



Wexford Joint Planning Commission

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

For calendar year 2016

New Year Greetings!

Not yet six months old, the Wexford Joint Planning Commission ('commission') has made remarkable progress towards establishing itself as a fully functional Planning and Zoning entity, representing eleven participating municipalities in Wexford County.

The Wexford County Board of Commissioners voted to repeal the county-wide zoning ordinance at a meeting held on February 17, 2016. December 31, 2016 was to be the last day that Wexford County would administer a county-wide zoning ordinance.

Guided by Michigan State University Extensions' Kurt Schindler, many of Wexford County's townships began discussing the possibility of joining forces in an effort to provide much needed planning and zoning services to their residents. Legal assistance and legal review was provided pro bono by Sarah C. Alden, Esq., with assistance by Richard M. Wilson Jr., Esq., both of Mika Meyers PLC. After many meetings, many hours of discussions, and the concerted dedication of many individuals, the Wexford Joint Planning Commission came into being.

Master Plan – Zoning Ordinance: though not a perfect fit, the Wexford County Comprehensive Plan of May 9, 2004 was carried forward as the Wexford Joint Master Plan. After many hours and arduous discussions, the planning commission recommended adoption of (what is now known as) the Wexford Joint Zoning Ordinance, by all participating municipalities. This zoning ordinance is a derivative of (1) a modern zoning template familiar to Schindler and Wilson for the administrative sections and (2) a proposed Wexford County Zoning Ordinance #6 which was never adopted by the county for the zoning districts. This was all accomplished by the self-imposed deadline of December 31, 2016 and published by all participating municipalities in order to avoid any lapse in zoning

Amid the accomplishments of the above tasks, the planning commission found time to select a planning and zoning administrator. As established in the 'Agreement', Cherry Grove Township was very cooperative in making room to house the official office of the Wexford Joint Planning Commission. An initial investment in office equipment and supplies has been made. The planning and zoning administrator will initially provide 8 hours of work per week to the planning commission on a contractual basis. It is anticipated that additional hours will need to be added in the near future to handle any compliance concerns associated with the zoning ordinance administration.

Although not 100% complete, the Wexford Joint Planning Commission has established a web presence at: www.wexfordjpc.org. The intent of this website is to provide as much information as possible to your township residents and property owners as well as the general public. As of the date of this report, the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance have been uploaded and are available on the website.

Looking Forward

The Wexford Joint Planning Commission realized that the adoption of a Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance were paramount in preventing any lapse in zoning for the participating municipalities. We are in the early stages of considering Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance review. The Master Plan requires a statutory review each five years. The Zoning Ordinance is not intended to be a static document, but rather the implementation tool to help achieve the vision(s) of the Master Plan.

During the zoning ordinance adoption process, a fee schedule was reviewed and approved by the 'commission'. The fees are structured to offset nearly all of the '*actual*' costs incurred with the processing of the different levels of permits. As most all permits will have some level of benefit to the community at large, the fee was reduced accordingly. This will also be incorporated into the budget process for future years.

The New Year brings new responsibility for the Wexford Joint Planning Commission. You now are part of an ever-evolving entity responsible for the planning and zoning on behalf of ALL of the participating municipalities. You have a seat at the table via your appointed planning commission representative.

The **Ordinance and Agreement to Establish the Wexford Joint Planning Commission** requires this *Annual Report* and:

- ✓ A report of activities for the current year (*summarized above*)
- ✓ A work program (*summarized above*)
- ✓ A budget request (*to be presented by WJPC Treasurer*)

Please refer to Sections 8 and 9 of the 'Agreement' for more details.

* *the budget process is described in section 9.c of the 'agreement' **

Budget

The Wexford Joint Planning Commission is very grateful for the initial planning and legal assistance received as the municipal representatives were 'hammering' out the details of the 'Agreement' throughout 2016. We remain dedicated to being fiscally conservative and professionally responsive to the residents, property owners, and the general public within our jurisdiction.

We believe that we can efficiently operate and maintain the progressive momentum of the Wexford Joint Planning Commission simply by replacing the depleted funds to date to bring our operational 'fund' balance back up to the initial \$50,000.00 (fifty thousand dollars) for the 2017 / 2018 fiscal year. Of continuing concern will be the ongoing personnel / administration required to operate the Wexford Joint Planning Commission efficiently.

In conclusion, please allow us to thank each of the participating municipalities for their confidence in and the continuing support of the Wexford Joint Planning Commission.

Very truly yours,
Wexford Joint Planning Commission
By:



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