



ACME TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
ACME TOWNSHIP HALL
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690
Oct. 13, 2014 7:00 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS TRAINING: CANCELLED
CALL TO ORDER WITH PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: 7:04pm

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Rosa, Finch, White, Timmins, DeMarsh, Feringa, Wentzloff, Forgette

Members Excused: Binkley

Staff Present: N. Lennox, Zoning Administrator;

Staff Absent: J. Jocks, Township Counsel; J. Iacoangeli, Township Planner

A. LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public Comment periods are provided at the beginning and end of each meeting agenda. Members of the public may address the Board regarding any subject of community interest during these periods. Comment during other portions of the agenda may or may not be entertained at the moderator's discretion.

Jim Heffner, 4050 Bayberry Lane. Wanted to report as a person who drives by VGT project daily, they have made tremendous progress in the last week or two with straw mats and asphalt. Very pleased with what seeing after there were some issues.

Jim Goss, 4105 Bay Valley Drive. We had a significant event here in Acme few weeks ago. We had 6500 at Acme fall festival and a real mark for community.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by: Timmins Second:White
Motion carried unanimously.

C. INQUIRY AS TO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None

D. CONSENT CALENDAR: The purpose is to expedite business by grouping non-controversial items together for one Board motion without discussion. A request to remove any item for discussion later in the agenda from any member of the Board, staff or public shall be granted.

a) RECEIVE AND FILE:

1. Draft Unapproved Minutes of:

- 1. Township Board minutes 09/02/2014 and Special Board 9/18/14**
- 2. Parks & Recreation Advisory 08/28/14**
- 3. Planning, Zoning & Administrative report: 09/30/2014**

b) ACTION:

1. Draft Unapproved Minutes of:

- 1. Planning Commission minutes 09/08/14**

Motion by: Feringa **Second:** Timmins

Vote: Motion approved unanimously

E. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 1. _____ none**

F. CORRESPONDENCE: none

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

H. NEW BUSINESS: None

I. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Native Plantings-Landscape ordinance-

Nikki Lennox asked PC members to read over the information provided by John I since it just arrived. PC members reviewed the new proposed ordinance and the “Recommended Planting Guidelines for Municipalities.”

Timmins – What or how would this be enforced?

Nikki – It would fall under our normal procedures and would be a civil infraction.

Feringa – A great idea to deal with invasive species during the construction process.

Nikki- We currently do not have any ordinance, only sizes. She gets asked this a lot however.

Wentzloff - Initial thought is that it is very different than the Garfield Township ordinance because it does not have the list of invasive plants in it. This is ok because this is not a static list and suggested putting on the website.

Nikki- We can certainly put this on the website for commercial site plan development but would need to reference document and provide link to the Guideline or where they may get it.

Feringa- Suggest we make sure document references the latest printed version to remove gray area. Should we incorporate Watershed Council guide as well? Perhaps make a reference to it as well. It is like a pocket guide.

DeMarsh – Would not favor referencing both documents due to differences or if there is conflicting information. In his experience dealing with this he found it difficult to get information.

Feringa- This would be a recommendation; not a requirement.

DeMarsh- Then you get back to enforcement. Can’t assume that they match. Prefers referencing Guideline as document for reference. Agrees it is a great idea to provide this information.

Finch – Concern about some of the designations made in the Guidelines that are listed.

Jim Heffner- Most important thing is to not allow invasive species to be planted. The ordinance would apply to land use permits. Garfield did not include single family homes as part of their ordinance. Recommended that we encourage education of our community on invasive species and encourage the use of rain gardens for storm water retention on individual properties. Two ways to do this and one is the educational process. The other way is to incorporate into ordinance. Garfield included in their guide to native plants as well as the invasive species not to plant, which is probably the most important. Especially for large developments

Nikki – It is anything which involves a site plan review that would come before the planning commission where you can have control where the landscape plan is submitted.

Wentzloff- This ordinance reads Land Use Permit.

DeMarsh- Page 12 of Guideline references prohibited plants. The prohibited species are at the end of the document as opposed to up front. Thinks we need to be clear to discourage or dis-allow invasive species in our documentation and encourage but not require native species.

Wentzloff - Asked where this ordinance falls within the zoning document.

Nikki- Thinks it is currently not in the best location in the ordinance and suggested moving it to the end by the parking and landscaping sections (7.5.5 and 7.5.6) . Rain gardens are in new US 31 Business district ordinance. She will ask John the reason he placed in section 7.10 as it seems buried.

Rosa – On Class 3 plants in the Guideline, there are listings of species that seem normal for this area and questioning list as actually invasive? Do some actually spread like the Russian Olive? Are there commercial uses for some of these? He specifically referenced Horse Chestnut which a customer asked him about and they were over 100 years old. There is a need for diversity. Discussion continued about other species and agricultural use.

Wentzloff – Look at class 1 and 2 to prohibit planting.

White – Understands the question. Is told by MSU extension to plant or mix with seed and that some species are listed. So there seems that conflicts are unavoidable.

Jim Heffner – Not a retroactive ordinance; would not be ordering people to take out existing plantings.

Wentzloff- Possibly look at prohibiting invasive species in class 1 and class 2 as plant materials and recommend the native species be used as plant materials. This then has the gray area in class 3.

Timmins – Supports adopting ordinance with classifications

Feringa – only for landscaping purposes for developments; does not apply to agriculture.

Forgette – Concerned about document classifications to be used as enforcement. Ordinance should define what should be prohibited.

White- Questions on enforcement. Would enforcement officer know the difference between species. Same concerns as Trae; would like to see how it is written out. Thinks it is good thing to suggest what to plant.

Wentzloff – Not a perfect document; merely a guideline. There may be a need for agriculture exemption. Intent of ordinance is not to single out every plant.

Nikki – Thinks the township involvement would be if it became a complaint. Would only apply to site plan reviews. We can put it on the web for homeowners to review and help educate.

Wentzloff – Thinks generally that having us as a recommendation gives us some leverage when dealing with larger development site plan reviews. Thanked Jim for the impetus for this discussion. More on this to come soon.

- b. B-4 Parking** – Nikki explained reason for ordinance and how it affected a new site in the B-4 district. Safety is of concern due to the high speed of M-72 and the nature of the parcels there may warrant an exception in the ordinance. Currently, there is a mix of both side and rear parking and side and front parking. Nothing is being proposed with respect to this ordinance but just looking for discussion.

PC members discussed pros and cons of an ordinance change and reviewed current conditions in the B-4 district. Consensus is there is not a lot of open parcels in B-4 and they feel the use of the ZBA process is the correct step.

Nikki-Proposed a possible exemption option, however, counsel may not approve.

Rosa – Asked about what happens when a site or sites redevelopment occurs in the future. Could that then become a problem? Does not think applying side and rear parking may not apply in area with high speed and may be troublesome.

Forgette- Referenced that this section of ordinance in parking is where sending to the ZBA is specifically called out. The ZBA made specific reference to this when making the last decision. And safety in that area was of concern.

DeMarsh – Inclination is we are trying to define a “feeling”; would like to see it more difficult or more defined; feels our expectation was that ZBA would reject plan based on ordinance.

Rosa – Can we look at landscaping plan changes as a means to make up front parking more desirable?

Feringa- Not sure why parking in front is so engrained when having building up front saves on infrastructure costs.

DeMarsh – It is also a marketing look. Lack of vehicles up front implies the business is not doing well.

Wentzloff – Let us see what John I has to say; and review ZBA decision.

Nikki- Will type up comments and give to John I.

J. COMMENT & OTHER PC BUSINESS

- 1. Zoning Administrator update on projects:** Nikki read update from report submitted in packet.
- 2. Planning Consultant:** Not present.
- 3. PC Education etc.:** Starting next month. TC Trail meeting next month too.
- 4. Public Comment:** none

ADJOURN: Timmins motion to adjourn; Second by Finch. Motion Carried. 8:43pm