

**JOINT MEETING - SANDS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**SANDS TOWNSHIP OFFICE COMPLEX**  
**January 28, 2025**

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:** Darlene Walch called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and introduced the Township Board.
2. **Roll Call:**
  - Present – Planning Commission:** Shelley Brauer, Cory Bushong, Suzanne Sundell, Pam Lajewski-Pearson, Justin Yelle
  - Present – Township Board of Trustees:** Darlene Walch, Carolyn Kerkela, Lee Yelle, David Kallio, Justin Yelle
  - Absent:** none
  - Employees in Attendance:** Randy Yelle (zoning administrator), Barb Kransi (recording secretary), Thomas Wahlstrom (fire chief), Bill Nordeen (township attorney)
  - Public in Attendance:** George LaBlonde III, Craig Salo
3. **Agenda:** Carolyn Kerkela moved; David Kallio seconded motion to approve the agenda  
Ayes: 9 Nays: 0 Motion carried.
4. **Minutes:** Pam Lajewski-Pearson moved; Cory Bushong seconded motion to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2024, Planning Commission meeting as presented  
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Business:** Joint meeting is a preliminary informational work session to discuss a request from Mr. George LaBlonde III and Craig Salo (Superior Extrusion) to develop housing under the Condominium Act (MCL 559.241) on parcel 52-14-116-003-15, just west of Feather Ridge on County Road 480.
  - Darlene Walch outlined contents of packet and reviewed bullet points from Zoning Administrator Randy Yelle's letter containing project requirements. She clarified the meeting is not a public hearing. Mr. Yelle clarified that the bullets contained in the letter represent only partial requirements and that other requirements will be determined.
  - Requestor input – George LaBlonde
    - ❖ Introduced himself
    - ❖ Pointed out large rendering of proposed development and stated that although the plans reflected 19 units, the plan is actually for 17 units with the two smallest lots in place to allow for required easements and retention areas as they are determined.

- Attorney input – Bill Nordeen
  - ❖ Responded to David Kallio’s question about age of Condominium Act by stating that it is from 1978 and clarified that although the Act is not outlined specifically within the Township’s zoning ordinance, it is covered by “...and all other developments...” in section 504.
  - ❖ Explained difference between Land Division Act and Condominium Act and clarified that developments created under the Condominium Act are not “subdivisions.”
  - ❖ Outlined five important elements of Condominium Act, including:
    1. Section 10 disconnects the Condominium Act from the Land Division Act.
    2. Master deed, which breaks property into “units” rather than lots. Discussed difference between site condominiums and traditional shared wall condominiums.
    3. Plan must be prepared by architect, land surveyor, or engineer.
    4. When public water and public sewers are not available, Section 71a outlines requirements for the developer to submit copies of the plan to the state health department. Within 30 days the state or local health department will respond with approval, including conditions of approval, or denial.
    5. Section 141 requires compliance with local zoning ordinances and laws, and states that a condominium project cannot be prohibited by a local unit of government.
- Randy Yelle outlined expected process and steps for reviewing and approving project.
- Board of Trustees and Planning Commission questions and comments
  - ❖ David Kallio asked if units are individually owned, and Mr. Nordeen stated that the land, the structure, and a percentage of any common areas are individually owned.
  - ❖ Carolyn Kerkela asked if units would have separate tax ID numbers (yes).
  - ❖ Shelley Brauer noted that two of the lots do not meet the minimum lot size for the zoning. Mr. LaBlonde and Mr. Yelle clarified that those were the lots that those lots are in place to allow for required easements and retention areas as they are determined. Mr. Nordeen clarified that minimum lot sizes required by zoning would apply.
  - ❖ Discussion regarding individual wells and septic systems and possible impact on aquifer. Mr. Nordeen stated that would depend on health department recommendations. David Kallio stated that a common septic system might be advantageous since maintenance could be included in association fees.

- ❖ There was additional discussion regarding common areas.
- ❖ David Kallio wondered if Township might add condominium requirements to Zoning Ordinance.
- ❖ Clarified that the condominium bylaws can be more restrictive than Township ordinances but cannot be less restrictive. Township will not enforce condominium bylaws. Discussed similarities and differences between neighborhood associations and condominium bylaws.
- ❖ Darlene Walch discussed Feather Ridge flooding and desire to not repeat problems that developed there. Digital copy of TriMedia study of area will be shared. Lee Yelle expressed that developer and Township should be proactive in trying to prevent additional flooding issues.
- ❖ Justin Yelle stated that the Township does not have an infinite water source and need to mitigate stress on the aquifer. Aquifer is down about 6 feet since 1980.
- ❖ Treasure Lee Yelle asked if state and/or local health department accepts input from the Township and Mr. Nordeen stated that he believes the health department would work with the Township.
- ❖ Pam Lajewski-Pearson asked if more than one ingress/egress is required.
- ❖ Two additional developments under review after TriMedia report is fully reviewed.

**7. Zoning Authority and MCSWMA Reports:** None

**8. Trustee/Commissioner Comments:** None

**9. Adjournment:** Darlene Walch adjourned the Planning Commission portion of the joint meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Shelley Brauer  
Chairman

Pam Lajewski-Pearson  
Secretary

Barb Kransi  
Recording Secretary