



**Minutes**

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
Thomas Township Public Safety Building, 8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609  
February 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, Rick Lorentzen, Chris Thompson, Diane LaMountain and Pat Lynch. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer, John Morey of D&M Site, Mike and Lisa Shabluk, and several interested parties.

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

**3. Approval of Agenda:**

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

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

It was moved by Lorentzen seconded by LaMountain to approve the minutes of December 17, 2014 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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

**6. Hearings-None**

**7. Sign Board of Appeals-None**

**8. Presentations**

**A. Request for Site Plan approval for Steward Investments, 9790 Gratiot Road.**

Mr. John Morey of D&M Site representing Steward Investments, Mr. Mike Shabluk, requesting site plan approval for 9790 Gratiot Road, also known as Thomas Plaza. Mr. Morey stated that the existing facility consists of an 8,000 square foot retail building with five (5) units in the front and a 1,600 square feet storage building currently zoned B-3 in the Gratiot Corridor. The site plan was in response to violation letters received by Mr. Shabluk regarding the leasing of the storage building to a landscaping company who was not properly storing their equipment. He

added there had been issues with the neighbors apparently regarding the lack of proper storage. Mr. Morey added that the area is zoned for mini-storage as a use but the building had not gone through the proper channels to be approved to lease the building for a business. The site plan attempts to accomplish the main issues with neighbors by placing a berm to the North with plantings, a six (6') foot high chain link screened fence around the building and a berm to the west, this to buffer the area with neighbors. Along Gratiot Road fencing and pillars as per the requirement. He stated he was able to get two sections, one with three (3) pillars the other with two (2) along with the simulated wrought iron fencing and additional landscaping into the plan. Also, he said there will be other plantings along the front area of something similar to day lilies to maintain the visibility of the business(es) from the road. He said the site once had a building on it that is no longer there but has left the area very gravelly and unable to grow grass. Mr. Morey said that in 1999 an addition to the existing building was approved and will take place one day in the future so this would create a problem with paving the area with asphalt and then having to tear it up down the road. What is being proposed is a gravel surface to meet the requirement of having something there. Because of future construction plans and the heavy trucks that will use the driveway. He added that the review letter required additional pillars and fencing be added but that would require tearing out existing parking for the main building to accomplish this. Lorentzen mentioned the previous owner presenting a plan for this property but not completing the work due to the high cost and he then sold it. Iamurri questioned what requirements were not being met. Sika explained that the building had only been approved for cold storage not as a rental property. It was never looked at that way. It was simply to be used to store maintenance equipment for maintaining the property. He also stated that they are upgrading the site, they have been very good to work with and he'd like to continue to work on this with them. Thompson added he is concerned with the precedence if there is no timeframe given to complete. Lorentzen questioned the additional pillar/fencing requirements. The additional pillar/fencing requirement would mean the loss of four to five (4-5) parking spaces in front. We have asked Mr. Shabluk for MDOT's approval on the sign. Mr. Shabluk stated that via emails he was given until Spring of 2015 to remove the sign and was granted approval for his tenant to currently display signage on the pole sign until that time. This was given by Don Hundley at MDOT. McDonald questioned Mr. Shabluk regarding where the landscaping company will be storing everything because when she viewed the property today they had several trucks, plows and trailers out. She was informed the storage should and will be in the building with the exception of the trucks. McDonald questioned Sika regarding the contingencies listed on the agenda. Sika showed on the site plan, that was part of the Power Point, the location of the asphalt area needed to get back to the storage building in the rear. Mr. Shabluk informed him they are to put fencing around the building in the back. Iamurri stated they then would be out of view and felt they needed to address the asphalt paving issue. He suggested a "passageway" to the building. Morey stated that the berm previously put in had not given regard to drainage and made the area in back retain water. He added that the new plan would involve a six (6") inch line to take care of the drainage. Iamurri suggested a grass area and stonecrete drive back to the building because of the type of trucks that will use the back area and the fact that if any addition is ever done it would have to be torn up. Discussion continued among the members as well as reviewing the site plan. A motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Iamurri to give site plan approval with the following contingencies/requirements.

- A stonecrete drive (22') will be created to go back to the cold storage building. This stonecrete area will be maintained and not left to deteriorate.
- To the west of the stonecrete, area of grass are to be planted and a split rail fence installed along the grassline to prevent driving in these areas.
- If a business, other than the landscaping business, should lease or make use of the cold storage building, the stonecrete must be removed and replaced with asphalt paving.
- The three (3) sections of fencing and five (5) pillars as noted on the site plan are required to be installed.
- Work on the property must be completed no later than September 1, 2015.
- A soil erosion permit from Saginaw County must be presented to Thomas Township before construction begins.
- Mr. Shabluk, represented by Mr. John Morey of D&M Site, must resubmit a revised site plan showing all the changes required and approved by the Planning Commission.

## ***9. Old Business-None***

## ***10. New Business***

### ***A-Election of Planning Commission Officers***

McDonald opened nominations for the offices of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. A motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Iamurri to nominate Ruth McDonald for Planning Commission Chairperson. Motion passed unanimously for the election of McDonald as Planning Commission Chairperson.

A motion made by LaMountain, seconded by Lynch to nominate Rod Iamurri as Planning Commission Vice-Chairperson. Motion passed unanimously for the election of Iamurri as Planning Commission Vice-Chairperson.

A motion made by Iamurri, seconded by LaMountain to nominate Rick Lorentzen as Planning Commission Secretary. Motion passed unanimously for the election of Lorentzen as Planning Commission Secretary.

### ***B-Presentation of "Certificate of Appreciation" to Mr. John Bintz***

McDonald addressed the members as well as those in attendance that on behalf of Thomas Township and the Planning Commission she would like to present Mr. John Bintz with a

“Certificate of Appreciation” for his years of service on the Planning Commission. Bintz accepted his certificate from the members stating it had been very gratifying to have served for 54 years. He noted he has seen a lot of change, good change in a wonderful township.

### ***C-2014 Planning Commission Annual Report***

Sika stated that by lawn, a review of the annual report of the items looked at by the Planning Commission is presented to the Township Board. That report is being presented for their review this evening. This will be the information provided to the Board.

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

##### ***A.-Letter of thanks from Ellen Ryder-Petre***

Accept and file

##### ***B-Planning & Zoning News-November 2014***

Accept and file.

##### ***C-Planning & Zoning News-December 2014***

Accept and file.

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

Motion by Iamurri seconded by Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. ***The next meeting date is March 18, 2015.***

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