



Minutes

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

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

November 16, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Rod Iamurri called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in addition to Mr. Iamurri were: Ruth McDonald, Dave Sommers, Steve Yockey, Pat Lynch, Jennifer Curry and Doug Bird. Also present was Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer, and two interested parties.

1. *Call to Order and Roll Call*

2. *Pledge of Allegiance.*

3. *Approval of Agenda:*

It was moved by Sommers, seconded by McDonald to approve the Agenda for the November 16, 2016 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

4. *Approval of Minutes:*

It was moved by McDonald, seconded by Yockey to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2016 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Iamurri did address the Planning Commission members to express his gratitude for the years of service of Diane Lamountain and expressed his sympathy at her recent passing. At that time, Iamurri also introduced the newest member, Mr. Doug Bird and welcomed him to the Planning Commission.

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

6. *Presentations-None*

7. *Hearings*

A.-Approval of the Master Plan Update

The public hearing was opened at 7:04 p.m. by Iamurri. He then explained that the Planning Commission had been working on the update of the Master Plan along with the Community Development Department and Rob Eggers of Spicer for just short of a year. He mentioned that updating of demographics and maps had been completed as well as an updated community survey that had been offered to give a better look at the community input regarding a lot of aspects of Thomas Township. Iamurri also added that the Master Plan had been reviewed by the Township Board and recommended for approval. Sika also noted that the Master Plan Update had been sent to the county as well as surrounding communities where not one response positively or negatively was received. Iamurri asked for any public comment at that time. With there being no comment, he closed the public hearing at 7:06 p.m. A motion was made by McDonald, seconded by Lynch to offer **Resolution #16-01** for adoption of the completed Master Plan Update. Yeas: Yockey, McDonald, Sommers, Iamurri, Lynch, Curry and Bird. Nays: None

8. *Sign Board of Appeals-None*

9. *New Business*

A.-Review of Ordinance Section 3.5; Accessory Buildings

Sika explained to the Planning Commission that there had been a recent meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals where a request for a variance had been made regarding the height of an accessory structure the resident wished to build. The resident wanted to keep the height of the structure in line with the principal dwelling on the parcel which would have exceeded the maximum height of seventeen feet (17') allowed by ordinance. Because the resident did not meet any of the criteria outlined in the ZBA Checklist the variance was denied. Sika did go on to say that one of the ZBA members had requested that the Planning Commission review the Ordinance section as it relates to accessory structure height. Sika noted that he had contacted some surrounding communities and found that they do in most cases make some sort of allowance to keep the accessory structure height in line with that of the principal dwelling if a resident wishes to build it that way. Sika noted that he did see some advantage to this such as a higher resale value of the property and making it more appealing when the accessory building roof pitch matched that of the home. Also the accessory building would have a stronger roof system if the pitch was higher due to the snow loads in this area. Several Planning Commission members felt this was something they should address. A text amendment will be drafted within the next couple of months and brought to the Planning Commission relating to accessory building height.

B-2017 Thomas Township Planning Commission Meeting Schedule.

The members of the Planning Commission were asked to review the proposed schedule for 2017 which shows meetings on the third Wednesday of each month of the year. Sommers mentioned

that the November meeting would fall on the 15th which conflicts with a lot of schedules due to deer season and a quorum may not be possible. It was felt that November 8th would be a better date to guarantee attendance. A motion was made by Yockey and supported by Lynch to approve the 2017 calendar with the November date change to the 8th. Motion passed unanimously.

C.-New Medical Marijuana Laws-Discussion Only

Sika explained that he wanted the Planning Commission to be aware of the new laws taking effect for “caretakers” to open growing facilities in communities. As outlined in the information provided, if there is no ordinance regarding these facilities and monitoring their use in any district then they would not be allowed. He explained that this something that warrants further education and information in order for the Planning Commission to have all the facts and review if they feel this is something that would “fit” in Thomas Township or if they feel it is something that would not be desired in the Township. It was decided that since licensing will not begin for these facilities until December of 2017, the Planning Commission would like to be further educated and weigh all the options pro and con. Further information will be provided to the members over upcoming months.

10. ***Old Business-None***

11. ***Receive and File All Correspondence-None***

12. ***Adjournment***

Motion by Yockey seconded by Bird to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. ***The next regular meeting date is December 21, 2016.***

Respectfully submitted by Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer