

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

Absent: Victor Ezbenko  
Greg Pierce

Also present: Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator  
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 Commission then proceeded with consideration of the **August 24, 2015** Planning Commission meeting minutes. The following corrections were noted: Page 2, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph and Page 3, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph – ‘Terpenting’ should read ‘Terpening’. 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. Public Hearing – Foundations Recovery Network (FRN)

The next matter to come before the Commission was consideration of the request by Foundations Recovery Network (FRN) for Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Review for a regional therapeutic retreat center. The subject property is located 10499 North 48<sup>th</sup> Street and is within the R-R District.

Chairperson Lauderdale advised that he would be abstaining from Commission consideration of the request in that he owns property within 300 feet of the subject site. *He relocated to the general seating area.*

Acting Chairperson Price opened the public hearing.

Gale referenced the application material and summary review (dated September 15, 2015) provided on the request. He stated that the special land use standards for the proposed use set forth in Article 20, Items 22 and 24 have been met, noting that a sign proposal did not accompany the site plan. Referencing Section 21.4 – Site Plan Content, Gale provided an overview of the site plan informational items pending a waiver by the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 21.4 T.

Richard Rogers, Chief Operating Officer – FRN, Krista Gilbert, Site Manager, and Terry Schley of Schley Architects were present on behalf of the application. Schley noted that, pursuant to the Commission’s discussion in June, the project has been developed consistent with the design standards applicable to a Retreat and Educational Center (Article 20, Item 24).

Rogers provided operational information on the proposed therapeutic retreat center and explained that proposed site improvements will include construction of a new 2-story fitness center and offices; construction of a new covered walkway; minor renovations to existing sleeping buildings and welcome center, and minor site improvements (sidewalks, utility improvements, landscaping). The golf course will be allowed to revert back to a natural state.

Referencing the Planning/Zoning Analysis prepared by Harvey, Schley stated that the Special Land Use Criteria set forth in Section 19.3 have been met, noting the following: the proposed use is generally less intensive than the previously approved Yarrow Golf and Conference Center; the developed elements of the site will remain largely unaltered; and, the proposed improvements comply with applicable Ordinance requirements.

In response to the site plan review comments provided by AGS, Schley commented that much of the information noted as ‘missing’ can be found in the application narrative or on Drawing Sheet CO.1 submitted in response to staff review.

Jim Stafford, an adjacent neighbor, expressed support for the proposed use but noted concern with any related impact on the adjoining lake. Specific concerns included the use of boats with engines on the lake; storm water runoff into the lake; and, the capacity of the existing septic systems.

Kay Stafford noted additional concern with a proposal that would include the removal of any more trees on the property.

Rogers stated that the use of motor boats on the lake is not proposed and that no buildings are proposed to be constructed across the road in close proximity to the lake that would impact storm water runoff. He further noted that consideration will be given to replanting trees in diminished areas on the site.

Schley noted that the existing septic systems have been inspected and were found to meet all applicable standards.

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

In response to Commission questions, Schley explained that the proposed new building will connect the ‘lodging’ buildings and serve as a hub for the center. He added that the remaining improvements will be largely interior renovations to existing buildings and work related to the addition of fire suppression in the buildings.

Fry questioned the proposal for the disposal of bio-waste from the site. Gilbert responded that all medical waste will be hauled away by a private contractor and disposed of off-site pursuant to State regulations. Fry also inquired as to the future use of the existing pathways previously used by golf carts to cross ‘B’ Avenue. Rodgers stated that the existing pathways are proposed to remain and will likely get occasional use by pedestrians from the retreat center.

In consideration of the site plan content, the following was noted: the subject property represents an existing development site; the site plan content requirements have been largely met through the site plan (including Drawing Sheet CO.1) and the application narrative; and, the site plan is found to be adequate per Ordinance requirements. Scott then moved to accept the proposed site plan, noting a waiver of the information required by Section 21.4 L. and N. Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Commission then proceeded with a review of the application pursuant to Article 20, Item 24 – Retreat and Educational Center. It was concluded that the proposal meets all applicable design standards, noting that any future sign proposal will be subject to compliance with Ordinance requirements.

In consideration of the Special Land Use Criteria set forth in Section 19.3, the following was noted:

- the proposed retreat center will be compatible with 'permitted uses' within the R-R District;
- the site consists of 303 acres and represents an existing development site with few proposed modifications;
- the golf course is proposed to revert back to a natural state, increasing the undeveloped portion of the site;
- the proposed retreat center is generally a less intense use than the previous Golf and Conference Center;
- the proposed site plan has been developed in compliance with all applicable standards;
- the developed portion of the 303 acre site is largely toward the interior of the property and is provided adequate buffers; and,
- the proposed use will not adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare of the community, or the character of the site.

The following conclusions were noted in review of the site plan pursuant to Section 21.6 B.:

1. - the proposed development will occupy less than 1% of a 303 acre site;
  - the bulk of the site improvements are located on the interior of the property and are not visible from the abutting roadways or surrounding properties;
  - existing site improvements near the roadways are not proposed to be altered and are provided effective vegetative screens;
2. - the public road network serving the site is adequate for the proposed use;
  - no changes to the existing driveway arrangement or parking areas are proposed;
  - parking is proposed to be provided in compliance with all applicable requirements (quantity, dimensions, circulation, location, surface);
  - access and on-site circulation should be subject to Fire Department review/approval;
3. - most existing buildings exceed applicable setback requirements;
  - existing/proposed outdoor lighting complies with Ordinance standards;
  - existing land cover on the site provides healthy protection to the surrounding area and is not proposed to be altered;
4. - utilities are proposed to be upgraded to provide required service and fire protection;
  - all utilities should be subject to health department review/approval;
5. - the land cover and natural features on the site are proposed to remain

- unaltered;
  - the existing golf course will be allowed to return to its natural state, adding to the percentage of the property that will remain undeveloped;
  - on-site landscaping will be replaced/expanded in proposed construction areas;
6. - the existing method of storm water disposal is proposed to remain unchanged;

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

Acting Chairperson Price then moved to grant Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval for the proposed therapeutic retreat center on the subject site based upon the review findings of Article 20, Item 24 – Retreat and Educational Center, Section 19.3 – Special Land Use Criteria, and Section 21.6 B. – Site Plan Review Criteria, and conditioned upon the review/approval by the Kalamazoo County Health Department and Township Fire Department. Scott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

*Chairperson Lauderdale returned to the Planning Commission table.*

2. Public Hearings -        Sections 8.2 C. and 8.5 A. – R-3 District  
    Article 15 – Maximum Building Length  
    Section 21.4 T. and 18.4. D.4. – Site Plans  
    Section 13.5 A. – Parking District  
    Section 18.4. C. and Article 15 – Accessory Buildings

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the Tentative Text of Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and reviewed the draft text. He stated that the proposed text amendments were considered as a result of questions presented to the Commission by the Zoning Administrator. It was noted that the changes had received lengthy consideration at meetings of the Planning Commission in June and July, 2015 and finalized for public hearing in August, 2015.

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

Chairperson Lauderdale moved to recommend approval to the Township Board of the proposed amendments as set forth in the September 28, 2015 public hearing notice/tentative text document. Fry seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### 3. Horse Boarding Facility

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the Commission had agreed to place consideration of an amendment to the 'horse boarding facility' provision currently in the Ordinance on the agenda in response to a request made by the Terpenings at the August meeting.

He advised that since the August meeting, the Terpenings have opted to pursue approval of their proposed facility under the Right to Farm Act GAAMPS instead of obtaining local zoning approval. Gale stated that the Terpenings are currently operating a commercial horse boarding facility on the site and that AGS is in contact with the Department of Agriculture to confirm the status of the application for GAAMPS approval.

The Commission acknowledged the update on the Terpening matter and noted that they are no longer requesting consideration of the text amendment. The Commission determined to continue consideration of the matter outside of an application and directed Harvey to continue to research/compile sample ordinances for consideration in October.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 1. Stoatin Brae Golf Course (15579 Augusta Drive)

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that Planning Commission member Jon Scott is representing the project and will not be serving as a member of the Planning Commission during its consideration of the matter.

Gale stated that the Planning Commission had granted Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval for the subject golf course on April 27, 2015 and that a condition of approval required 'submission of required building plans within three months of the date of receipt of Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval.' He advised that the construction documents were not submitted in compliance with the established deadline and that an extension of the deadline is required.

Jon Scott was present on behalf of the project. He noted that the construction documents have recently been submitted to AGS and that a 120-day extension to the 3-month requirement would be satisfactory to complete the process.

Scott then referenced a memo provided to AGS dated September 25, 2015 wherein several proposed minor site plan clarifications are detailed. He reviewed the noted clarifications for Commission consideration. The Commission noted that the clarifications do not represent modifications to the approved plan and do not require Commission action.

Chairperson Lauderdale then moved to grant a 120-day extension to the 3-month deadline of July 27, 2015 for the submission of all building plans for the project. Price seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Dock Rental Issue (per AGS)

Due to the lateness of the hour, discussion of the revised draft text provided by Gale that proposes an amendment to the definition of ‘Dwelling Unit’ set forth in Section 2.2 and an amendment to 17.2 B. – Boathouses and Dock Regulations was postponed to the October meeting.

3. Screening Standards

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Commission agreed to postpone discussion of the draft text provided by Harvey to the October meeting.

4. Conditional Rezoning

Due to the lateness of the hour, discussion of the sample ordinance provided by Harvey was postponed to the October meeting.

5. Watershed Protection Strategies

Due to the lateness of the hour, discussion of the matter was postponed to the October meeting.

6. Recreation Plan

Chairperson Lauderdale reminded that the Commission had agreed that Fry (and the Parks Commission) will work to complete a recommended prioritization list that aligns with the Park grant for submission to the Commission after October.

## REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Scott reported a recent Township Board focus on enforcement practices in the Township and continued discussion regarding the new Township facility. He added that GLAT continues to work with the Kalamazoo County Parks Department to energize completion of the KVRT.

## REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on September 2, 2015 and considered a request for variance approval to adjust an existing lot line between two adjacent nonconforming lots. He advised that the request was granted.

## MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

No comments were offered.

## ADJOURN

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP  
Township Planning Consultant