

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
June 26, 2017**

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
Greg Pierce
Jeff Price
Sherri Snyder

Absent: Victor Ezbenko
Russell Fry

Also present: Kelly Largent, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant

Members welcomed recently appointed Township Board member Robb Blain back to the Planning Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that agenda item 7.1) should be corrected to indicate revision of Site Plan fees – Sections 21.5 and 24.7. The agenda was approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission then proceeded with consideration of the **May 22, 2017** Planning Commission meeting minutes. Price moved to approve the minutes as presented. Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jack Gesmundo was present and offered an update on the status of the Gull Harbor Point development given the recent purchase of the remaining 4 development sites by American Village Builders. He noted that he has met with the project developer (Mike Sullivan) and discussed existing issues and pending site work. Gesmundo stated that utilities have been extended to all sites and the concrete road/drive completed. He added that amendments have been made to the master deed for the development to improve the marketability of the undeveloped sites.

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

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearings – Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments

Article 20, Item 10 – Campgrounds / Item 21 – Seasonal Campgrounds

Chairperson Lauderdale opened the public hearing. He gave an overview of the proposed amendments, noting that the proposed revisions/additions/deletions to Article 20 and Items 10 and 21 are intended to reasonably provide for ‘campgrounds’ in the Township and remove the existing reference to ‘seasonal campgrounds’.

No public comment was offered on the matter. Chairperson Lauderdale stated that no written correspondence had been received regarding the proposed amendments. He then closed the public comment portion of the public hearing.

Price then moved to recommend approval by the Township Board of the proposed amendments to the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance as set forth in the June 26, 2017 Public Hearing Notice. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 2, Section 2.2 – Definitions

Chairperson Lauderdale opened the public hearing. He gave an overview of the proposed amendment, noting that the proposed revision to Section 2.2 is intended to improve/clarify the definition of ‘campground’ in the Ordinance.

No public comment was offered on the matter. Chairperson Lauderdale stated that no written correspondence had been received regarding the proposed amendments. He then closed the public comment portion of the public hearing.

Price then moved to recommend approval by the Township Board of the proposed amendment to the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance as set forth in the June 26, 2017 Public Hearing Notice. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion – Placemaking/Destination Zoning

Chairperson Lauderdale provided an overview of a recent meeting held between the Township and Gull Lake View Golf Course regarding future development interests and the limitations that existing zoning options presented. In the discussion, the topic of regional ‘placemaking’ efforts in Michigan was introduced and the concept of a ‘resort/recreational’ or ‘destination’- type zoning approach was discussed.

Harvey gave a general explanation of regional ‘placemaking’ and how this approach that is being advocated/facilitated in Michigan supports the efforts of local communities within a region to recognize the value that their assets play in ‘attracting and retaining talent’. She noted that local land use regulations that recognize that value serve to strengthen the region.

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced a handout developed to provide background information on the concept of ‘placemaking’ and examples of rural placemaking strategies that have been employed, including zoning options that facilitate ‘destination’ type uses. He requested feedback from the Commission on the topic and an indication of interest in moving forward with exploring amendments to the Zoning Ordinance in keeping with this strategy.

Lengthy Commission discussion ensued wherein support for the idea was expressed. The following was noted:

- The Master Plan provides some support for ‘placemaking’; the next review/update of the Plan should include specific rural placemaking strategies.
- Existing assets in Ross Township support destination-type zoning (ie. Gull Lake, Brook Lodge, MSU properties, KVRT system, etc.)
- There is not enough coordinated promotion of this area of the Region.
- Ross Township has a huge lack of rental housing; a destination-type zoning approach would tactically allow for mixed-use development and provide housing that attracts people to the area.
- There are several areas in Ross Township that would be ideal for innovative development options (such as the former Wildermuth School).

The Planning Commission reiterated their support for exploring zoning amendments designed to accommodate destination-type land use and agreed that Chairperson Lauderdale request Township Board approval to allow continued work in this area.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Sections 21.5 and 24.7 – Site Plan (Application) Fees

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced Planning Commission discussion of the matter in May wherein proposed amendments to Section 21.5 – Final Site Plan Submittal and Review Scheduling Procedures and Section 24.7 – Application Fees to implement an escrow approach in the site plan review fee structure were discussed.

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that draft text was provided by Attorney Thall for Commission consideration, in addition to the following documents submitted for Township Board review:

- Zoning Application and Escrow Fee Schedule
- Resolution – Zoning Application Escrow Policy

Following review of the proposed revisions to Section 21.5 and 24.7, Pierce moved to accept the draft text for public hearing. Price seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Watershed Protection Strategies

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Planning Commission has had productive discussion on this matter to date and has proceeded with Zoning Ordinance amendments to the site plan review process to better address storm water management. He stated that the Commission’s actions have fulfilled the decision to start with a ‘small step’ and questioned the Commission’s desire on a ‘next step’.

Pierce stated that the GLQO actively works with the 4TWRC and is currently engaged in education efforts on shoreline management. He noted that there have also been recent efforts in conducting shoreline inspections/mapping/ranking to increase awareness and forward the objectives of shoreline protection.

Snyder stated that she would like to see the implementation of shoreline protection measures in the Ross Township Park Master Plan.

Following discussion, the Commission agreed that the Township should continue to support the efforts of the 4TWRC and GLQO. It was further noted that the

Commission has no desire to develop waterfront-related zoning standards at this time, but looks forward to the opportunity to apply the storm water management review procedures just adopted.

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that he will inform Ken Kornheiser (4TWRC) of the Planning Commission's discussion.

3. Sign Ordinance

Harvey reported that MTA's model ordinance has not yet been released and that the review of draft sign ordinance remains on hold.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Blain reported that the Township Board remains focused on the road issue. He also noted that the Township Board is currently holding interviews to fill the vacant seat of Township Supervisor.

Blain reported that the Township Board adopted the recently recommended text amendments, as submitted.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

No comments were provided.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

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