

VALLEY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY July 24, 2012

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

Roll Call:

Members present: Harry Smith, Carol Browne, Fred Lewis,
Zoning Administrator, Paul Shamblin
Tony Garofalo and Brandee Ellis were excused absent

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes: Fred Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes supported by Carol Browne. The April 26th 2012 Special Meeting minutes and the June 26, 2012 Planning Commission minutes were approved as read.

Approval of Agenda: Carol Browne made a motion supported by Harry Smith to approve the Agenda of July 24, 2012. Agenda was approved.

Public Hearing on the Use of Solar Panels

The public hearing on the use of Solar Panels was called to order at 7:05 pm by Vice Chair Smith. A question from audience member Melodie Dobbins concerned the meaning of "co-location." Zoning Administrator Shamblin explained that it meant multiple panels affixed to one tower or pole. It was prohibited for safety reasons. Mr. DeYoung from the audience made the point that he already had solar panels that are not in line with the new ordinance. Zoning Administrator Shamblin assured him that pre-existing conditions are not subject to the ordinance under discussion.

Hearing no other comments, Vice Chair Smith asked for a motion to approve the ordinance as written and to send it to the Valley Township Board for their approval. Motion was made by Fred Lewis and supported by Carol Browne. Motion to approve the Ordinance on the Use of Solar Panels passed unanimously.

Public Hearing on the Use of Solar Panels closed at 7:12 pm.

Old Business:

A. Adult Entertainment Ordinance

Draft #1 of the Adult Entertainment Ordinance was discussed. Questions concerning location restrictions were discussed at length. A motion to eliminate Section E allowing businesses that derived only 25% of their gross profits from adult entertainment to be exempt from coverage under the Adult Entertainment Ordinance was made by Fred Lewis and supported by Harry Smith. The motion passed.

A revised draft will be discussed at the August 28, 2012 meeting.

New Business:

A. Fireworks Discussion

After review of the Michigan Fireworks Safety Act, it was recommended by Vice Chair Smith that Valley Township not attempt to write an ordinance governing the use of fireworks. The Michigan Fireworks Safety Act is comprehensive and makes it difficult for townships to make further restrictions.

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Harry Smith made a motion supported by Fred Lewis to remove this topic from further consideration by the Planning Commission. Motion passed.

Zoning Administrator Report

The township continues to have problems with cemetery records being accurate. Administrator Shamblin recommends doing a manual check of boundaries and placing permanent markers for future reference. Some minor issues of blight continue but many situations have been eliminated or improved.

Open Discussion on Non-Agenda items

Question from audience member, Melodie Dobbins, about "Fracking" on DNR land. Vice Chair Smith stated he had been in communication with the DNR and they denied that any fracking was being done in Allegan County. Ms. Dobbins was concerned that access to the state forest could be made by private citizens who owned land adjacent to the state forest selling or leasing their mineral rights to gas companies who could then extend their drilling on to state owned land. She was also concerned about rumors that the DNR plans to make some parcels available for leasing of their mineral rights. Vice Chair Smith stated that he would continue to monitor the situation and stay in communication with the DNR.

Adjournment

Fred Lewis made a motion to adjourn supported by Carol Browne. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol S. Browne, Secretary