

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
July 28, 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
 Jeff Price
 Jon Scott
 Sherri Snyder

Absent: None

Also present: Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
 Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Board then proceeded with consideration of the **June 23, 2014** Planning Commission meeting minutes. Price 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

1. Open Space Development

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the request made by Gull Lake View Golf Club in June to amend the Zoning Ordinance so as to allow for an open space development with a golf course component. He noted that the Board had agreed to proceed with a review of the existing open space development provision to consider allowing a use such as a golf course to qualify as 'designated open space' within such a development.

Harvey provided the Board with an overview of sample open space development approaches . . . and outlined ideas for using the open space preservation development and planned unit development provisions to allow for residential/golf course development.

Scott opined that in his consideration of this amendment he is asking the questions 'what would this change mean to the Township?' and 'what is good for the Township?' He referenced the economic impacts, infrastructure impacts, environmental impacts and the ability to maintain the rural character of the Township as important considerations.

Fry noted that how the open space provision is structured and applied is a crucial element. Specifically, a key objective would be 'more open space . . . less development'. Lengthy Board discussion ensued wherein the following was noted:

- Could structure approach to allow a 'recreational' use of the open space;
- Could modify percentages (of open space and residential uses) so as to require more open space (than the existing 50%) if 'recreational' use of the open space is proposed . . . ie, 90% open space/10% residential;
- The permitted percentages would dictate what the 'recreational' component would be ;
- The 'recreational' component would have to drive the economics of the project or a loss of the 50% residential could not be supported

Scott stated that the open space development provision should be structured so as to both ensure the preservation of sensitive/important natural areas and provide for more intensive use of open space, such as agriculture, playing fields, or varied passive recreational uses. He supported consideration of a sliding scale approach that related the required percentage of open space to the proposed use of the open space.

Scott reiterated the importance of being objective and considering how such a change could be applied elsewhere in the Township. He noted that some use of

'common open space' can be good for the community as a whole. He added that open space can easily be returned to its natural state as use proposals change.

In Board consideration of the sliding scale approach to allowing use of the 'designated open space', it was recognized that it would be difficult to sustain a 90% open space ratio (for example) without a continuation of the approved use of the open space (such as a 'golf course'). To that end, the open space development provision should be structured to allow for a future reduction of the open space to 50% in support of maintaining a sustainable development.

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced Section VII-1 of the Ross Township Master Plan in support of the proposed concept under discussion. It was further noted that the board philosophically accepts the concept and desires to move forward in modifying the open space development provision accordingly.

Harvey was directed to draft modifications to the Open Space Preservation Development provision (Article 20, Item 28) pursuant to Board discussion for review in August.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Recreation Plan

Scott stated that there has been no movement on the Parks Committee due to recent Board work on the appointment of the Supervisor. He noted that the Committee structure and personnel are in place and will likely be formalized in August.

Fry indicated that the GLAT Committee continues to work on connecting the region's trail systems. He referenced recent movement from MSU regarding the future of Brook's Lodge.

2. Accessory Uses ~~or~~ **and** Buildings/Structures

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the Tentative Text of Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Pertaining to Guest Houses and Accessory Uses/Buildings/Structures prepared by Attorney Rolfe for Board review. He noted that the tentative text had been revised pursuant to the Board's review comments provided at the June 23, 2014 meeting.

Following general discussion of Section 18.4 (A.4., B.1., and D.1) and the proposed definition of 'private road', there was Board consensus to proceed with the preparation of the public hearing draft for Board review in August.

3. GAAMPS

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the memorandum received from Attorney Rolfe dated May 8, 2014 regarding (1) Addressing implications of April 2014 Right to Farm Act ‘GAAMPS for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities’; and (2) Addressing implications of March 2014 Right to Farm Act ‘GAAMPS for Farm Markets’.

He noted that the Board had concluded on the Decision Points related to Recommendation No. 1 set forth on page 6 of the Memorandum at the June meeting. He added that there had also been Board consensus at that time in support of defining the term ‘roadside stand’ in the Zoning Ordinance. (Recommendation No. 1 – page 9)

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that consideration of the remaining ‘recommendations’ and ‘decision points’ set forth in the Memorandum was required.

Board discussion ensued wherein it was determined that ‘roadside stands’ and ‘farmers markets’ should be defined and allowed in the Zoning Ordinance. Snyder agreed to provide Richland’s ‘farmers market guidelines’ to the Board for reference in their consideration of the related ‘decision points’. She also suggested looking at Old Mission Peninsula for guidance and agreed to research same. Continued discussion of the matter was postponed to the August meeting.

4. Recreational Vehicles

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that discussion of the current regulation of recreational vehicles and the application of the proposed ‘guest house’ provision to recreational vehicles was in order. The Board determined to postpone discussion of the matter to the August meeting.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Scott advised that the Township Board recently appointed Paul Dykstra to fill the vacated position of Township Supervisor.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals did not meet in July.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Chairperson Lauderdale advised that Pat Crowley, Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner has been scheduled to address the Board at the August meeting regarding the Site Development Rules (created by the Drain Office).

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
Township Planning Consultant