

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PORTAGE
Planning Commission Minutes
Scheduled Meeting

April 6, 2010

Members Present: Peggy Lee Anderson, Jim Gale, David Hiner, John Ligon, Bill Marlor, Mike Wilmers, Helen Wuthrich.

Ex Officio: Bill Bingham.

Location: Portage Township Office

Guest Record: John Ollila, Sally Santeford, Ted Grzelak, Vic Betterly, Marty Raffaelli.

Mike Wilmers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and requested that Bill Bingham present the issues to be discussed at the meeting.

The minutes were presented. Corrections were suggested and the minutes were approved with the corrections.

A copy of a letter from Lindsey Ringuette of the Upper Peninsula District Office, Water Bureau, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment was presented to the Planning Commission. Her letter, in a response to email questions from John Ollila, reports: Moyle-Valley View Quarry (VVQ) has applied for or obtained WB permits. A COC permit has not yet been received by VVQ, but VVQ may commence operations as long as those operations do not result in the discharge of process wastewater to surface waters of the state. VVQ has obtained a Part 91, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control permit from Houghton County.

Comments from the audience pertaining to VVQ operations were received. Questions were asked about long term benefits versus costs of to Portage Township of actions taken regarding VVQ.

Bill Bingham requested action on Portage Township Zoning Ordinance number 124. The suggested wording change is that "Portage Township Board" will replace the "Board of Appeals" in the

ordinance. David Hiner moved for the change with a second by Jim Gale. The change was approved unanimously.

The Planning Commission then addressed the issue regarding special use permits pertaining to the extraction of aggregates in Rural Residential zoned areas. Jim Gale moved that a special use permit from the Portage Township Board be required for the removal and processing of sand, gravel, clay or other such minerals in Rural Residential areas. The motion was seconded by Helen Wuthrich. A discussion ensued with issues raised about standards for making the decision such as size of the property, berms for noise control, reclamation measures and techniques, hours of operation and so forth. After an extended discussion by the Planning Commission and members of the audience, the motion was passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission suggested that VVQ officials be contacted by the VVQ Subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors to establish and clarify hours of operation.

Bill Bingham reported on other Township issues. There have only been 5 building permits issued so far this year. This is down from previous years.

Stimulus funds are difficult to obtain because of various bureaucratic decisions of other governmental units.

Sewer projects are receiving highest attention which should reduce billings for sewage treatment. Other treatment plant users are reducing their volume as well. As a result, rates charged by the treatment facility to customers may rise because of fixed costs.

The Mall Property transfer is on hold at this time.

Applications are still open for replacements for Bill Bingham.

Given no further business, Mike Wilmers adjourned the meeting.