purposes is illegal. Size of buildings can be regulated by zoning code

-Has the township considered modifying the zoning code for lot Coverage? Are we only concerned about size? Attorney Bloom responded that Barndominiums can't be banned, but must meet building code and zoning requirements

-Feels rest assured after hearing from Attorney Bloom. Feels it is more Community oriented

-Feels better about this, and now feels that their voice is being heard, and It's not just the waterfront owners who have a voice. Appreciates the wider perspective.

-Likes to hear this perspective, and doesn't feel 1 type of property should be singled out

-Concern with minimum living space requirement. If something happened to his place, he couldn't afford to build with the current size requirement

## **Short Term Rentals:**

- A. Attorney Bloom stated that after reviewing Lake Township's zoning, with the exception of those who can prove they have been renting prior to 1997, most likely all STR's are illegal. Courts have ruled that STR's are a commercial enterprise, and not allowed in residentially zoned districts.

He is suggesting if they are going to be allowed, the township needs to work to find middle ground on what regulations will be

### **B. Public Comments:**

-Would like weekly, monthly rentals. This would make it more affordable for them to leave their place for a period of time, by renting it out while they're gone

-Will this ordinance be decided by the community vote, or by the planning commission who were not elected by the voters, and the STR's she cleans has rules about the number of guests allowed. Attorney Bloom explained that Planning Commissions do the research, and make recommendations to the Township board, and that it is the township board that makes the decisions. He also reiterated that STR's are commercial, and illegal in residentially zoned areas

-Opposed to STR's. If owners can't afford the taxes, they should sell. Also express concern about overuse of septics, and toxins And if the township doesn't allow commercial business (see public comments under barndominiums) then why allow commercial hotels which is what STR's are.

-Lives alone and is afraid because of the things that go on at the STR across the street

-Negatively affects private roads (wear and tear). Also, a neighbor had a person from a neighboring STR break into their home while they were away and their daughter was there alone at the time. You just don't know what kind of people you will get.

-STR owner. It allows them the ability to keep the property and gives them financial flexibility. What is the timeline?

-What are the townships objectives with ordinance?

-Doesn't feel the township is listening to him. Feels like township is trying to get rid of renting all together

-Has any research been done on polling? Why is the township trying to restrict the number of people in a bunkhouse, and why does the township want to restrict distance between rentals?

-Has rental on each side of him. How to maintain a decent relationship. Attorney Bloom suggested reaching out to the owners of the properties

**8. New Business:**

**1. Solar**

- A. Attorney Bloom will be working with the township on this ordinance..
- B. The township attorney is reviewing the current MTA ordinance. When it is returned, the Planning Commission will review at a meeting so the public can review, then the commission will present to the board

**2. Special use permit:**

- A. A request for a storage building in the commercial district has been turned in. A meeting will be in in the next 45 days

**9. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule**

May 17 2025 10:00 am  
June 14 2025 10:00 am  
July 12 2025 10:00 am  
Aug 2 2025 10:00 am  
Oct 11 2025 10:00 am  
Jan 10 2026 10:00 am

**10. Correspondence:**

- 1 letter asks for regulations on STR's
- 1 letter asks for updated draft on STR ordinance

**11. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 12:10pm

Next regular meeting is May 17, 2025 at 10:00am

Respectfully submitted by:

Dana Lugten

Draft: not official until approved at next meeting