

**MUSKEGON CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
PC-19-7  
July 8, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Bouwman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL**

**Present: Hower, Singerling, VandenBosch  
Bouwman, Hughes, Frein, Borushko**

**Absent: None**

**Excused:**

**Also Present: Planning / Zoning Administrator Brian Werschem,  
Recording Secretary Andria Muskovin and 2 guests**

**Approval of Agenda**

Motioned by Borushko supported by Hower to approve the July 8, 2019 agenda.

Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motioned by Singerling supported by VandenBosch to approve the minutes of June 10, 2019.

Motion carried.

**Communications**

Board Minutes for June 3, 2019 & June 17, 2019 reviewed with no comments.

Staff Report acknowledged

**Unfinished Business - None**

**New Business –**

1. **PC 19-16** Public Hearing - Ordinance 19-6 amending Section 58-64 “Keeping of Animals”  
Purpose: Amend Section 58-64 “Keeping of Animals” of the Muskegon Charter Township Zoning Ordinance to allow for certain types of poultry, primates and reptiles as pets.

Public Hearing opened at 7:03 P.M

Brian Werschem stated that there were a couple of questions asked regarding chickens from the posting on the door at Township Hall, but no calls or walk ins from the posting in Muskegon Chronicle.

Brian Werschem explained that there had been a request to have a Capuchin monkey as a pet from a resident who had begun building a home in the Township. They had approached the Board at a meeting and the Board felt they could possibly be acquired as a pet and would run it through the process.

Werschem explained that chickens are being kept in the Township by so many that it is becoming an issue for enforcement to keep up with.

Reptiles are being added so that they do not become an issue.

Singerling asked if the Township would be liable for Monkeys that are kept in the Township. No

Chairman Bouwman questioned section C asking if it were supposed to be Monkey and not Monkeys. Werschem – Yes.

Section D – Reptiles. What if someone has a painter turtle? Resident only needs to notify the Township when they get it.

Borushko was concerned with illegal monkeys coming here with Eboli. Wanted to know what the punishment would be to resident if they bring monkey here and don't register them.

Brian Werschem stated that they do have to be approved by the Department of Agriculture before they can come in to the State. Resident has to show where the monkey came from, show proof of vaccinations, show who the vet is that is caring for monkey and has to do this annually.

Borushko asked if it needed to be sterilized. No.

Singerling stated that he has no issues with chickens or reptiles. Primates can be dangerous and prefers that any to be kept should be spayed or neutered.

Borushko asked if we could do that. Werschem – Yes.

Bouwman stated it could be put in local ordinance.

Werschem stated that monkeys tend to act differently or calm down when neutered (male monkeys). Werschem stated that a contingency could be added. Recommended by the PC to have them spade or neutered.

Bouwman asked if it would stand up in court. Werschem stated that it could go to legal but could take several weeks to find out if we have the ability to make them spay or neuter monkey.

Bouwman asked if the Board could amend the ordinance if the PC recommends approval.

Werschem stated that the Board values the PC's opinion and would have Brian look into it. Bouwman would be comfortable approving it if the Township could look into legal advice regarding spay or neuter of monkey.

Werschem will vet it through legal.

Bouwman asked if we were better off knowing they have one if they say they won't get it sterilized. Werschem stated it would become an enforcement issue.

Borushko commented that if they keep it under the table, that they should be prepared to pay fines. Local, State, Federal and that it should go on their tax roll.

Frein had question regarding chickens. If they have 4 chickens can they have a dog? Yes. Chickens are on their own and don't count against other animals.

Borushko asked about pot belly pigs in the house. Werschem talked about ferrets & potbelly pigs being added by Muskegon Charter Township in section of ordinance to address them in each occasion giving MCT the latitude to choose what fits.

Hower asked how many animals are allowed with Sections C & D being combined. Werschem stated that people with reptiles usually have more than one and legal counsel wanted it written that way.

Kineta Fowle, 428 S Sheridan, Muskegon MI asked what is said about reptiles. Werschem gave her a copy of the ordinance. She stated that they were grandfathered in from a previous supervisor giving them permission to have their 100lb tortoise. She felt the weight limit on reptiles is way too low. She stated that the tortoise is not dangerous and that we have dangerous dogs in the Township and they do not have a weight limit.

Motion to close public hearing by Borushko seconded by VandenBosch.

Motion approved

Motion to recommend by Singerling with addition under Part C, subsection C to include spade or neuter of monkeys.

Yeas: Hower, Singerling, VandenBosch, Hughes, Frein, Borushko

Nays: Bouwman

**Public Comment – None**

August Meeting is August 20, 6:30 work session, 7:00 meeting

**Adjournment**

**Motioned by Hughes supported by Singerling to adjourn at 7:35 P.M.**

**Motion carried.**

**Respectfully submitted by,**

**Sandra Frein  
Secretary**