

**Minutes**

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
Thomas Township Public Safety Building  
8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609  
May 15, 2013 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, Rick Lorentzen, Dale Halm and Diane LaMountain. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, Susan Coggin, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer and two (2) interested parties.

Members Absent: Rod Iamurri and Chris Thompson

**2. *Pledge of Allegiance.***

**3. *Approval of Agenda:***

It was moved by Mr. Halm, 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 April 17, 2013 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. *Communications – Petitions – Citizens Comments – None.***

**6. *Hearings* - None.**

**7. *Presentations* – None.**

**8. *Sign Board of Appeals* – None.**

**9. *Old Business* – None.**

**10. *New Business***

**A. *2013 Thomas Township Business/Organization Appreciation Award***

Mr. Sika stated that the votes have been tabulated and the results of the Business/Organization Appreciation Award – 2013 are as follows:

Business/Organization Award Winner - Wanigas Credit Union

Honorable Mention – Bob Evans Restaurant

Honorable Mention – Gratiot Animal Hospital

Mr. Halm suggested that in the future all names be listed on the business list. He stated that it can be confusing when the actual business name is not listed. Mr. Halm also suggested that the Planning Commission expand the awards to include a couple more categories such as most improved existing business. The Planning Commission members and staff will submit some ideas and present them at the July, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

***B. Discussion Only – Driveway Locations at the End of Dead End Roads.***

Mr. Sika stated that due to the tough economic times, some public roads that have been developed with a dead-end with the intent of attaching a future phase or development are being terminated and used for single driveways. Mr. Sika presented the following text which may help alleviate this type of situation in the future:

Public Road Dead-End Driveway Regulations: In the event that a public road is terminated (dead-ends) with the intent of attaching to a future phase or development, the dead-end must not be restricted from the intended future extension for which it was designed. To achieve this, it is hereby prohibited to attach a driveway to the end of a public roadway dead-end for the purpose of constructing a one or two family dwelling.

If after site plan review the Planning Commission deems that a public road dead-end is no longer a viable connection to a future phase or development as it was originally designed and planned, the dead-end may be converted into a cul-de-sac with a minimum of forty-two (42') feet of driving surface. The surface must be designed to meet the minimum standard for a paved County roadway. If the attached dead-end roadway is curbed, the cul-de-sac must also be curbed with appropriate drainage. Utilities may also be required to be extended to the end of the cul-de-sac. At which time a driveway may be allowed to connect to the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Sika stated that the staff will draft a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment for discussion only at the July, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

***C. Discussion Only – Definition and Requirements of Decks as Extensions of Outdoor Living Space.***

Mr. Sika stated that over the past two decades, more people have been designing extensions onto the home in the form of outdoor living space in most cases decks.

These areas are typically constructed off the rear or side of the home with direct access to the inside by way of a doorway. The following regulations define the placement and design of outdoor living space decks in order to eliminate conflicts with other uses on a parcel.

**Outdoor Living Space Decks, Defined:** An area directly attached to a residential home that is intended to extend the living area to the outside by way of open space decks. This area must have direct access to the home in the form of a door which opens onto the outdoor living space deck. In addition, these areas must meet all of the setbacks as if it were a part of the principal dwelling.

Outdoor Living Space Decks may be partially enclosed or covered with such design elements as pergola, trellises, gazebos, or other similar design elements. The outdoor living space deck will be counted as though it were part of the principal dwelling for lot coverage and setbacks for property lines.

Mr. Sika also presented the Planning Commission members with a memo from Cindy Winland of Crescent Consulting giving an opinion regarding whether a hot tub covered by a gazebo located on a deck attached to a house is part of the deck or is an accessory structure.

Mr. Sika stated that the staff will draft a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment for discussion only at the July, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

#### ***11. Receive and File All Correspondence***

A. March, 2013 Edition of the Planning and Zoning News.

#### ***12. Adjournment.***

Motion by Mr. Halm, seconded by Mrs. McDonald to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. ***The next meeting date is Wednesday, June 26, 2013 (Training Session with Cindy Winland).***

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