TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP

ANTRIM COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Torch Lake Township

Public Hearing

RE: Chapter VI A; Section 6.02 Permitted Uses

APPROVED Minutes WITH ADDITION 4-0

January 8, 2019

**Present:**  PC Members; Bill Stridiron, Cole Shoemaker, Jerry Kulka (Chair), Maryanne Jorgensen (Co-Chair), Lora Carleton (Secretary), Chuck Goossen & Bill Petersen

**Others:**    Deb Graber, Zoning Administrator, Chris Grobbel - Township Planner of Record

**Audience:**   14-16 attendees

**Recording Secretary:** J. Petersen

**1.**    **Call to Order Public Hearing:**

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm by Kulka

**2.    Summarization of the Procedures and Rules**

Kulka outlined the rules and procedures to the room

**3.   TOPIC - Chapter IV “A”; *Agricultural Zone* Section 6.02 *Permitted Uses***

Kulka summarized the role of the PC as it pertains to having been asked by a township resident who wished to be permitted to offer barn weddings, as a commercial venture on his agriculturally zoned property. Grobbel explained that by nature of the township ordinance, any activities NOT specifically outlined in the ordinance are NOT permissible without being added to the ordinance. He stated the goal is to be proactive. He also said several townships directly in our area are currently suffering in litigation (law suits) over this very topic - things they didn’t see coming- thus we would like to approach the opportunity proactively, not reactionary.

Kulka informed the room of the desire for the PC to hear from township residents and landowners regarding this proposal/idea which the PC has been asked to consider. Kulka asked the PC secretary to call from the audience from the citizen comment cards that had been turned in.

Carleton Called Tom Petersen 12232 Hjelte Road

T. Petersen asked the PC several questions to clarify this discussion was for Commercial Use (income producing) in Agriculturally zoned properties - for outdoor events of an ongoing nature and would NOT apply to residentially zoned areas and would NOT apply to the occasional, random personal outdoor events in any zone. He then spoke in favor of permitting this activity.

Carleton Called Jim King 615 Tamarack

J. King spoke in favor of permitting this activity stating it would provide farmers with much needed niche’ opportunity to supplement income.

Carleton Called Dieter Amos 2380 US 31 N

D. Amos, neighbor of the Hubbell farm spoke in support of permitting this activity with certain conditions. He noted the barn at the Hubbell farm situationally was in the perfect location - off the road, plenty of parking, no close neighbors etc. But not every farm/situation will be as such, problems come up so guidelines should be worked set up to avoid.

Carleton Called Joe Hubbell

J. Hubbell spoke in support of township permitting this activity

Carleton Called Brian Altonen 4143 Powell Lane

B. Altonen, neighbor of Hubbell spoke in support of this activity with a reasonable set of guidelines. He stated the need for farms to supplement their income is real and demands flexibility to make it work.

Carleton Called Cathy McAuliffe

C. McAuliffe spoke in support of permitting this activity with limits and guidelines. She spoke of the need for farmers to supplement their incomes in order to keep the farms going.

Carleton Called Dianna Altonen

D. Altonen spoke in support of permitting this activity. She stated farmers struggle to make ends meet and that keeping the farm in the family, honoring deceased family, is difficult without the ability to supplement.

Carleton Called Vernon LaLone

V. LaLone spoke in favor of permitting this activity. He stated the township survey indicated the want for open spaces and clean water above all other wants. He stated he wished for people in agriculturally zoned areas to do what they wish, without township restriction or involvement, that any business should be blanketly allowed agricultural areas. He stated it made no sense to make lists of what is and what is not allowed if it doesn’t impact anyone and falls with parameters.

Kulka asked for any further comments and or rebuttals

B. Altonen stated he agreed with LaLone. He said the restrictions should be few but there was no need in his opinion for the PC to write a whole new special ordinance. He also stated that farmers are excellent stewards of the land - that which the township survey (as LaLone stated) is of utmost importance.

J. King stated that “keeping the rural character” as stated in the land use plan for the township is very much accomplished by allowing these types of activities.

Kulka asked if there were any other comments and or activities that should be considered while and as long as the issue was open.

V. LaLone stated the permitting should not be limited to weddings and outdoor events. He stated he’d like to build a facility for patrons to lodge and have a guided hunt. He stated his research had led him to become aware that bed and breakfast type facilities were permissible and he would like to discuss adding “hunting lodges” to the permitted list as well. Kulka said that the Agriculture Zoning Ordinance does have a B&B option and that V. LaLone could pursue it with the Zoning Administrator.

Graber and LaLone agreed to meet about his personal project at a later time.

Kulka stated the request of for “hunting lodges” to be added was noted but that Graber and LaLone would continue the discussion of his project at a later time.

Kulka asked for further comment from the audience/public and there was none

Kulka closed the public meeting at 8:09pm