

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 23, 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, Chairperson
 Victor Ezbenko
 Russell Fry
 Greg Pierce
 Jeff Price
 Jon Scott

Absent: Sherri Snyder

Also present: Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
 Kelly Largent, 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 Commission then proceeded with consideration of the **April 25, 2016** Planning Commission meeting minutes. Fry moved to approve the minutes as presented. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Vince Carahaly noted that he was present at the April Planning Commission meeting where he announced his candidacy for the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners (District 6). He reminded that he is a member of the Southcentral Michigan Planning

Council. Carahaly provided an update on Kalamazoo County's current effort to update the County Master Plan.

No further public comment on non-agenda items was offered.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that no New Business was scheduled for consideration.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Dock Rental Issue (Section 17.2 - Boathouses and Dock Regulations)

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Planning Commission had determined in March that Section 17.1 requires clarity in its regulation of dock rental and should be directed to the Zoning Board of Appeals for formal interpretation. He noted that the matter was considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals at their May 4, 2016 meeting where it was interpreted that *'the current standards set forth in Section 2.2 – Definitions and Section 17.1 – Waterfront Lot Access and Use Regulations prohibits dock rental.'*

He referenced the May 23, 2016 PC Memo provided by Harvey that sets forth the interpretation of the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as the proposed modifications to Sections 2.2 and 17.1 considered by the Planning Commission in April. Harvey clarified that the draft text does not include any proposed changes to Section 17.2 given the amendments proposed to Section 17.1.

Commission review of the draft text ensued. Fry questioned how the proposed modifications would apply to existing nonconforming lots or situations. Harvey stated that the proposed revisions to 17.1 are intended to clarify, and not alter, the existing standard. She referenced the interpretation rendered by the Zoning Board of Appeals. It was further noted by the Commission that the expansion of the definition of 'access lot beneficiary' is consistent with the current application of the standard.

Gale stated that the proposed revisions to Section 17.1 adequately respond to their request to provide clear Ordinance language regarding dock rental. He agreed that the original changes suggested to Section 17.2 are not necessary.

Fry then moved to accept the draft text dated May 23, 2016 for public hearing in June. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Gull Harbor Point

Gale advised that a modification to the approved landscape plan for the project has been requested. He explained that an alternate proposal consisting of shrubs and grass plantings is suggested to replace the berm originally proposed for the 'northerly portion of the open space'. He noted that the alternate proposal is intended to provide buffering similar to the approved berm but not present runoff problems.

The Planning Commission agreed that it would be reasonable for the Zoning Administrator to consider such an alternate proposal. In response to questions, Gale noted that a June 1, 2016 deadline for compliance with the approved landscape plan was issued by the Township.

3. Screening Standards

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced draft text dated May 23, 2016 (Draft #3). Harvey provided an overview of the proposed draft text, noting the revisions made pursuant to the Commission's discussion in April.

The Planning Commission agreed that the proposed text reflects the discussion of the Commission and provides the desired screening standards.

Pierce then moved to accept the draft text dated May 23, 2016 for public hearing in June. Price seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Watershed Protection Strategies

Harvey distributed copies of a 'waterfront overlay district' recently developed and presented to the Village of Paw Paw for adoption. She provided an overview of the 'waterfront overlay district' approach and the elements of the proposed ordinance.

Planning Commission discussion ensued wherein support for the approach was noted and interest in collaborating with the Four Township Water Resources Council for local implementation expressed. Commission members suggested that it would be more effective as a water quality protection effort if it were applied as a group.

It was agreed that Chairperson Lauderdale would contact the Four Township Water Resources Council to discuss opportunities for collaboration on a similar approach in the area.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Scott provided an update on the status of the new Township Hall; a summary of the recently completed community opinion survey and the resulting formation of a subcommittee for roads; and a Parks Committee report.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on May 4, 2016 and considered the request from the Planning Commission for the interpretation of Section 17.1. He noted that consideration of the scheduled setback variance application was postponed at the request of the applicant.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Scott stated that he believes the Commission's recent work on the Zoning Ordinance that facilitated the horse boarding facility and the cat hospital are good examples of the Planning Commission's grasp of the big picture and their success at working with residents to solve problems.

Fry reported on the status of GLAT's current fundraising efforts for the Galesburg to Augusta and Augusta to Gull Lake trail segments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

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