

**MANISTEE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

70 Maple Street  
Manistee, MI 49660

**MEETING MINUTES**

October 5, 2006

A Meeting of the Manistee City Planning Commission was held on Thursday, October 5, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 70 Maple Street, Manistee, Michigan.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Maureen Barry, Ben Bifoss, Tamara Buswinka, Dave Crockett, Ray Fortier, Harlo Haines, Tony Slawinski and Roger Yoder

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Greg Ferguson

**OTHERS:** Kate & Per Wickstrom (Narconon Stone Hawk), Greg Beha (Glouster, OH), Ann Evans (6594 Bar Lake Road), Micheal Moran (CMH Director), Tim Piscopink (6595 Bar Lake Road), Robert Lux (65 Greenbush Street), Jon Rose (Community Development), Denise Blakeslee (Planning & Zoning) and Others

Meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Yoder.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**Narconon Stone Hawk - Special Use Permit for a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility.**

A Public Hearing has been scheduled in response to a request from Narconon Stone Hawk for a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility.

**Kate & Per Wickstrom, Narconon Stone Hawk** - Mr. & Mrs. Wickstrom spoke about the proposed facility. The facility is a long term residential treatment program. They use a holistic approach they do not use drugs to get people off drugs. They teach their clients control, communication and how to confront their problems. They opened their first facility in 2003 and have 600+ graduates. They have had good responses to the surveys they have taken, they do not feel that this issue has had the controversy that the issue of Walmart has had in the community. They give every effort with their students to go through the program. If the student is not willing to work with the program and leaves they can come back at a later date. They will need to pay for the detoxification part of the program if they come back.

**Greg Beha, Glouster, OH** - Mr. Beha's step son was signed up for the Narconon program in July. When they took him to the facility they told him they had a No Refund policy, it was not explained ahead of time. He paid \$23,500 for treatment. After 18 days his son was dropped off at a motel 26 miles away and given \$10. Mr. Beha did not know what the problem was but is very upset that they left him in a motel. He has called for a refund and they will not give him the money back. They told him they would take his son back into the program but he has to pay \$1,500 for him to go back through the

cleansing treatment. Mr. Beha does not like their policies or how they handled his son's dismissal from the program (leaving him at a motel) he also left a handout stating his concerns (attached).

**Ann Evans, 6594 Bar Lake Road** - Ms. Evans works in Substance Abuse at Manistee - Benzie Community Mental Health. She does not know a lot about the Narconon program but to have 600+ people get through the program is great. With this type of abuse sometimes the facilities have to discharge one person for the betterment of the rest of the group. If a discharged patient were to come back they would need to go back through the detoxification/withdrawal process again. Ms. Evans likes the idea of the therapy teaching them to cope and rebuild their lives. She has worked in traditional treatment facilities and they can be effective. She likes the idea that they have 12 beds for members of the community, we need treatment options in our area.

**Michael Moran, Director Manistee - Benzie Community Mental Health** - Mr. Moran has seen a lot of substance abuse in his 31 years with mental health. Substance abuse is the most expensive cost to society, 80% of the people in our court system have abuse problems. He has seen a variety of programs and people can recover. Last summer he visited the Narconon Stone Hawk Battle Creek facility. This facility is very nice, close to a neighborhood and they have had no problem/complaints from the neighbors. He had the opportunity to speak with the students and their families, many had gone to other programs and this one was the most positive for them. This program has changed/saved their lives. Mr. Moran can't imagine any problems and only sees benefits, a win-win. He hopes the request goes through and that they are welcomed into the community.

**Tim Piscopink, 6596 Bar Lake Road** - Mr. Piscopink is in the 12 step program and a lot of people cannot make it through that program. This is an alternative that is needed that might help alleviate some of the problems of substance abuse. A holistic approach that uses saunas is a good way to get the toxins out of someone's system. The facility will bring jobs to the area and taxes. This is a nice facility that was used to help people before and does not understand if it is used to help people again why it needs a special permit. Mr. Piscopink has lost friends to addiction. Anything to help stop the problem is great. It will also cut down on crime, abuse is the biggest problem of our society.

**Robert Lux, 65 Greenbush Street** - Mr. Lux has no problem with a treatment center in Manistee, there are twice as many in the community with problems living outside the facility now. Mr. Lux had a few concerns he would like addressed; How are their statistics compiled? What type of follow up do they provide once someone completes the program? Does insurance cover any of the expenses? How do they release their patients?

Correspondence received in response to the request (copies attached):

**Dan Duchon, 82 Maple Street** - Letter in support

**Lori Weslo-Walker, 1018 Vine Street** - Letter of concern

**Michael Moran, Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health Services, Manistee, MI** - Letter of Support

**Greg Stone, Recovery Consulting, 242 Fairlane Dr., Traverse City, MI** - E-mail in support

**Greg & Beth Beha, 1931 Taylor Ridge Road, Clouster, OH** - E-mail in opposition

**Lou Theirwechter, Allegan County Board of Commissioners, Allegan MI - Letter of Support**

**Dr. Carlton Erickson, Director and Distinguished Professor of Pharmacology/Toxicology, the University of Texas, Austin, TX - Letter in opposition**

**Patrick Gerard, 9381 Shellway Drive, Rapid City, MI - Letter of Support**

2 - Emails without addresses in opposition

There being no further discussion the Public Hearing closed at 7:28 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

#### **Planning Commission Meeting of September 7, 2006**

MOTION by Ray Fortier, seconded by Tony Salwinski that the minutes of the September 7, 2006 Planning Commission Meeting be approved.

With a roll call vote this motion passed 8 to 0.

Yes: Barry, Bifoss, Buswinka, Crockett, Fortier, Haines, Slawinski, Yoder  
No: None

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Narconon Stone Hawk - Special Use Permit for a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility.**

A public Hearing was held earlier regarding the request from Narconon Stone Hawk for a Special Use Permit for a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility. Members of the Planning Commission asked the applicant questions which the applicant answered:

Q. Will Narconon Stone Hawk pay property Taxes?  
A. Yes

Q. Will Narconon Stone Hawk be applying for grant money?  
A. No

Q. Can Insurance be used to pay for the program?  
A. They have a staff person who assists the family with the insurance paperwork. They send the request to the insurance company and the checks go to the family. Depending on the Insurance coverage the amount of money they get back varies.

Q. Can a person who has Blue Cross Blue Shield use their insurance.  
A. Depending on their plan they may be reimbursed up to 80% of treatment. A different plan may only cover detoxification and 15 days of time at the facility.

Q. How are their statistics compiled?

- A. They have 4 independent studies that are available on their web site (Spain, Sweden, Utah & California). They keep their own demographics for their facilities.
- Q What is the success rate?  
A. They average 60 %- 70% who complete the program.
- Q. What type of follow up do you provide after treatment?  
A. They are tracked for two years and at first get bi-weekly calls, then monthly calls, then bi-annual calls.
- Q. Is the site plan complete?  
A. Except for the location of the Basket Ball Court which would be located on the north side of the facility if it is constructed.
- Q How many beds will be at this facility?  
A. They do not plan to have more than 120 people at the Manistee facility if approved.

Other discussion included the licensing of their facilities. Narconon Stone Hawk is licensed by the State of Michigan and they have very specific rules they must follow. They have passed every inspection that the State has made at their facilities. They are inspected twice a year with no prior notice.

At times a graduate of their program will go on to work at their facilities. The graduate is trained at their Battle Creek Facility. They would only get a job after completing the necessary training which may include college.

They will hire local people including nurses to work at the facility and they will be trained at the Battle Creek Facility. Training would take prior to opening so they are ready to work when they open their doors.

There are four reasons for suspension from the program; 1) drugs, 2) Sex, 3) Violence, 4) Continued violation of rules. They do not allow the disruption of one person to effect the recovery of others. If suspended they will take the person to the airport or bus station. Before the person is removed they notify the family before they leave the center. Very rarely they put someone in a motel. They pay for the room and give the person \$10 for food (not enough to buy drugs). If they return they need to pay for the withdrawal program.

There are 153 Narconon facilities in the world, 12 in the United States.

The Planning Commission has been asked by the Zoning Administrator to determine if a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility is a Use Similar to Uses Permitted as Special Land Uses as provided for in Section 1886 of the City of Manistee Zoning Ordinance.

MOTION by Ben Bifoss, seconded by Ray Fortier That a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility is hereby determined to be a Use Similar to a Nursing Home or Convalescent Home and Education Facility and that the standards recommended by staff with signage being limited to 4 sq. ft. Wall or Ground Mount Sign with external lighting.

With a roll call vote this motion passed 7 to 1.

Yes: Bifoss, Crockett, Haines, Slawinski, Buswinka, Fortier, Yoder  
No: Barry

Motion by Ben Bifoss Seconded by Tamra Buswinka to adopt the resolution that has been prepared by staff approving the request from Narconon Stone Hawk for a Special Use Permit for a Drug Education and Rehabilitation Facility changing the requirements on the resolution to reflect compliance and add condition #7 that limits the facility to 120 beds.

Commissioner Barry expressed concerns about the safety and efficacy of the program.

With a roll call vote this motion passed 7 to 1.

Yes: Buswinka, Fortier, Bifoss, Slawinski, Crockett, Yoder, Haines  
No: Barry

**Michcon/DTE Energy - Determination by Planning Commission for fencing of above ground valves.**

The Planning Commission has received a request from Michcon/DTE Energy for approval for security fencing at their facilities throughout the community. This determination is provided for under Section 527 Essential Services of the City of Manistee Zoning Ordinance.

Discussed the fencing at the facility on Robinson Street. A wooden fence was required because it was on City Property next to a school.

Motion by Ben Bifoss, seconded by Harlo Haines to approve the request from Michcon/DTE Energy for security fencing of their facilities throughout the community as provided in Section 527 Essential Services of the City of Manistee Zoning Ordinance requiring that any fence constructed in a Residential District, Historic Overlay District and the Waterfront District be required to have a wooden fence of equal height.

With a roll call vote this motion passed 8 to 0.

Yes: Slawinski, Yoder, Barry, Crockett, Haines, Buswinka, Fortier, Bifoss  
No: None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Sand Products Corporation - Request for Extension.**

The Planning Commission did not take action at their meeting on September 7, 2006 on a request from Sand Products Corporation for an extension on the expiration period on their current PUD permit related to the Man Made Lake Project to a total period of three (3) years.

Mr. Rose explained that the three year extension would begin once the Sewer Moratorium is lifted by the DEQ.

MOTION by Ray Fortier, seconded by Dave Crockett to approved the request from Sand Products Corporation to extend the expiration period on their current PUD permit related to the Man Made Lake Project to a total period of three (3) years.

With a roll call vote this motion passed 7 to 0 with Commissioner Ben Bifoss Abstaining.

Yes: Fortier, Buswinka, Haines, yoder, Slawinski, Crockett, Barry

No:

### **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

Commissioners were asked during the Worksession on September 19, 2006 how they wanted correspondence that was addressed to them and mailed to City Hall handled. The Commissioners in attendance authorized Denise Blakeslee to open and distribute all correspondence that is received in their name at City Hall. Ms. Blakeslee asked Commissioners Maureen Barry, Ben Bifoss, and Harlo Haines for permission to open correspondence mailed to City Hall in their name.

Commissioner Maureen Barry, Ben Bifoss and Harlo Haines gave Denise Blakeslee permission to open and distribute all correspondence that is received in their name at City Hall.

Commissioners were given a calendar for 2007 meeting/worksession dates. This item will be on the November agenda.

Three terms on the Planning Commission will be expiring at the end of October.

### **CITIZEN QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:**

**Lee Trucks, 453 Second Street** - Mr. Trucks asked if there had been any changes in the Planning Act to allow a Planning Commissioner to serve on another board?

Mr. Rose responded that at this time a Planning Commissioner cannot serve on another board or commission.

### **WORK/STUDY SESSION:**

The Planning Commission has a regularly scheduled Worksession on Thursday, October 19, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION by Tony Slawinski, seconded by Ray Fortier that the meeting be adjourned. Motion passed unanimously.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30 P.M.

MANISTEE PLANNING COMMISSION

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Denise J. Blakeslee, Recording Secretary