

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 18, 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
 Victor Ezbenko
 Russell Fry
 Greg Pierce
 Sherri Snyder

Absent: Jeff Price
 Jon Scott

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 **April 27, 2015** Planning Commission meeting minutes. The following corrections were noted: Page 5, 5th full paragraph – ‘Stonehenge’ should read ‘Stonehedge’; Page 5, 7th full paragraph – ‘Nick Hershall’ should read ‘Nic Hirzel’. Fry then moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Snyder 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. Joint Township Board/Planning Commission Meeting

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that a date for the annual Joint Township Board/Planning Commission meeting has not yet been determined. It was suggested that the meeting be considered for either October or November, 2015 and to continue to be held as part of the regularly scheduled Township Board meeting.

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that he would contact Supervisor Dykstra to schedule the meeting as discussed.

2. Prioritize 2015 Work Plan – Zoning Ordinance Text Changes

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the Planning Commission Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 approved by the Board on April 27, 2015. He noted that the suggested ‘Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments’ had not been prioritized.

Board discussion ensued wherein the following prioritization was proposed:

1. *Conditional Rezoning*
2. *Review Sections 21.4 and 18.4D.4.*
3. Begin as a single review effort:
 - *Wetlands Ordinance*
 - *Natural Resource Ordinance*
 - *Storm Water Management Standards*
 - *Wellhead Protection Overlay District*
 - *Surface Waters Protection Overlay District*

It was noted that the text changes set forth in Priority 3. were all referenced as ‘watershed protection strategies’ in the Gull Lake Watershed Resource Protection Guidebook developed for Barry Township, Prairieville Township, Richland Township and Ross Township in 2011. The Board agreed that the beginning stages of a review effort could include all five strategies.

The Board then determined that Priority Items 1. – 3. be placed on the June meeting agenda for preliminary discussion. In preparation for that discussion, Harvey was asked to provide the Board with copies of the ‘conditional rezoning’ text adopted by Prairieville Township and the Gull Lake Watershed Resource Protection Guidebook (if needed).

It was then noted that the suggested text changes ‘*Reduce Lot Coverage – Permeable Surfaces*’ and ‘*Reduce Commercial Impermeable Parking*’

Requirements' could also be studied together and would be an appropriate Priority 4. Item. Harvey referenced existing text used by Yankee Springs Township that may be of interest to the Board at such time as the matter is considered.

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.

Harvey provided a review of existing provisions, noting that the Zoning Ordinance does not generally set forth any screening standards. She explained the difference between screening and landscaping ordinances and reviewed how such requirements are applied to development proposals. Harvey then gave an overview of the sample ordinances provided for Board review.

General Board discussion ensued wherein the following was noted:

- the Township has limited commercial development;
- screening standards should be flexible given the varying sizes of commercial parcels in the Township;
- any approach to requiring screening and/or landscaping should be simple;
- screening standards are appropriate for the few nonresidential areas of the Township;

It was agreed that the general approach used in Table A. of the Genoa Township Zoning Ordinance was of interest, noting that it provided both landscaping and screening standards in an appropriate level of detail.

Harvey was then directed to draft text using Table A. of the Genoa Township Zoning Ordinance as a reference for Board consideration in June.

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.

Fry stated that the Parks Commission has been meeting monthly and is currently focused on the Township Park. He noted that 20 years have passed since the Township last received grant money and that there is currently DNR support for a new grant for the park.

He noted that the Parks Commission is also focused on the regional nonmotorized trail plan, noting that they have been meeting with the Kalamazoo County Parks Authority and area foundations regarding same . . . and will next be meeting with the local road agencies to coordinate land acquisition efforts. Fry then provided an overview of the funding options available and the routes currently under consideration, including trail spurs in the Gull Lake area.

Regarding a prioritization of the Recreation Plan 'Action Items', it was agreed that Fry would prepare a preliminary prioritization list for Board consideration in June.

Fry also requested Board input regarding a revision to the current mission statement in the Recreation Plan. The Board noted their support for the Parks Commission to proceed with revising the mission statement for consideration when the Plan is amended to prioritize the 'Action Items'.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

No report was provided.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on May 6, 2015 and considered a request for variance approval to allow the construction of a new residence within the 50 ft waterway setback. He advised that the request was granted.

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the Board is scheduled to meet on June 3, 2015 to continue consideration of several variance requests related to proposed boundary line adjustments initially considered by the Board in April.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

No comments were offered.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
Township Planning Consultant