

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 19, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Chairperson Lauderdale called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Ross Township Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jim Lauderdale, Chairperson
 Robb Blain
 Russell Fry
 Greg Pierce
 Jon Scott
 Sherri Snyder

Absent: Jeff Price

Also present: Troy Feltman, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
 Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant
 Craig Rolfe – Township Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Board then proceeded with consideration of the **April 28, 2014** Planning Commission meeting minutes. Fry moved to approve the minutes as presented. Blain seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment on non-agenda items was offered.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing – Reorganized/Reformatted Zoning Ordinance

Public Hearing – Wind Energy Systems

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the Tentative Text of Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the ‘Introduction and User Guide’, ‘Wind Energy Systems’, and the ‘Reorganized/Reformatted Zoning Ordinance’ prepared for public hearing. He also referenced several emails provided by Attorney Rolfe that provide background information on the proposed tentative text and the replacement pages provided for insertion into the Zoning Ordinance related to the proposed amendments.

Attorney Rolfe noted that the existing numbering system used in the Zoning Ordinance has long been cumbersome and thanked the Board for the opportunity to propose a new Ordinance format in conjunction with other text amendments. The Board thanked Attorney Rolfe for the effort expended on the transformation and agreed that it represents a great improvement.

No public comment was offered on the matter. The public comment portion of the public hearing was then closed.

Fry moved to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments as set forth in the May 19, 2014 public hearing notice/tentative text document. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Scott questioned the appropriate timing of submitting the recommendation to the Township Board given the upcoming vacancy of the seat of Supervisor in June. Attorney Rolfe responded that the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are largely non-substantive and should be able to be considered seamlessly by the Township Board in June.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Recreation Plan

Fry stated that GLAT is scheduled to meet next week and will be meeting with key stakeholders to discuss the primary objectives of the area’s nonmotorized trail system and review preliminary trail routes. He noted that Tom Wheat, Prein & Newhof, has prepared the map work delineating the preliminary routes and adjacent property ownership.

Fry noted that GLAT is working to identify the presence of any key issues at this juncture and to include all affected/interested parties in the process. He explained that ‘key stakeholders’ currently include officials from Ross Township, Richland

Township, Prairieville Township, Village of Richland, Augusta, and affected landholders. Fry added that all input received to date has been very positive.

In response to questions, Fry stated that many of the members on the Committee have experience in this process and have been very helpful.

Scott advised that members have not yet been appointed to the newly established Ross Township Parks Committee.

2. Accessory Uses or Buildings/Structures

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced proposed text (Draft #3) provided by Harvey. Harvey provided a review of the draft provisions.

Board discussion ensued wherein it was noted that the draft text provides for the regulation of accessory buildings/structures consistent with the Board's discussion/direction in April. It was determined that the draft text is ready for submission to Attorney Rolfe for review and comment.

The Board requested that Harvey meet with Attorney Rolfe for discussion of same and finalize the draft text accordingly for Board review in June.

3. Guest Houses

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced proposed text (Draft #2) provided by Harvey. Harvey provided a review of the draft provisions.

Lengthy Board discussion ensued. The following was noted:

- omit reference to 'mobile homes and recreational vehicles' in the definition of 'guest houses' . . . this may raise questions of interpretation;
- why reference a time limit for use . . . ie. 'short duration'?
- the Ordinance does not currently address the use of 'recreational vehicles' for temporary residential purposes – will the 'guest house' provision raise this question?
- the presence of a kitchen in a recreational vehicle will prohibit its proposed use as a 'guest house';
- the Ordinance does not address the parking of 'recreational vehicles' in general; this is a separate work issue and will be added to the Work Plan;
- Board support expressed for prohibiting 'kitchen facilities' in 'guest houses' as a way of limiting use to visiting guests and maintaining a clear distinction from a dwelling.

Attorney Rolfe noted that the proposed text will essentially allow occupancy of a 'guest house' by anyone in that enforcement of the occupancy limitation will be difficult. He noted that transient residency situations have been a concern to the Township in the past.

Scott stated that 'guest houses' currently exist in the Township. He noted that the proposed approach will allow limited use of accessory buildings for residential purposes and address the situation from this point forward. He added that he is comfortable with the limitations that will exist through the building size and kitchen standards.

The Board agreed that the proposed 'guest house' provision represents only a shift in policy and addresses an existing and realistic pattern of use in the Township.

Harvey was directed to revise the draft text pursuant to Board discussion and submit same to Attorney Rolfe for review and comment. The Board requested that Harvey meet with Attorney Rolfe to finalize the draft text accordingly for Board review in June.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Scott referenced the April 22, 2014 Township Board minutes noting the items of discussion.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on May 7, 2014 and considered requests for variance approval from the front and side setback requirements applicable to the expansion of a nonconforming building on a nonconforming lot. He advised that variance approval was granted from the 50 ft waterfront setback for the addition of a second-story addition over an existing porch. The requests for variance approval from the 5 ft side setback requirement applicable to two (2) proposed building additions were denied.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the correspondence received from Attorney Rolfe dated May 8, 2014 regarding the implications of the new Right to Farm Act GAMPS. He requested that Board members be prepared to discuss same at the June meeting.

In response to a question by Pierce, Feltman updated the Board on the status of the building/landscaping/zoning issues on property located on Idlewild.

Scott stated that he would like to see the Township begin to use social media avenues as a way to more effectively disseminate information. It was agreed that it would be particularly effective in engaging youth.

Fry inquired as to how the new C-1 Bay District standards might apply to the efforts of Gull Lake Storage as they move forward in rebuilding from recent storm damage. Feltman advised that the matter is currently under consideration.

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that a notice had been received from Bedford Township regarding a proposed update of the Township Zoning Ordinance.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
Township Planning Consultant