

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
April 27, 2015**

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  
                  Russell Fry  
                  Greg Pierce  
                  Jeff Price  
                  Sherri Snyder

Absent:         Jon Scott  
                  Victor Ezbenko

Also present:        Kelly Largent, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator  
                          Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant  
                          Rob Thall, 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 **March 23, 2015** Planning Commission meeting minutes. Price moved to approve the minutes as presented. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment on non-agenda items was offered.

## NEW BUSINESS

1. 2014 Planning Commission Annual Report  
2015 Planning Commission Work Plan

The Board accepted the 2014 Annual Report and 2015 Work Plan (as revised per the March 23, 2015 Board discussion) and approved the submission of same to the Township Board.

2. Public Hearing – The Bungalows at Gull Lake View Golf Club

The next matter to come before the Board was consideration of the request by Jon Scott of Gull Lake View Golf Club for Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Review for the proposed construction of duplex lodging to house guests of Gull Lake View Golf Club (The Bungalows). The subject 2.5 acre parcel is located at 7223 North 38<sup>th</sup> Street and is within the R-3 High Density Residential District.

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that Planning Commission member Jon Scott is representing the application and will not be serving as a member of the Planning Commission for the entirety of the meeting.

He noted that the subject property was recently rezoned to the R-3 District. The proposed duplex lodging is being considered pursuant to Section 8.3 C. – *Golf course, including pro shop, cocktail lounge, dining room, and/or overnight lodging in proximity and incidental thereto*. He further referenced Article 20, Item 16 for standards specific to a ‘golf course’.

Largent (AGS) referenced the application material and summary provided on the request. She noted that the applicant has requested several site plan content waivers pursuant to Section 21.4 T.

Jon Scott was present representing the application. He explained that lodging for customers is currently provided on the site of the golf course. He indicated that having on-site lodging broadens the scope for bringing in customers and serves as a good tax base for the Township.

Scott stated that the proposal involves four identical 2-unit buildings for a total of eight units. He confirmed that he does not intend to sell the units . . . rather they will be rented out as part of a golf package, similar to the current practice.

Scott noted that he is requesting special land use permit and site plan approval for all four buildings . . . but advised that only one building is proposed to be built at this time. He noted that completion of the project is estimated to occur in two or three years.

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

In consideration of the Special Land Use Criteria set forth in Section 19.3, the Board concluded the following: the proposed duplex lodging will be compatible with other uses/buildings allowed within the District; the proposed duplex lodging represents infill development within the existing golf course and is not near a water body; the proposed density is consistent with the existing residential land use in the area and will be served by the existing access drive and utilities; adequate parking will be provided on the site; and, the proposed duplex lodging will not be detrimental to adjacent properties, the public health, safety and general welfare of the community, or the character of the site given its proposed density/location within the existing golf course development.

The Board proceeded with a review of the application pursuant to Article 20, Item 16 - Golf Courses, Parks and Playgrounds. It was confirmed that the proposed duplex lodging is located within a 'regulation golf course' and will not exceed the maximum 8 units/acre density standard (total 72 residential units on approximately 200 acres). It was further noted that adequate rubbish disposal will be provided; adequate parking is proposed; proposed lighting will comply with Section 18.3; and, the building design is similar to existing development within the golf course.

Section 21.4 T. was referenced in considering the requested waivers from the site plan content requirements set forth in Section 21.4. The Board agreed to grant the requested waivers based upon the following findings:

- I. Size and location of utilities: the Layout Diagram reflecting utility location was accepted; the Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority letter of approval and utility designs developed by Prein & Newhof referenced by Scott were accepted and required to be submitted.
- M. Property survey: a survey in progress was submitted by Scott; the partial survey was accepted and the complete survey required to be submitted.
- R. Employee numbers: the Board accepted Scott's statement that there will be no changes in staff employment or shifts due to the project.

In consideration of the Site Plan Review Criteria set forth in Section 21.6, the Board concluded the following: the proposed project is compatible with the surrounding golf course development; existing land cover provides an adequate buffer to adjacent properties; the existing access drives and proposed parking areas are adequate; the proposed project represents infill development within the existing golf course; proposed connections to existing roads and utilities are adequate; and, minimal impact on existing natural features and the landscape is proposed.

It was reiterated that the above findings were based on the application documents presented and the representations made by the applicant at the meeting.

Lauderdale then moved to grant Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval for the proposed duplex lodging on the subject site based upon the review findings of Article 20, Item 16. – Golf Courses, Parks and Playgrounds; Section 19.3 – Special Land Use Criteria, and Section 21.6 – Site Plan Review Criteria and conditioned upon the following:

- 1) Approval of the requested site plan content waivers pursuant to Section 21.4T.
- 2) Submission of the information required in support of the requested site plan content waivers;
- 3) The six month special land use permit initiation period set forth in Section 19.5 will be considered met with the issuance of the building permit and the commencement of on-site development for the first proposed building.
- 4) The one year site plan approval validation period and 6-month extension option set forth in Section 21.10 will apply to the build out proposal.

Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### 3. Public Hearing – Gull Lake View Golf Club

The next matter to come before the Board was consideration of the request by Jon Scott of Gull Lake View Golf Club for Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Review for the proposed construction of a golf course. The subject 212 acre parcel is located at 15579 Augusta Drive and is within the R-R Rural Residential District.

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced Article 20, Item 16 for standards specific to a ‘golf course’.

Largent (AGS) referenced the application material and summary provided on the request. She noted that the applicant has requested several site plan content waivers pursuant to Section 21.4 T.

Jon Scott was present representing the application. He explained that the subject site represents approximately 200 acres of the 780 acre parcel that was previously approved for the Hillcrest Orchards project. Scott stated that most of the trees on the property were removed in preparation for the residential project. He further noted that the top soil had been removed in many areas due to arsenic contamination and replaced with native grasses. Scott stated that the golf course has been designed to retain much of these grass areas to take advantage of the

environmental benefits they provide, their aesthetic qualities, and to protect the grassland habitat that has been established on the site.

Scott explained that he has retained Renaissance Golf Design, a renowned golf course design firm, to assist in the design of the proposed golf course. He explained that a 'minimalist' design has been applied to the site that will require less disturbance than a typical golf course design.

Scott introduced Ron Ryan, a friend (and an attorney with a background in municipal law) attending to assist in the presentation of the proposal. Ryan referenced the survey and site plan submitted and provided an overview of the project noting compliance with applicable dimensional and street/drive layout requirements.

Fry questioned the future of the Hillcrest Orchards project on the remaining 500 acres. Scott responded that the availability of necessary utilities and the residential market remain hurdles to the project moving forward.

In response to Board questions, Scott explained that the majority of the proposed golf course is situated on the higher portions of the property. He detailed storm water runoff design for the site . . . noting that the lowlands will receive the runoff and that less than 10% of the site is proposed to be graded. It was stressed that the golf course design is focused on a return of the site to its natural state with minimal grade changes and the use of grasslands to manage storm water runoff.

Scott further noted that a portion of the northwest corner of the subject property is adjacent to property currently owned by the applicant (~~StoneHenge~~ **Stonehedge**) and that irrigation will be provided through an extension from that development.

General discussion ensued wherein the following was confirmed: frontage and access to the site is provided on Augusta Drive; the site does not front on 44<sup>th</sup> or 46<sup>th</sup> Streets; the required land division on the site has already been reviewed and approved by the Township; and, arsenic no longer exists on the site in any significant levels/quantities.

Nick ~~Hershall~~ **Hirzel** questioned if any residential element is planned for this golf course. Scott indicated that no such plans exist at this time. ~~Hershall~~ **Hirzel** added that storm water currently flows south off the property. He expressed concern with future runoff from added irrigation and fertilizer application. Scott provided a detailed overview of the proposed grounds management approach. He explained that fertilizer is applied in smaller quantities to cure . . . not to prevent. He added that studies have shown that turf fertilizer largely stays in the turf layers. The role of the grasslands was also highlighted.

No further public comment was offered on the matter and the public comment portion of the public hearing was closed.

In consideration of the Special Land Use Criteria set forth in Section 19.3, the Board concluded the following: the proposed golf course is compatible with other uses/buildings allowed within the District; the subject site is contiguous to an existing golf course rendering the proposed golf course compatible with the surrounding area; the proposed use is compatible with the natural environment . . . noting the 'minimalist' design approach used and the use of the grasslands in the storm water management approach; the property is provided frontage and access on Augusta Drive (a major road); traffic generated by the proposed golf course (and any related impacts) will be seasonal; adequate parking will be provided on the site; and, the proposed golf course will not be detrimental to adjacent properties, the public health, safety and general welfare of the community, or the character of the site given its proximity to an existing golf course development, the proposed design approach, existing land cover, and the topography of the property.

The Board proceeded with a review of the application pursuant to Article 20, Item 16 - Golf Courses, Parks and Playgrounds. It was confirmed that the proposed golf course is of adequate size; all proposed buildings meet setback requirements; no overnight lodging is proposed; adequate public restrooms and rubbish disposal will be provided; proposed parking complies with Ordinance standards; and, proposed lighting will comply with Section 18.3. It was suggested that additional lighting should be considered for the employee parking area. In consideration of fencing requirements, it was noted that the project site abuts residential zoning in several locations but the topography/slope and land cover on the property provide an adequate natural buffer.

Section 21.4 T. was referenced in considering the requested waivers from the site plan content requirements set forth in Section 21.4. The Board agreed to grant the requested waivers based upon the following findings:

- F. Sealed drawings: the letter provided by Renaissance Golf Designs, Inc. and the design memo provided by Prein & Newhof were accepted.
- I. Size and location of utilities: the Site Plan reflecting utility locations was accepted; utility sizing is proposed to be completed by the utility; specifications will be provided to the Township.
- L. Surface drainage facilities: the lack of proposed drainage facilities was accepted given the proposed minimal on-site grading and retention of existing grassland areas.
- O. Building floor plans: the Site Plan reflecting building locations was accepted; building plans shall comply with all applicable codes and be submitted to the Township prior to the issuance of a building permit.

In consideration of the Site Plan Review Criteria set forth in Section 21.6, the Board concluded the following: the proposed project is compatible with the surrounding area and adjacent golf course development; existing topography and land cover provide an adequate buffer to adjacent properties; the proposed access drives and parking areas are adequate; proposed connections to existing roads and utilities are adequate; retention of existing grasslands provides a natural barrier to adjoining lands and aids in storm water management; and, minimal impact on existing natural features and the landscape is proposed.

It was reiterated that the above findings were based on the application documents presented and the representations made by the applicant at the meeting.

Fry then moved to grant Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval for the proposed golf course on the subject site based upon the review findings of Article 20, Item 16. – Golf Courses, Parks and Playgrounds; Section 19.3 – Special Land Use Criteria, and Section 21.6 – Site Plan Review Criteria and conditioned upon the following:

1. Approval of the requested site plan content waivers pursuant to Section 21.4T.
2. Submission of the information required in support of the requested site plan content waivers;
3. Submission of required building plans within three months of the date of receipt of Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval.
4. On-site retention of storm water runoff.

Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. Joint Township Board/Planning Commission Meeting

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that a date for the Joint Township Board/Planning Commission meeting has not yet been determined.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Board agreed to postpone discussion of the meeting date to the May meeting.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### 1. Screening Standards

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the Board had previously discussed revising the screening standards in the Ordinance to address the use of “berms” (*Section*

18.6 A.) As requested, Harvey had provided the Board with examples of good screening standards that would give both direction and flexibility in establishing effective screens.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Board agreed to postpone discussion of the sample text to the May meeting.

## 2. Recreation Plan

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the Board had been asked to review and prioritize the 'Action Items' set forth in the Recreation Plan so that they may qualify for DNR grants.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Board agreed to postpone discussion of the matter to the May meeting.

## REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

No report was offered.

## REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on April 1, 2015 and considered a request for variance approval to adjust an existing lot line between two adjacent nonconforming lots that would reduce nonconforming lot area and lot frontage. He noted that a second lot line adjustment was also proposed that would continue nonconforming side yard and front yard setbacks. He advised that action on the requests was postponed to May.

## MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

No comments were offered.

## ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP  
Township Planning Consultant