



Minutes

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Thomas Township Public Safety Building, 8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609
November 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Ruth McDonald called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in addition to Mrs. McDonald were: Rod Iamurri, Diane LaMountain, David Sommers, Dale Halm, Pat Lynch and Steve Yockey. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer, Russ Taylor, Township Manager and several interested parties.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda:

It was moved by Sommers, seconded by Iamurri to approve the Agenda for the November 18, 2015 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes:

It was moved by Halm seconded by LaMountain to approve the minutes of October 21, 2015 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Election of Planning Commission Officers

Elections of Planning Commission Officers were held with McDonald requesting to not be considered for an office at this time noting her desire to continue to serve as a member of the commission only.

A nomination was made by McDonald, seconded by Halm to nominate Iamurri for the office of Chairperson. The vote was unanimous in favor of Iamurri as Chairperson.

A nomination was made by Halm, seconded by Iamurri to nominate Lynch for the office of Vice-Chairperson. The vote was unanimous in favor of Lynch as Vice-Chairperson.

A nomination was made by Halm, seconded by Iamurri to nominate Yockey for the office of Secretary. The vote was unanimous in favor of Yockey as Secretary.

The terms of these offices will be for one year.

The meeting was continued at this time by Chairperson Iamurri.

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

7. *Presentations*

A.-Site Plan Approval for Consumers Energy

Lindsey Kosner and Kevin Fuller were present representing Consumer Energy. They presented a Site Plan to the Planning Commission for a utility site to be constructed on the Consumers Energy property located at 7888 Gratiot Road. Kosner did explain that the utility building will sit back from the road and have the required paved road back to it along with the stone pillars and fencing. She also stated that the landscaping would also be installed on the site. Fuller noted that there had been some requirements that were not originally met on the first site plan and he has since modified the original to include two (2) additional stone pillars as required, a scale, the legal description and a landscape plan with plant types noted. He will be sending this by email in PDF format to the Community Development Department within the next week. A motion was made by McDonald, seconded by Sommers to approve the site plan for the installation of a utility building by Consumers Energy at 7888 Gratiot Road with the following contingencies:

- A revised site plan will be presented within the next week that includes a scale, legal description of property and its zoning.
- A detailed landscape plan will be submitted denoting what types of plants will be installed at the site.
- Two (2) additional pillars are required on the site for a total of seven (7) pillars overall and will be included on the revised site plan.

Motion passed unanimously.

8. *Sign Board of Appeals-None*

9. *Hearings*

A. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Section 3.2 (o) Parking of Recreational Equipment and Recreational Vehicles; Section 5.3 (e) Parking of Vehicles and Section 2.2 Definitions.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:10 p.m. The Planning Commission reviewed the changes that were made by the Thomas Township Board Ordinance Committee to their recently approved version of these text amendments. No public comment was made so the hearing was closed. Halm questioned the changes that were made to the established setback and why it was increased. Taylor explained this would only affect those who were setback far from the road and prevented an RV from being parked several feet in front of the home. Halm also noted that there was a specification regarding licensed vehicles that noted a current license from the State of

Michigan. Sika said he would have that changed to a generic licensed vehicle as to include a licensed vehicle regardless of what state it is licensed from. Sika also noted that with the approval of the Planning Commission, he will work with the Township Attorney to insure that these changes are incorporated into the Ordinance to make it both clear to understand and enforceable. He also noted that illustrations would be included to help people visualize exactly where RV parking is allowed. A motion was made by Halm and seconded by LaMountain to recommend approval of the text amendments with the following contingency; that Sika work along with the Township Attorney, Otto Brandt to properly incorporate these changes into the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Section 9.1 A-1 Primary Agriculture and Conservation Development District and Section 9.2 A-2 General farming, Open Space, Woodlot and Conservation Development District Uses by Right.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:21 p.m. Request for Public Comment was made. Alex Bommaritto, Attorney for the Geddes Family, spoke in favor of the change to the “Uses by Right” of these two sections of the Zoning Ordinance to include Farm Manager dwellings. He felt this would be beneficial change while still allowing control over the housing for farm labor. No further public comment was made and the public hearing was closed. Sika did explain to the Planning Commission as well as those with an interest in the audience that Planning Commission approval, if received, was the first step in the process. If approved the text amendment would then be sent to the Saginaw County Metropolitan Planning Commission. Once their review was done then it would go before the Thomas Township Board of Trustees. If approved at that level the Ordinance with the text amendments would then be published and take effect thirty (30) days later. He said the Ordinance being in effect was still a few months down the road. A motion was made by McDonald, seconded by Halm to recommend approval of the proposed text amendment to the A-1 and A-2 zoning districts allowing Farm Manager Housing as a use permitted by right. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Sign Board of Appeals-None

11. New Business

A. Capital Improvement Plan

Taylor reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan with the Planning Commission. A motion was made by Sommers, seconded by Halm to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

B. 2016 Thomas Township Planning Commission Calendar

The calendar for the schedule of Planning Commission meetings for 2016 was presented. The meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month and are adjusted if any conflict arises. It was noted that the January meeting was listed as the 21st on the schedule and should be the 20th. The change will be made. A motion was made by LaMountain seconded by McDonald

to approve the 2016 Planning Commission meeting schedule as presented with the January date change from the 21st to the 20th. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Old Business

A. Master Plan Update-Continuation from Previous Meetings

Sika updated the Planning Commission that the Community Survey was continuing and as of this date had 211 responses. He noted that Eggers is hoping to reach 250. He added that the survey will be available to take until November 24, 2015 if there was anyone the Planning Commission knew of that they should remind or if they have not taken the survey themselves. Sika told the Planning Commission that Rob Eggers will be present at the December 16th meeting to bring the final results to them and continue with the discussion of goals at that point based on the results.

13. Request for an Ordinance Committee Meeting

Sika stated that during a recent request for review, the section of our Ordinance regarding Wireless Communication Facilities had been reviewed and there were several concerns with some areas of the Ordinance. He felt that at this time it would be a good idea for the Planning Commission Ordinance Committee to take a look at the ordinance and see if they had the same concerns or if they felt that the Ordinance necessitated any text amendments. He told them he will check his schedule regarding a date and contact them to see their availability.

14. Receive and File All Correspondence-Planning & Zoning News-October 2015.

15. Adjournment

Motion by Halm seconded by Iamurri to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. ***The next meeting date is December 16, 2015.***

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