

Schoolcraft Township Planning Commission

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, December 6, 2010

A meeting of the Schoolcraft Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, December 6, 2010, at the Schoolcraft Township Hall commencing at 7:00 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Charles Bibart
Ken Hovenkamp
Len Jaworski
Dave Reno
Jim Shaw
Barry Visel

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ron Avis

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Attorney Rolfe
Supervisor Ulsh
Approximately 20 township residents/landowners

Chairman Visel opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Len Jaworski with support from Ken Hovenkamp to approve the agenda as issued.

Motion carried 6-0

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:

A motion was made by Jim Shaw and supported by Len Jaworski to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2010, meeting, without correction.

Motion carried 6-0

CITIZEN TIME ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

No items were discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Plan Review: Wellness Center

Todd Merit and Dale O'Brian were present to discuss the proposed site plan for the new Wellness Center on U Avenue. The plan includes a new modular building for conducting rehabilitation services focused on chronic pain. Most discussion centered on parking capacity required by our ordinance. Attorney Rolfe informed the applicants that the ordinance requires 11 parking places. The proposed plan included 6 parking places with an area set aside for future expansion for parking. The applicants agreed to expand the parking capacity to meet the ordinance requirement.

A motion was made by Ken Hovenkamp with support from Dave Reno to approve an updated site plan, which includes at least 11 parking places, subject to verification by the zoning administrator.

Motion carried 6-0

OLD BUSINESS

a. Continuing Ag Zoning Discussion, meeting and input from landowners and residents

Approximately 20 township landowners and residents were in attendance in response to invitations sent out by the Planning Commission to solicit discussion and input on the progress and direction on Ag Zoning. One resident, who was not able to attend, sent a letter requesting that their property retain its ag zoning. Handouts were provided, including proposed draft ordinance language and summary of residential development options. A draft map showing the proposed changes was displayed.

Chairman Visel opened the discussion by reviewing the Master Plan and its implications for preserving the Township's agricultural land use and rural character.

He noted that our current Ag zone ordinance and map were not adequate to meet the intent of our Master Plan which resulted in the Planning Commission's work to update the zoning ordinance and map. Chairman Visel reviewed the Commission's work to establish two new Ag zones and covered the benefits of preserving agricultural use, as well as proposed single family residential development opportunities. He then opened the floor for discussion.

The ensuing discussion lasted about an hour with residents expressing interests ranging from definition of a parcel, to any potential impact on property tax rates, to how the Township might help its landowners keep their land in agricultural use.

Some residents requested that the Future Land Use Plan (Master Plan Map 8) be adjusted so their property would be included in the Agricultural Preservation designation and therefore subject to the newly proposed ag zones. (After discussion was completed, the Planning Commission decided that the Future Land Use Plan should not be adjusted at this time. We should complete the proposed adjustments to the ordinance language associated with all zoning classifications prior to considering any adjustment of the Master Plan.)

Chairman Visel closed this agenda item by outlining the next steps in the process including finalizing draft ordinance language and map designations, formal public hearing, and submission to the Township Board for decision.

In summary, several attendees expressed support for the direction taken by the Planning Commission in updating the ordinance and map concerning ag zoning. Significantly, no attendee expressed opposition to the direction taken. Several attendees also expressed appreciation for the Planning Commission's effort and work on this important issue.

REPORT FROM THE TOWNSHIP BOARD

Ken Hovenkamp updated the Commission on activities of the Board including consideration and action by the Board on the non-conforming issues of the Blodgett property at 2259 East W Avenue. Resolution of the issue could involve a request to change the zoning classification of the property

REPORT FROM THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Mr. Hovenkamp also reported on the variance application approved by the ZBA at its Dec. 2 meeting, to allow the reconstruction of the enclosed porch portion of the lawful

nonconforming single family dwelling on the Blodgett property noted above, within the footprint of the existing deteriorated porch

MEMBER'S TIME AND TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY TIME

Attorney Rolfe will provide another copy of his "points to consider" covering issues we may want to consider for updating the ordinance relating to the Rural Residential zoning classification. It is intended to kick off discussion at our January meeting.

With no further business, Chairman Visel adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Bibart".

Respectfully Submitted

Charles Bibart

AV12.6.10