

**VALLEY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2011**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Garofalo.

**Roll Call:**

Members present: Harry Smith, Carol Browne, Brandee Ellis, Fred Lewis, Tony Garofalo

Paul Shamblin, Zoning Administrator

**The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**

**Minutes:** Brandee Ellis made a motion to approve the minutes supported by Harry Smith. The August 23, 2011 Planning Commission minutes were approved as read.

**Approval of Agenda:** Harry Smith made a motion to approve the Agenda supported by Fred Lewis. The September 27, 2011 Planning Commission agenda was approved.

**Old Business:**

**A. Medical Marihuana Ordinance**

State Trooper Craig Theodore from the Wayland Post and Trooper Craig Camp from the Saugatuck Detachment attended the Township meeting to respond to questions with regard to enforcement of Medical Marihuana complaints. The state doesn't enforce local ordinances. Trooper Camp stated he didn't think a township ordinance could be more restrictive than the state law. There are three categories covered under the state law: Patients, Caregivers and Caregivers who are also patients. The focus needs to be on caregivers only. A second issue was the need for a township permit. Although it might be to the township's advantage to know where caregivers reside, it is necessary to protect the identity of patients. The suggestion was made to require a special use permit as we do for any other home occupation business. After a lengthy question and answer session, it was suggested that it is best to make the Medical Marihuana Ordinance similar to other zoning ordinances already passed by Valley Township.

A motion was made by Brandee Ellis supported by Fred Lewis to revisit the draft ordinance we have been discussing to simplify it and make it more clearly a zoning ordinance. Motion passed. The new draft will be discussed at the October meeting.

**B. Fall Workshop for Recycling and Wood Burning**

Zoning Administrator Paul Shamblin reported his discussions with local businesses on the possibility of a seminar on wood burning. They seemed to be in favor and suggested other forms of heat in addition to wood burning furnaces.

A date of Saturday, November 2nd was selected. The time is 10:00 a.m. to noon. The issue of advertizing the seminar around the county was discussed. The possibility of posters in businesses, posting it on our website, sending emails to local residents and putting an ad in the Allegan County

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News were mentioned as possibilities. Karen and Brandee will work on a poster that can be used for advertizing the seminar.

Inviting installers of wood burning furnaces was also discussed. The primary purpose of the seminar is to make residents aware of what is involved in purchasing and installing a wood burning furnace and to help them overcome any safety hazards.

The issue of insurance is another aspect of having a wood burning furnace installed in your home. Trustee Roseanne Wendt would be a good source of information on that topic and might be willing to speak at the seminar.

There won't be enough time during this seminar to also cover recycling but we now have the name of a company north of town who will take leaves that have been picked up in the township. The next obstacle is to find someone to pick up the leaves at a reasonable price. The recycling fund can be used to help defray the cost of picking up leaves. We need to find out if this is a service residents would use if it is available and determine the cost.

### **New Business:**

#### **Wireless Communication Towers**

This was the third issue brought to the Planning Commission last spring. The use of wireless communication is growing rapidly. Valley Township residents will benefit from having a reasonable set of parameters for installation of towers and determining who is responsible for removal of unused towers. Residents will also benefit from any franchise fees that are associated with towers. The wind energy ordinance is a good template for wireless communication. Chair Garofalo will work on a first draft to be discussed at the October meeting.

#### **Zoning Administrator Report**

There are still issues of blight in the township but they are being addressed. More homes are being foreclosed leaving empty abandoned buildings in the township. This is a problem that needs to be addressed.

#### **Open Discussion on Non-Agenda items**

None

#### **Adjournment**

Harry Smith made a motion to adjourn supported by Tony Garofalo. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol S. Browne, Secretary