

**SANDS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

May 11, 2023

1. Call to Order at 6:30 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Shelly Brauer.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call: Shelley Brauer, Justin Yelle, Suzanne Sundell, and Cory Bushong present  
Absent: Pamela Lajewski-Pearson  
Others in attendance: Randall Yelle, Barb Kransi, plus refer to page 3
4. Approval of agenda: Motion by Suzanne Sundell, seconded by Shelley Brauer, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Motion Carried.
5. Approval of Minutes from April 18, 2023: Motion by Cory Bushong, seconded by Suzanne Sundell, to approve the minutes as presented. Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Motion Carried.
6. Public Comment: Due to the number of individuals in attendance, Shelley Brauer asked for a show of hands of those wanting to speak. Ms. Brauer stated that she would give everyone an opportunity to speak for three minutes. Ms. Brauer further stated that she would be flexible but would have to limit time beyond three minutes as necessary. After the public comment portion of the meeting closed she cannot take additional comments from public.
7. Special Use Permit request 22-01, The Preserve LLC. (Kona Hills) Campgrounds
  - a. Randall Yelle, Zoning Administrator comments – new site plan received with campsites within eagle setback removed, letter from Mary Kay Johnson, provided board members with section 700 requirements related to Special User Permits as well as attorney letter addressing requirements
  - b. Public input:
    - i. Shelley Brauer read letter submitted by Mary Kay Johnson who was unable to be in attendance opposing approval of permit
    - ii. Spencer Johnson – questions about new site map and roads, enforcement, boundaries, additional requirements, concerns about fire
    - iii. Candy Fletcher – provided information about Rock Solid, a company contracted by The Preserve to develop plan, in favor of potential for tourism and economic development, believes The Preserve will be good stewards of land
    - iv. Nilsson Davis – if campground is acceptable use, plan should be approved
    - v. Lauri Shaw – shared concerns about emergency equipment exit proximity to her property, changing character of area, traffic safety issues
    - vi. Juliet Elder – concerns about campsites within setback, her family’s potential use of their property
    - vii. Brandon Snyder – provided his credentials, spoke in support of approval of permit, encouraged open communication with developers
    - viii. Jude Catallo – shared concerns about property being a sacred Native American site, should be day use only
    - ix. Scott Emerson – referred to his letter submitted for April meeting, shared concerns about too much development on property, eagles, “iffy-ness” of proposal, toilets, increased light, opposition from public. Recommended donating property or portion of property

- x. Kevin Koch – area is evolving, change inevitable as people discover this area, believes The Preserve will respond appropriately to concerns, economic benefit, encouraged board to approve project
  - xi. Wayne Jacques – attended one of open houses and believes The Preserve will be good stewards, development inevitable, supports project
  - xii. Sam Jacques – spoke in support of project so everyone can enjoy
  - xiii. Carl Johnson – lives adjacent 66 years, expressed concerns about possible future uses of property, traffic concerns, possible future uses could be outside of scope of Sands Township, asked that board not approve
  - xiv. Sara Johnson – spoke in support of project, plan to preserve land in financially sustainable way, work on property has already improved drainage, reminder that it is 80 acres and minimal impact by 50 sites while allowing public access, suggested avoiding discussion about items that are “gossip”
  - xv. Neil (unable to hear last name) (from Gwinn) – questions about primitive campground vs. statement about structures on property, safety plans, eagle, outdoor recreation, concerns about possible future use, safety on road in front of welcome center, asked board to not approve
  - xvi. Walker Lakenen – has been working with developers, have been blindsided by rumors, attempting to be minimal impact, asked for board to approve, anything that would be added has to go back to committee
  - xvii. Jean Johnson – eagles, concerned that developers are not showing appropriate respect
  - xviii. Devin Mahoney – recommended reviewing updated map
  - c. Requester input – Jeremy Johnson, The Preserve, LLC  
Requested that those with concerns talk to the developers, many steps still to come in long process, purpose of development is to 1. promote awareness of historical relevance of area, 2. recreational activity, 3. prevent further development, discussed history of project from inception, reminded committee that vote is limited only to special use for campground and not any possible future use
8. Close Public Hearing: Shelley Brauer closed the Public Hearing at 7:21 p.m.
9. Committee questions and discussion regarding road and restrooms within eagle nest setbacks, parking, lengthy discussion regarding setbacks on all sides (property line to activity area) and need to rework site plan, fire pits, four-wheelers and side-by-sides, safety barriers at cliff areas, campground attendant planned from open to close, gate access, day use parking on Marquette city property, recommended signage and replanting in eagle area, and forest management plan. Randy Yelle, the Zoning Administrator, reiterated that Sands is the first step, and MDOT and EGLE will not even talk with developers until approval is obtained. There was more discussion about the access road and setbacks based on purchase of new property.

Planning commission chair read each of the recommended conditions of approval. Cory Bushong recommended that SUP approval is separated from formal site plan approval (site plan with amended setbacks will still require approval). There was additional clarification regarding safety barriers, walk-in sites, eagles, day use limits, registration process, gates for emergency use, amplified sound (not allowed), restroom requirements (vault toilets, no sewage seeps into the ground), managing complaints about campers, fire pits, and fire safety.

10. Motion by Commissioner Bushong, after conducting the required public hearings, receiving input from staff, permit requester, and the general public, and reviewing the Townships Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and other related Ordinances, including concerns from the surrounding property owners, as well as the State of Michigan (DNR) it is determined by the Sands Township Planning Commission to grant SUP22-01 with the following conditions of approval:

- Must comply with all Township ordinances, (Including but not limited to, Sands Township's Noise, Nuisance, & Fireworks Ordinances) as well as all Marquette County, State of Michigan, and Federal laws and regulations
- Provide to Sands Township Zoning, copies of all Marquette County Health Department approvals prior to starting construction
- No large capacity water wells as defined in the Sands Townships Zoning Ordinance
- Minimum of two hundred and fifty (250) foot setback on all sides of the campgrounds per zoning ordinance section 317
- 66-foot ingress/egress off of U.S. 41, along with approved copies of approval from MDOT and the City of Marquette
- Must have a curb-cut off of U.S. 41, (black top and/or concrete) with a minimum depth of not less than 50 feet and must comply with Sands Township Article X Access Management
- For fire protection, install a 12,000-gallon holding tank located on property with adequate access and turning area to allow three (3) fire trucks the ability to refill (one exiting, one filling, one holding to refill)
- Dedicated and approved emergency egress used for emergencies only (Right Turn Only when exiting)
- Property lines are to be well marked to avoid trespassing on neighboring properties
- Provide copies of insurance covering the campground to the Sands Township Zoning Department
- Campground sign(s) will require their own Zoning Compliance Permits
- Must provide to the Township of Sands, one of the following: letter of credit, bond, or other financial guarantee, in the amount of \$250,000
- Must comply with State of Michigan (DNR) regulations, laws, and guidelines regarding all active/inactive eagle nests on property
- Install safety barriers, keeping personnel (public and employees) from the edge(s) of the area known as the "Rock-Cut"
- All conditions of approval must be in place prior to any campground activity by campers, the general public, and/or any person other than contractors under contract with owner(s) performing their contracted job(s)
- Camp fire pits, shall be in compliance with State of Michigan requirements and have protective screens and must be attended when in use.
- Revised Site Plan must be provided and signed by Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission, prior to starting campground construction in preparation of opening campground operation.
- **Note:** Violations of any of the above conditions of approval may cause the approved Special Use Permit to be voided by Sands Township.

Motion supported by Commissioner Sundell  
Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Motion Carried.

11. Shelley Brauer adjourned meeting at 9:08 p.m.

\*May 11, 2023 Special Planning Commission Meeting Additional Attendees

- Devin Mahoney
- Kevin Koch
- Carl Johnson
- Jean Johnson
- Spencer Johnson
- Walker Lakenen
- Pete Banfield
- Scott Emerson
- Jude Catallo
- Jeremy Johnson
- Wayne Jacques
- Sam Jacques
- Lauri Shaw
- Jim Elder
- Juliet Elder
- Rosa Throenle
- Dale Throenle
- Sara Johnson
- Candy Fletcher
- Brandon Snyder
- Nilsson Davis
- Louis Rodriguez
- Neil (last name unknown)

Shelley Brauer  
Chairman

Pam Lajewski-Pearson  
Secretary (Absent)

Barb Kransi  
Recording Secretary