

Minutes

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Thomas Township Public Safety Building, 8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609

January 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

John Bintz called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in addition to Mr. Bintz were: Ruth McDonald, Chris Thompson, Pat Wurtzel, Diane LaMountain and Rick Lorentzen. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development and Susan Coggin, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer.

Members Absent: Dale Halm.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance.**
2. **Approval of Agenda:**

It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mrs. McDonald to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

It was moved by Mrs. McDonald, seconded by Mrs. LaMountain to approve the minutes of December 15, 2010 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Hearings:**

1. **Amendment to Section 10-19F-2-A and 10-19F-2-D-1 – North Business District Overlay Zone.**

Mr. Sika stated that in 2007, the Planning Commission adopted the North Business District Overlay Zone to promote a downtown theme that residents would be able to enjoy. This area consists of mixed uses such as residential, office businesses and service businesses. In 2009, the Planning Commission approved the General Guidelines Ordinance for Gratiot Road. These requirements are intended to serve as design guidelines in order to enhance any new or redeveloped properties along the Gratiot corridor. Mr. Sika further stated that the proposed amendment to the North Business District Overlay Zone is to combine the newly established General Guidelines for M-46 and those of the North Business Overlay Zone.

Mr. Bintz then asked for public comments in favor or in opposition to this proposed amendment. There were no public comments at this time.

Mrs. McDonald questioned who maintained the streetlights after installed. Mr. Sika stated that if a light is out or not operating correctly, Consumers Energy is called, and they repair the light.

Motion by Mr. Lorentzen, supported by Mrs. McDonald to recommend approval to the Township Board the amendment Section 10-19F-2-A and 10-19F-2-D-1 – North Business District as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Amendment to Section 10-18C-2-3, 10-18C-4-B-2 and 10-18C-4-B-4 – R-3, Residential Multiple-Family, Intensive Low Rise District.**

Mr. Sika stated that the Community Development Department has been reviewing the Zoning Ordinance for sections that may need to be updated. The R-3, Multiple Family minimum yard requirements is one section that may need to be updated. In the past several years, the Planning Commission has strived to create more open space within proposed development. Mr. Sika further stated that after discussion with the Township Manager, some questions were raised regarding the low number of units requiring recreational areas. Mr. Sika suggested that until further research could be completed, the Planning Commission may want to table this proposed text amendment.

Mr. Bintz then asked for public comments in favor or in opposition to this proposed amendment. There were no public comments at this time.

Motion by Mr. Thompson, supported by Mrs. McDonald to table the proposed amendment. Motion carried unanimously.

1. **Presentations**: None.
2. **Sign Board of Appeals** – None.
3. **Old Business** – None.
4. **New Business:**
5. **Discussion Only – Possible Amendment to Section 10-2-2(M) – Parking of Recreational Equipment.**

Mr. Sika stated that due to the change in the economy and residents looking to save money whenever possible, more and more recreational vehicles and/or equipment are now being stored on private property rather than renting a facility to store them off site. Due to this, many driveways are becoming storage areas for numerous recreational vehicles and/or equipment. The proposed amendment would allow residents the option to keep their equipment on their properties, but regulate the number of recreational vehicles and/or equipment stored in the front yard. The proposed text amendment is as follows:

**10-2-2(M) Parking of Recreational Equipment:** The parking of recreational equipment including travel trailers, campers, boats and similar recreational equipment is prohibited within the required front yard areas of any “R” district and shall not be parked or stored closer than four (4’) feet to any side or rear property line. ***Further, one (1) recreational vehicle and/or equipment may be parked in between the defined front yard and the front of any primary residential structure, but at no time may any recreational vehicles be parked in the defined front yard area.*** Recreational equipment shall have adequate ingress or egress available or potentially available to either public or private right-of way. ***Recreational vehicles and/or equipment must be parked and/or stored on an approved hard surface at all times.***

The Planning Commission recommended that the proposed amendment be published for a public hearing for the next available Planning Commission meeting.

1. **Discussion Only – Possible Amendment to Section 10-3-3-E – Parking Encroachments Restricted.**

Mr. Sika stated that this section of the ordinance restricts vehicles from being parked within the front yard area; however, it does not restrict what type of a surface a vehicle may be parked upon. Most vehicles are parked on a driveway; however, some properties with homes setback beyond the minimum yard setbacks are able to park vehicles on the grass. The proposed text amendment is as follows:

**10-3-3-E Encroachments Restricted:** Parking as specified and/or provided in any residential district ***shall be maintained at all times on the driveway surface as approved. Recreational vehicle and/or equipment parking is also restricted to the driveway in any residential district and agricultural district which is primarily used for single family. When parking such items in the side or rear yard, all items must be behind the front of the primary residential structure.***

The Planning Commission recommended that the proposed amendment be published for a public hearing for the next available Planning Commission meeting.

1. **Discussion Only – Dual Zoning on One Parcel.**

Discussion followed regarding two areas of Thomas Township that contain dual zoning on one parcel. Mr. Sika stated that South Miller Road on the east side of the road from the church to Dutch has two zonings on each parcel. He stated that he is not sure why this zoning was originally set up like this; however, feels that it would be beneficial to the parcel owners to have one zoning. Mr. Sika also discussed the subdivision containing Timberwood and Circlewood. The current zoning of each of these parcels is R-2. While all of the homes in the subdivision are currently single family homes, he is concerned with the remaining vacant lots developing as R-2 lots or duplexes. The Planning Commission agreed and instructed the Community Development staff to proceed with contacting the property owners regarding this possible rezoning.

1. **Adjournment:**

Motion by Mrs. McDonald, seconded by Mr. Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. The next meeting date is Wednesday***, February 16, 2011.***

### Respectfully submitted by Susan Coggin, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer