

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
August 28, 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
Victor Ezbenko
Russell Fry
Greg Pierce
Jeff Price
Sherri Snyder
Jesse Zamora

Absent: None

Also present: Kelly Largent, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator
Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant
Rob Thall – Township Attorney

Members welcomed Jesse Zamora and recently appointed Township Board member Jeff Price to the Planning Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission then proceeded with consideration of the **July 24, 2017** Planning Commission meeting minutes. It was noted that the discussion on the Cadwallader application set forth on pages 3 and 4 should be corrected to reflect the proposal of a 10 ft x 7 ft porch roof. Specifically, the last paragraph on page 3 and paragraphs 2 and 5 on page 4 should be revised to reflect corrected roof dimensions. Pierce moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Cleave and Sue Brown stated that they would like to build a 3-car garage on a shallow back lot located at 1899 Idlewild. Largent (AGS) explained that the lot is very small and that she had suggested the applicants address the Planning Commission regarding the feasibility of obtaining a special land use permit for the proposed building.

Attorney Thall advised that the Planning Commission cannot comment as to the merits of a building proposal outside of the special land use permit process and that it would instead be appropriate for the Zoning Administrator to offer guidance to the applicant on the relevant issues.

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

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing – Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments

Section 21.5 – Final Site Plan Submittal and Review Scheduling Procedures
Section 24.7 – Application Fees

Chairperson Lauderdale opened the public hearing. He gave an overview of the proposed amendments, noting that the proposed additions are intended to formalize the escrow approach in the application fee structure set forth in the Ordinance. Chairperson Lauderdale explained that the application fee structure was initially reviewed in conjunction with the Township's efforts to update the site plan review process to include storm water management considerations.

Attorney Thall stated that the Township Board will then proceed with putting this policy into place by resolution. He referenced the Zoning Application Escrow Policy, revised fee schedule and related affidavit previously presented for information.

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.

Fry moved to recommend approval by the Township Board of the proposed amendments to the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance as set forth in the August 28, 2017 Public Hearing Notice. Price seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion – Placemaking/Destination Zoning

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced Planning Commission discussion of the matter in June wherein support for exploring zoning amendments designed to accommodate destination-type land use was noted. He advised that the Township Board subsequently expressed support for continued Planning Commission work in this area. Chairperson Lauderdale stated that he then requested that Harvey provide information to the Planning Commission regarding ‘destination-type’ zoning approaches used across the State.

Harvey referenced material from MSU Extension on the use of the PUD option allowed by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act to foster ‘destination-based’ land use, such as a ski resort, and sample ‘recreation district’ text from 2-3 communities in Michigan, provided to the Planning Commission in July. She stated that the existing PUD provision in the Zoning Ordinance is sound but should be reviewed with a focus on expanding the scope of the PUD option, as well as the residential and nonresidential options within a PUD. Harvey suggested that such an approach may be an easy way to accommodate the resort- and recreational-type facilities being discussed.

Jon Scott agreed that the existing zoning ordinance is very limiting but expressed concern that a modification of the PUD text may result in allowing things not originally envisioned. He admitted that the concept of ‘resort/recreational zoning’ is difficult to manage and that there is likely more than one way to address it . . . but stressed that the concept of ‘placemaking’ is key to this community.

Lengthy Planning Commission discussion ensued wherein the following was noted:

- There is no desire to open up the PUD option so much that unintended development begins to occur; but there is support for the idea of design flexibility.
- Building exteriors are important in creating quality destination-type development; can building exterior regulations be established?
- Probably should not require design compatibility with the rest of the community where it may not be relevant or where the synergy is not present in the area of the development.

Following a discussion of ‘next steps’, Harvey was directed to develop outlines of an overlay district approach and a PUD approach for addressing resort and recreational-type facilities (destination land use). It was noted that the outlines would give clarity to the vision on how these approaches would work and allow

for comparison between the two. Harvey agreed to work to have the draft outlines ready for review/discussion in September.

2. Watershed Protection Strategies

Planning Commission members agreed to continue to consider the matter ‘on hold’ at this time.

3. Sign Ordinance

Harvey and Thall reported that MTA’s model ordinance has not yet been released and that the review of draft sign ordinance remains on hold. Thall noted that a September release of the document is anticipated.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Price reported the following:

- Gary Moore has been appointed as the new Township Supervisor; Norm Kellogg, existing Deputy Clerk, has been appointed as the new Township Clerk; Jeff Price has been appointed as a Township Board Trustee.
- The Township Board remains focused on the road issue –
 - A public hearing regarding the assessment of property was held on August 8, 2017 – most agree road improvements are needed; some concern expressed by residents not aware of the effort
 - A special meeting is scheduled for August 29, 2017 to discuss the feedback received in the public meetings.
 - Main issue of ‘what is the most equitable way to do the assessments’ remains.
 - The matter is scheduled to be discussed/decided by the Township Board on September 12, 2017.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Snyder reported her recent attendance at a GLWQ Association meeting where at a high level of interest and support for community action regarding shoreline preservation and storm water management was expressed.

Fry stated that that the three ‘Trucks & Tunes’ events held in the Township Park were attended by approximately 560 people (total). He noted that the three park master plan concepts were on display during these events and that good feedback was consistently received. The feedback will be compiled and presented to the Township Board in October for discussion prior to a public hearing.

Fry questioned where the Township stands on the matter of medical marijuana. Attorney Thall noted that whether Ross Township ‘opts in’ or ‘opts out’ regarding allowing medical marijuana facilities within the Township is a Township Board decision, which will dictate how the Planning Commission proceeds.

Fry noted that daily rentals are being actively promoted on Gull Lake and that the Township will need to address this topic in the near future. (An article on the issues of short-term and long term rentals was provided by AGS)

Chairperson Lauderdale reported his recent participation in the ‘Tour of Green Infrastructure’. He provided details on the information provided and the interesting storm water management designs being applied.

Chairperson Lauderdale advised that a Notice of Intent to Plan had been received from Comstock Township regarding the update of their Master Plan.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

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