

MINUTES of February 24, 2015 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

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

Roll Call: Members present: Harry Smith, Ron Remington, Craig VanMelle, Carol Browne. Excused absent Fred Lewis. Ken Engelking, Zoning Officer was also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes: Harry Smith made a motion supported by Ron Remington to approve minutes of the January 27, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting. Motion passed.

Approval of the Agenda: Harry Smith made a motion supported by Ron Remington to approve the Agenda of the February 24, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting. Motion passed. A typographical error was noted by Secretary Browne.

Old Business:

A. Chris Fawley request for zoning variance.

Mr. Fawley stated his interest in using his residential property of 23 acres to raise produce, chickens and possibly beef cattle and goats for his family's use. He stated he was disappointed in finding out that was not allowed on residential property even though it was 23 acres. He stated he knew the property was zoned residential but didn't understand that meant it had restrictions on raising animals. He felt it should be zoned agriculture because land behind his was zoned that way.

Although he does not have cattle or goats at the present time, he would like to raise up to 4 animals at a time and possibly 3 – 4 goats. He currently has 15 laying chickens and would also like to increase that number. Mr. Fawley was questioned about the distance of non-farm homes to his property being within 250 feet. He stated his animals would be kept at the center of his property which is surrounded by trees and at least 1/8 of a mile from any other residence.

Zoning Administrator Engelking encouraged Mr. Fawley to apply for a special use permit rather than a zoning variance which if approved would allow him to use his property differently as long as he lived there but would not apply to future owners. Mr. Fawley was advised to be very explicit about how many animals he was requesting to be housed on his property and what other uses he felt would be necessary to support his animals. He must also submit a manure plan. The Commission reminded Mr. Fawley he was asking for a special use permit to raise food for his own family's use. If he had plans to commercially sell any food products (other than produce at a small stand), he needed licenses and approvals from the agriculture department, the health department and the Department of Environmental Quality.

New Business:

A. Joe and Terri Conti proposal for a Planned Unit Development along 42nd street on Lake Allegan

Mr. Conti presented drawings to the Commission to explain a revision in his original site plan concerning the placement of garages (storage areas) to a different area and to attach each one to a building site rather than have them be stand alone. This revision was in response to the Commission's concern that stand alone storage areas constituted a commercial use that is prohibited in this zone. Questions were raised concerning the drive back to the storage buildings and sufficient space to turn around as well as fire truck access to this area. Would a private road be adequate?

Further discussion centered on Mr. Conti's plans for utilities, waste management, green space (a park along the water is planned as well as bike paths), minimum square footage of homes, architectural and landscaping requirements, etc. Mr. Conti stated he did not favor restrictions on individual buyers and feared too many restrictions would hamper lot sales.

The Commission inquired why 4 lots adjacent to his development were not included in the PUD. Mr. Conti stated he hoped to build and/ or sell those more quickly to raise cash and inspire PUD sales since the PUD approval would likely take more time. Zoning Administrator Engelking pointed out that those lots once sold would only have to meet Township building requirements and would not be subject to any future PUD requirements which could lead to buildings that were less desirable.

Issues to be resolved are final placement of storage sites, size and limitations of storage buildings, placement of private roads, Consumer Energy setback requirements and lots along the water that are less than 1 acre. Mr. Conti was encouraged to work with Zoning Administrator Engelking to resolve some of these issues and to return to the Commission with a detailed narrative describing his plans for the development to accompany the site drawings.

Zoning Administrator Report:c

Mr. Engelking reported two residences that had been former "meth" sites have not been decontaminated. He is in contact with the State Police and county health department regarding clean up of these sites. He also suggested the Township might want to consider either strengthening our current dangerous building ordinance or adding a hazardous building ordinance to assist in controlling these types of harmful sites. Allegan Township has a similar ordinance that might be a useful sample for us to see. Secretary Browne will request a copy.

Mr. Engelking also reported he is following up on rental properties that are not registered with the Township.

Open Discussion of Non-Agenda Items:

Supervisor Browne asked the Commission to confirm that Schipper Eggs had been told that although their land was zoned agriculture that did not automatically classify their composting business as agricultural. The Commission confirmed his understanding. Zoning Administrator Engelking also submitted wording from the State Tax Commission's Property Classification manual that states "property that is zoned agricultural may not necessarily be classified as agricultural...the zoning does not dictate the classification."

Adjournment:

Craig vanMelle made a motion supported by Carol Browne to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Carol S Browne, Secretary