

PLEASANTON LAND USE PLAN - SEPTEMBER 7, 1999

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INTRODUCTION TO PLEASANTON TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN

Why does Pleasanton Township need a Land Use Plan? The Township Rural Zoning Act, Public Act 184 of 1943, Section 3, as amended, says, "The zoning ordinance shall be based on a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare; to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability and to limit the improper use of land; to conserve natural resources and energy; to meet the needs of the state's residents for food, fiber and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation..." That particular paragraph goes on to cover numerous other items, but it is the underlined phrase we wished to emphasize. We are required by law to design a land use plan on which our zoning ordinance is based. The plan is the method whereby the township is able to examine where it has been, where it is at, and, most importantly, where it is headed sometime within the next 20 to 40 years. The land use plan serves as the foundation for zoning decisions. It allows township officials to justify their decisions regarding development proposals and other zoning requests. The land use plan helps to demonstrate to the public and the courts the rationale for decisions reached. With this in mind, it is important to keep the plan up to date if it is to serve as a viable tool. A review every five years is considered reasonable.

Why did Pleasanton Township decide to prepare a "Land Use" plan, as opposed to a "Master" or "Comprehensive" Plan? In reviewing the Workbook For Preparing or Updating A Master Plan..., (March 1992 Edition) from the Michigan Society of Planning Officials, the Commission determined that with a population under 5000, little or no growth in population in the last ten years, and with a locality that was primarily rural in character, the simplest plan (Land Use) was probably adequate for our present purposes. It may be that in five years time the Commission may have to consider something more elaborate. Land use plans have a narrow focus on present and future land use, and may or may not have goals, objectives or policies. They are usually prepared by a zoning board or commission for the purpose of providing a legal basis for the zoning ordinance.

LOCATION

Pleasanton Township is located approximately 18 miles north of the city of Manistee, in Manistee County. It borders Benzie County on the north, Arcadia Township on the west, Springdale Township on the east, and Bear Lake Township on the south. The township's most significant geographical landmark is that it encompasses the northern half of Bear Lake. The major highway, north to south, is US 31, with Co. Rd. 600 (13-mile Road) the major east-west highway in the south and County Line Rd. and Glovers Lake Road in the north. The topography of the township is generally rolling and consists of a mixture of hardwoods, pine forest, farmland and orchards. Lake Michigan lies west of Pleasanton township at a distance averaging eight (8) miles. The township possesses several small streams, as well as Mud, Glovers, and Bear Lakes. With the exception of the lakeshore residential development, the rest of the township is rural in nature, with few commercial or industrial entities. General farming is decreasing, with specialty farms producing strawberries, asparagus, pickles, or fruit are still in existence but not increasing. There are some horse

and cattle operations, though they tend to be minor in nature. Although antrim gas shale development was in an active stage in the early to middle '90's, exploration has decreased with little indication that it will pick up any time in the near future. Should the United States suffer an embargo on imported oil or another form of shortage, the situation could change overnight.

CLIMATE

The Climate of Pleasanton Township is strongly influenced by Lake Michigan. Because of prevailing westerly winds, spring and early summer temperatures are cooler than would normally be expected, and in the fall and winter, temperatures are milder than would normally be expected at this latitude. Recorded temperature extremes have, however, ranged from a minus 34 degrees F to 100 degrees F. Average precipitation is well-distributed throughout the township over a year's time. September is the wettest month, while February is the driest. The average annual snowfall for Pleasanton Township is 100 inches. These figures reflect the importance that lake moisture has in producing the lake snow belt since the amounts are more than twice the annual snowfall received further south. The length of the frost-free period for Pleasanton averages 153 days. This period is somewhat shorter in the eastern margins of the county where continental climatic conditions become more prevalent and Lake Michigan has less effect.

POPULATION

In 1980 Pleasanton Township had a population of 627, but the 1990 census revealed a drop in that figure to 573, a percentage drop of 9%. The Township still has a large population of seasonal residents, most of whom live in close proximity to the east, west, and north shores of Bear Lake. Of 564 housing units in the township, 255 are classified as "seasonal, recreational, or occasional use." The line between seasonal and permanent residents has been blurring somewhat over the past few years, since many of the original "summer folks" are retiring and making the shores of Bear Lake their year 'round home. That distinction is further obscured by the fact that many of our retired "permanent" residents leave for all or a portion of the winter months.

The rest of our citizens are either farmers, workers at a variety of endeavors outside the township, or both. We have a small number of entrepreneurs who run their own home businesses, such as bread baking, wood carving, firewood sale and delivery, farm machinery repair, licensed day care, or needlework, etc. The rest fall into the category of homemaker, student, and the unemployed.

As pointed out in the 1990 census, there is no question but that our general population is adult and caucasian, with a majority in the "older" category. For instance, in the 1990 census, we had only 23 children under the age of 5. In other categories we have: 27 persons 18-24; 146 persons 25-44; 102 persons 45-60; and 165 persons 65 and over (of whom 54 were 75 and over). The median age of the township is 45.1. At the present time our median density is 17 persons per square mile. Unless there is significant change in the 2000 census in age populations in the township, we are looking forward to a citizenry that will be growing older, and perhaps needing the services on which the elderly rely, such as medical installations, adult foster care homes, nursing homes, assisted living apartments, visiting nurses, paid homemakers, cleaning services, and perhaps delivery systems for food and other necessities. It may very well be that it is in these areas that we might look to increased commercial development.

PRESENT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

At the present time, under the category of "industry" we can list the Ron Brown Asphalt Plant on north U.S. 31, and Corneillie Concrete at the same location, with the possible inclusion of a welding service, and a forestry product (chips, etc.) installation in the same general area. More centrally located on U.S. 31 are retail businesses including the Pleasanton Valley Greenhouse and Farm Store, Kober's Wood Carving Studio, DLA & GF Trucking Inc., Schafer's Excavating, Landscaping, Inc., and United Agricultural Products, (agricultural chemicals & supplies). Kampvilla Mobile Home Park/Good Sam RV Park is in the same general area. Crystal Forest Campground is located just west of US 31 on Norconk Rd.

PLEASANTON TOWNSHIP HISTORY

Pleasanton Township's geologic history includes being covered by a large ocean and five glaciers which passed back and forth over the area several million years ago. Melting ice released large amounts of water which form the various watersheds and lake areas in the township. Eventually a dense hardwood forest covered the area, with Native American groups living or passing through the area. Thousand-year old burial mounds were found by early settlers on the south line of Section 31. Settlers and later farmers in the township picked large numbers of flint and stone projectile points and tools from their plowed fields, probably from the group known as the Woodland Indians.

The land area containing Pleasanton Township was purchased by the United States from the Chippewa and Ottawa Tribes in 1836. Two years later, John Brink surveyed the boundaries of the Township and returned in 1839 to survey the section lines in preparation for land sales. The first settlers arrived about 1862, after passage of the Homestead Act in that year. The Act provided almost free land to bona fide settlers. In-migration increased after the Civil War, as veterans sought more extensive holdings and better soil than that of their eastern communities. Very early settlers were George B. Pierce, Dwight E. Sibley, and Charles Bailey. By 1870 about 65 families were living in the township. US 31 was established in 1861 as the Allegan, Muskegon, and Grand Traverse State Road, but was not completed until 1870. It was not until 1871 that a sawmill was established in the village of Bear Lake, and sawn lumber became available for construction. Henry Erb (section 34) had the first small store in his home, schools were started in the '60's, and the first church was established where the Lighthouse Baptist Church now stands (north of the intersection of Lumley Rd. and US 31) about 1870.

In the census of 1870 there were 65 houses with 285 residents. By 1874 there were 419 residents. By 1880 there were 91 dwellings. In 1900 659 persons called Pleasanton Township home, and in 1904 there were 674, figures that have not changed too substantially since, except for a decrease during the depression years.

In the late 1920' and early 1930's, The east and west shores of Bear Lake developed with modest summer homes. The north shore saw some limited development, but did not become truly developed until the late 1940's and 1950's. From then until the present time, there has not been much change in the lakeshore areas, except for the extension of shore development in Big Bay. Norconk Road, from US 31 to the western township line has become more residential in nature, with a number of homes being built.

With the increase in the prices being paid for hardwood timber (about 1990) there has been extensive lumbering in the township, and some clearcutting. Such denuding of previously forested areas in the township has evoked concern, but at present there is no remedy but to try and educate landowners of the benefits (both financial and aesthetic) of selective cutting.

(Most of the information in this brief historical overview was taken from Pleasanton Township: 1863-1983 by Steve Harold. Those wishing a more extensive history may obtain a copy of the above from local libraries.)

PRESENT LAND USE AND ZONING IN THE TOWNSHIP

Pleasanton Township presently is zoned into four land use districts. They are: Residential, (R-1); Residential-Agricultural (RA-1); Residential-Agricultural and Commercial by Special Use Permit, (RA-2); and Wilderness-Recreation District, (WR-1). There is as well a Wetland Overlay District, as shown on the official zoning map. The overlay district was designed to protect various wetlands in the Township from filling, pollutant run-off, preservation of plant material and aesthetics. Limited development of these areas is possible with care. The district includes lands 100 feet landward from the edge of a wetland. If there is any dispute as to the edge of the wetland, it shall be determined by the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources.

The Residential-Agricultural RA-2 district was specifically designed to permit the township to give close attention to the location and development of commercial and industrial development. Permitted uses in the district are limited, with nearly all other uses allowed only by the issuing of a special use permit, with concomitant development criteria as thought necessary to protect the area from aesthetic deterioration, and any air or water pollution. Although the district lies on each side of US 31 in the northern section of the township, it is the Planning Commission's intent to "cluster" any new development in specific areas, such as the intersection of Glovers Lake Rd. Should increased development become a reality in the area, service roads should be located adjacent to US 31, with limited access to the highway, so that numerous driveways opening onto the highway are not created.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN IN PLEASANTON TOWNSHIP:

Big Bay Bog: Listed on State Resource Maps as a "Special and Unique Area," the Bog is a prime example of such a habitat, containing typical bog plants, such as Sundews and Venus Flytraps. It provides a water-cleansing action for the lake and surrounding territory, and aids in fish production.

Little Bear Creek: The creek surfaces from a series of springs in Section 27 (approximately 120 rods south of Norconk Road and 90 rods east of US 31.) Water from the outlet from Bear Lake, on Lakeside Ave., joins the Creek, after crossing US 31 in Section 33, and flows eastward through Sections 34, 35, and 36, creating a sizable wetland area.

Bowens Creek: The creek heads in the northwest corner of Section 29, flows across a corner of Section 30, and then heads through Section 19 to Arcadia Township, eventually entering Arcadia Lake and Lake Michigan. In the fall, large spawning salmon are seen all the way to the creek's headwaters. At present there is little or no development along the creek and it is a prime example of a small, but quality, stream. Richley Creek, a small stream that heads on the west edge of Section 18 joins Bowens Creek in Arcadia Township.

Bear Lake: The Lake has a surface area of 2.92 sq. miles, or 1,869 acres, with a length of shoreline of approximately 7.63 miles. Its maximum depth is 24 feet. It is the second largest lake in Manistee County. The immediate drainage area, or watershed, which drains to the lake is approximately four times the size of the lake. It has no inlet, but does have an outlet that discharges intermittently to Little Bear Creek. Bear Lake is considered a shallow lake, a fact which

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makes it more likely to be turbid from disturbed bottom sediments, and also causes it to reach higher summer temperatures than those of deeper lakes. Since 1991 Pleasanton and Bear Lake Townships have divided the cost of quarterly water testing of approximately ten sites on the Lake. Those tests reflect that the quality of the lake water is still fairly high in all parameters. There has been a subtle increase in nutrients in the lake over the last nine years or so and zebra mussels have been found. Fishing remains generally good, although there is some indication that pan fish populations may be declining. Somewhat over half of the northern side of the Lake is in Pleasanton Township. Needless to say, continued high water quality is of supreme importance to the Township.

Glovers Lake: A small lake located on the northern edge of Section 13, with limited residential development surrounding it, and one public access off of Glovers Lake Rd.

Mud Lake: A lake 8 to 10 acres in size, located in the northeast corner of Section 9, completely surrounded by three property owners.

State Land: On the eastern side of the Township, generally in Sections 13-14, 23-24, 25-26, and a portion of 36, are large tracts of land owned by the State. These forested areas have provided a natural habitat in which both fish (Green's Creek) and wildlife have flourished. Deer, and small animals such as squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, skunk, fox, weasel, muskrat, mink, otter, beaver, and birds such as partridge are in good supply. Coyotes are an able predator in the area, and recently there have been sightings of bear. Although not seen frequently, bobcat are known in the area. Hunting and fishing in these areas provides optimum outdoor recreation, as do a trail and snowmobile system. All efforts should be made by local and state government to insure the maintenance and preservation of this acreage for multi-use recreational activities. Pleasanton Township's Zoning Ordinance places all of this acreage under the Wilderness-Recreational Classification.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Parks and Recreation:

Pleasanton Township offers diversified recreational opportunities. Hiking and biking is available on many of the township roads, which are rarely congested with traffic. The State Forest land is available for mushrooming and hiking, on the east side of US.31. Winter sports (downhill and cross-country skiing, skating) are available at Crystal Mountain, just over the Benzie County Line to the east. Golfers have a choice of a course (Chestnut Hills on Glovers Lake Rd., just west of Butwell) in the township, or a short drive to the course at Bear Lake Village. Movies are available at the Garden Theatre in Frankfort, the Vogue in Manistee, and Honor's Cherry Bowl Drive In during the summer. Stage and musical performances can be seen at the Ramsdell Theatre in Manistee, and occasionally in Benzie County. Interlochen Arts Academy and the Interlochen National Music Camp offer numerous musical/dance/theatrical performances throughout the year. There are many restaurants and lounges within short driving distances of the township.

EXISTING FACILITIES:

- (a) Pleasanton Township Hall: Originally located on 1 1/2 acres of land at Lumley and US 31, an additional 5 acres were purchased on the west in 1993 for a total of 6 1/2 acres. The present Township Hall was originally the Pleasanton Center School, built in 1884. Remodeled several different times, the Hall now boasts a modern kitchen, handicap access and restroom. At the rear of the building is a covered patio with 12 picnic tables, and the facility is available for rent to township residents. Outdoors, there is a swing set, slide, merry-go-round, horse shoe pits, and volleyball net.
- (b) Pleasanton Township Park, about 3 1/2 acres on Lakeside Drive on the east shore of Bear Lake, with 20 feet of lake access across the road. Facilities include parking for seven cars, three picnic tables, a roofed shelter, bath house, pit toilets and swing set.
- (c) Three additional lake accesses on the east shore, with an access and permanent picnic table at the end of Butwell Road, and accesses at the end of Myers Rd., and on Three Pines Rd., where the road turns to the north.
- (d) The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has established a boat launching site on the west shore, at the entrance to Big Bay. Located on 36 acres, the site has extensive parking, a dock, and pit toilet.

Undeveloped sites:

- (a) Manistee County Forest: 83.29 acres at Norconk and Iverson Rd.
- (b) DNR Glovers Lake Access, 3 acres located on south side of lake, 2 miles east of US 31 off Glovers Lake Rd.
- (c) DNR Bear Lake/Pleasanton and Betsie River snowmobile trails.
- (d) Nature Trail: 200 acres owned by State of Michigan, located east of US 31 and north of Norconk Rd.

Recreation Programs:

- (a) Bear Lake School system
- (b) Bear Lake-Pleasanton Recreation Association
- (c) Manistee Recreation Association

Private Sector:

- (a) Kampvilla, Inc.: Mobile home park and "Good Sam" RV Campground, 16624 N. US 31 (b) Crystal Forest Campground, 8675 Norconk Rd. (c) Dayton-Bear Lake Outing Club, Butwell Rd., "Members Only" (d) Frederick's Cottages, 40047 Lakeside Ave. (e) Kacz's Kozy Kabins, 13535 Lakeside.

GENERAL RECREATION:

- (a) Hunting, small game, white-tail deer, turkeys and water fowl. (b) Fishing in Bear Lake, Glovers Lake, Little Bear Creek and Bowens Creek. Ice Fishing in winter. (c) Trapping (d) Trails, Cross-country skiing, hiking, horse-back riding

and snowmobile riding. (e) Public accesses: water skiing, swimming, boating and fishing

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Pleasanton Township Board is the local body of Government with the Pleasanton Township Planning Commission and Board of Appeals as zoning bodies. There is a local Zoning Administrator, but building inspection duties are carried out by the State. The Parks and Recreation Committee is an advisory Board. Other entities are County Government at the Courthouse in Manistee, (Manistee Health Dept. District 10); Manistee Conservation District (soil erosion permits); Department of Natural Resources, District office at Cadillac (wetland permits, etc.)

The township owns and operates the Pleasanton Township Cemetery, located just to the north of the Township Hall on US 31.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Police protection is located in Manistee at the County Sheriff's Office, or the Michigan State Police Post. Conservation law is enforced by local conservation officers, from the DNR District Office in Cadillac. Call 911 for police help.

Fire and Rescue emergencies are handled through calls to 911. Local emergency equipment is located at the Bear Lake Township Fire Dept.

Hospitals and Ambulance Services are provided by West Shore Hospital at Manistee, and Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital at Frankfort. Emergencies are handled by a call to 911 for the Bear Lake Fire Volunteer Fire Dept. & EMT and rescue squad.

Sanitation and Waste Disposal are handled by individual septic systems, permitted by the Manistee Health Dept. District 10, and private rubbish collection by Shoreline Waste Services, either on-site or at the Township Hall once or twice a month. Only private wells exist in the township.

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

Pleasanton Township is included in the Bear Lake School District. The public schools (K through 12) are located at 7748 Cody, Bear Lake. A private school, Bear Lake Christian School is located at 7750 Main St., Bear Lake.

The closest library is in the village of Bear Lake, open on Monday and Thursday afternoons, a branch of the county library in Manistee.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Pleasanton Township has no public transportation located within the confines of the township. Manistee County Transportation, Inc., supported by a county millage voted by the electorate has its headquarters in the city of Manistee. It offers a variety of services in Manistee County. These include shuttle bus service, (Manistee City) plus the Dial-A-Ride and Trolley Service. Dial-a-Ride is available to out-county areas on an advanced reservation basis, from 7AM to 6PM, Monday through Friday. There is also daily bus service to Munson Medical Center in Traverse City by reservation. The trolley service takes persons on a narrated tour of the Manistee area from June through Labor Day, Monday through Saturday, leaving the MCTI office each hour from 1 to 6 PM. The trolley may be reserved for family and civic events. A private taxi service is available in Manistee and surrounding area.

Air service is provided at the Manistee-Blacker Airport, north of Manistee on US 31. There are 5,500 feet east and 2,800 feet north and south of paved runways, beacon and runway lights, daytime radio and VOR on the field. Great Lakes Airlines provides scheduled services. Charter service is also available. The airport is presently being upgraded to an all-weather facility.

Car rental services are available at Mowry Buick/Pontiac/Oldsmobile through National Car Rental, at the airport and their sales offices. Bottrell's Sales and Service also has their own line of rental cars.

There is at present no state-wide bus service serving the area between Traverse City and Muskegon.

The CSX Company provides freight service from the south and east to the city of Manistee, where rail service then terminates.

Trucking service is provided by several companies. Serving the county area are Alvan Motor Freight, Associated Truck Lines, Wolverine Express, Parker Motor Freight, DLA & GF Trucking Inc. and L.C. Townsend, Inc.

Local delivery systems are Tom Evens from Kaleva and Manistee; Howes and Howes, Mesick; Sand, gravel, asphalt, are delivered by Ron Brown and Sons, Pleasanton Township; Sand and gravel by Randall Excavating, Inc., Bear Lake Township; and Schafer Landscaping delivers mulch and black dirt, Pleasanton Township.

PROPOSED GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR PLEASANTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The overall goal of the Pleasanton Township Planning and Zoning Commission and Township Board is to promote orderly growth and an attractive quality of life for its residents, while protecting our lakes, streams, wetlands, unique environmental areas and groundwater from contamination. Township citizens have a right to expect that property values will be protected by reasonable and compatible zoning. Flexibility for future change should be provided while adhering to the tenets of the above goal. Following are strategies to insure the on-going development of this goal:

1. Maintain the agricultural-rural residential nature of the township by resisting "spot-zoning." In keeping with its agricultural heritage, policy should work towards the maintenance of large tracts of land for farming, and the encouragement of family farms. Landowner applications under the farmland preservation provisions of the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act 116 of 1974 should be encouraged and approved, particularly in areas of prime agricultural land. Road closure should be strictly discouraged, and existing roads should be maintained to facilitate transportation of farm products. Reforestation should be encouraged where feasible, particularly the maintenance of hardwood forests. Selective cutting of existing hardwood is preferable to "clear-cutting" and should be seriously considered at the time of forest harvest.
2. Existing residential areas should be protected from encroachment of unsuitable or detrimental development. Mobile homes are subject to identical zoning as other single family housing. Residences should be discouraged in flood plains, wetlands, or areas designated "unique and special" by the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources. Applications or preliminary subdivision plats should be approved under the Manistee Co. Subdivision Control Ordinance and Michigan Subdivision Control Act 288 of 1967. The township has adopted a Planned Residential Development ordinance in an effort to keep a maximum amount of open space while not discouraging the building of homes. Additional zoning categories may have to be developed to accommodate specific changes in the Township, such as (but not limited to) the US 31 corridor, and the portion of Norconk Rd. west of US31.
3. Encourage light-industry and commercial development in the NE area of the township adjacent to Highway 31, where such enterprise is already present. Care should be exercised to see that the natural environment of the Township is not endangered. Particular concern rests with industry characterized by high waste volumes, or that which is toxic in nature. Zoning ordinance revision should consider specific attention to driveways off US 31 by developing service roads. Commercial development should be encouraged in "cluster" areas, such as the intersection at US 31 and Glovers Lake Rd. Consideration may have to be given to the U.S. 31 and Norconk Road intersection since commercial enterprises are already present in the area.
4. Because of the nature of the area, tourism should be encouraged by developing (or by advertising the existence of) cross-country skiing and snowmobile trails, nature hiking trails, fishing, water-oriented sports, "natural-beauty" roads, etc. At the same time care must be taken that proper controls are in place (i.e., boating safety rules) to ensure health and safety. Cooperation between the Commission and the Pleasanton Parks and Recreation Committee is essential to promote these recreational facilities. Wetland, and "Keyholing" ordinances should be investigated for feasibility of inclusion in the Pleasanton Township Zoning Ordinance.

9. Local governments should have a means to recover costs for servicing mineral extraction and development activity. More cooperation should be sought with the state concerning regulation and problems associated with mineral extraction, such as road upkeep and repair.

10. Agricultural land continues to disappear in all areas of Michigan. Although Pleasanton Township may not be considered a particularly prime area for agriculture, we do have the ability to provide food products for the local area, as evidenced by the popularity of "Farmers' Markets." Since rural character is important to the citizens of Pleasanton Township, we need some method to insure that land suitable for food production remains undeveloped.