

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
October 24, 2016**

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, Chairman  
Russell Fry  
Jeff Price  
Victor Ezbenko  
Sherri Snyder

Absent: Greg Pierce  
Jon Scott

Also present: Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission then proceeded with consideration of the **September 26, 2016** Planning Commission meeting minutes. Fry moved to approve the minutes as presented. Price seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment on non-agenda items was offered.

NEW BUSINESS

No New Business items were on the agenda or presented.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Article 20, Item 13.B.2. (*Horse Boarding or Riding Stable access to roads*).

Harvey provided, as requested at the September 26, 2016 meeting, standards regarding access to roads for horse boarding facilities/riding stables established in adjacent/area communities for Planning Commission consideration.

Planning Commission members reviewed and discussed extensively the information provided by Harvey ("Text Amendment: Article 20, Item 13--Horse Boarding or Riding Stable, October 24, 2016"):

- "the use shall have frontage on an existing or officially proposed road having a primary or greater classification or a township designated primary road"
- primary road is not defined in the Ross Township Ordinance
- the frontage standard applies to 24 of 46 special land uses listed in Article 20, including "horse boarding or riding stables"
- Article 20, Item 13.B.2 requires that "buildings and parking areas shall be provided with access from a County road or State trunk line for horse boarding or riding stables"
- a similar use has been established for other special land uses ("earth removal, gravel processing, mineral extraction, and quarrying")
- provisions from Barry County and the Townships of Comstock, Cooper, Oshtemo, Prairieville, Richland and Yankee Springs

Additionally, members discovered that Article 20, Item 2, "The use shall have frontage on a state trunkline", is not referenced in any of the 46 "Standards Required of Special Land Uses".

Planning Commission member decision, based on the information presented above, is for members to review each of the 46 "Standards Required of Special Land Uses" regarding road access and be prepared to discuss and, hopefully, reach consensus on this issue at the November 28, 2016 regularly scheduled meeting.

2. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Article 22, Section 22.4 C. (*Repair, Maintenance and Restoration of Nonconforming Use or Building/Structure*)

The topic regards the existing requirement that reconstruction of a nonconforming use or building/structure damaged due to 'fire, flood, wind or other calamity' be started within six months and completed within one year. The issue is whether or not the timelines are too restrictive given the delays that are frequently experienced in the processing of insurance claims.

At the September 26, 2016 meeting, Harvey was directed to research/review standards established for the repair/reconstruction of nonconformities in adjacent/area communities for Planning Commission consideration in October.

Planning Commission members reviewed and discussed extensively the information provided by Harvey ("Text Amendment: Section 22.4-- Repair, Maintenance and Restoration of Nonconforming Use or Building/Structure, October 24, 2016").

Chairman Lauderdale was directed to provide, in the meeting minutes, language derived from the discussions for Planning Commission consideration at the November 28, 2016 meeting. The proposed language is:

"A building permit must be granted within twelve (12) months after the building/structure damage or destruction and construction must be completed within eighteen (18) months after the building/structure damage or destruction. Request will be considered by and can be granted by the Zoning Administrator for a one-time six (6) month extension based on the circumstances in the request."

### 3. Watershed Protection Strategies

Planning Commission members agreed in August to conduct a review of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance to '*identify what aspects of water (lakes and streams) protection exist*' as the first step toward addressing Watershed Protection Strategies. Planning members were assigned, in September, the following review assignments with a request to discuss their reviews at the October 24, 2016 meeting.

Victor Ezbenko	Sections 2.2, 16.6 and 17, ZO
Gregg Pierce	Section 20, ZO
Sherri Snyder	Section 21, ZO
Jon Scott	Section 22, ZO
Jim Lauderdale	Chapter VI, MP
Rusty Fry	Chapter VII, MP
Jeff Price	Chapter VIII, MP

Reviews of their respective assignments were presented by Pierce, Snyder, Fry, Price and Lauderdale. Agreement is consistent between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance relative to the importance of Watershed protection. Specific process for Watershed protection appear to be absent on how "best" to achieve Watershed protection. Agreement was reached for each person to send their reviews to Lauderdale in WORD for consolidation for Planning Commission members.

General discussion ensued regarding the 'next steps' in the consideration of 'watershed protection strategies' with emphasis on communication with and input from the Township Board and completion of reports from all Commission members for discussion at the November 28, 2016 meeting. Proposed is to discuss

with the Township Board in January 2017 progress of the Planning Commission and proposed next steps for Township Board input.

Bruce Snyder, certified for shoreline conservation, Pat Crowley, Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner, and MSU extension personnel were identified as resource persons as the Planning Commission continues to address Watershed protection strategies.

#### REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

No report from the Township Board.

#### REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Lauderdale reported the ZBA: 1) rejected, based on findings of Section 23.8. 2, a request to form a non-conforming non-buildable lot by moving a lot line, and, 2) accepted, based on findings of Section 23.8. 2, a request for a set-back request for a sign placement.

#### MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Fry reported that an engineer has been selected by the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVT) organization for the trail between Galesburg and Gull Lake, with immediate implementation of design and planning. Master Plan Engineering Design and Planning for Phase I, 35th Street to Galesburg-Augusta High School (GAHS), is scheduled to be completed Q2 2017, and, for Phase II, GAHS to Augusta/Gull Lake, is scheduled to be completed Q3 2017. Jon Scott volunteered to KRVT land associated with his golf courses for a staging area. Discussions are underway for potential for the trail to be in a land conversancy along the Kalamazoo river. Stakeholder and public input will be sought through discussions regarding construction, including initiating construction from Gull Lake to GAHS or GAHS to Gull Lake. Currently, \$350,000 has been acquired for this project with some significant contributors (\$100,000 from Embridge, \$40,000 from Battle Creek Community Foundation, \$30,000 from Harold Upjohn).

Ross Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan completion has been funded at \$10,000 by the Township Board to develop a plan for amenities, playground, fences, road-parking, etc for the Ross Township Park..

#### ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Lauderdale , Chair, Ross Township Planning Commission