



Minutes

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Thomas Township Public Safety Building, 8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609
May 20, 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, Diane LaMountain, Chris Thompson, Dale Halm and Patrick Lynch. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, and Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer, and no interested parties.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda:

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

4. Approval of Minutes:

It was moved by Lynch seconded by Thompson to approve the minutes of April 15, 2015 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Communications – Petitions – Citizens Comments – None.

6. Hearings-None

7. Sign Board of Appeals-None

8. Presentations-None

9. Old Business

A. Discussion Only-Proposed RV Parking Text Amendment

Sika discussed with the Planning Commission the difficulty being experienced in understanding the rules for the parking of recreational vehicles and equipment as the Ordinance currently reads. He noted that there are three (3) major problems in two (2) of the Zoning Ordinances relating to the regulations on parking of recreational vehicles and equipment. Section 3.2 (o) and Section 5.3 (e) contradict each other as currently written. 5.3 (e) states in part recreational vehicles

parked in a residential district must be parked on a driveway surface at all times. Driveway has not been defined. Section 3.2(o) allows RV's to be parked between the defined front yard and the front of the primary residential structure. Then it goes on to say that RV's can at no time be parked in the defined front yard area. This makes these ordinances very hard to enforce because they can be interpreted different ways by different people. 3.2 (o) also states RV's can be parked on a hard surface, which is not defined. It has always been enforced with the understanding that a hard surface is anything other than sand or mud. We need to have a clear definition at this point. Sika went on to say that we do not want to change the regulations of the ordinance or how it is enforced, but to clearly state what the rules are. He added to keep in mind that recreational vehicles covers all recreational vehicles and equipment as well. Halm questioned a property with a house setback very far from the road. Could they park an RV in what is defined as the side yard due to setbacks even though it may be in front of the house? Sika explained that this is an issue that the current ordinance does not clearly define and this is what we have found. The Planning Commission needs to look at how the ordinance has been enforced in the past, the language that is written, what the intent might be and try to mesh all of those things together when reviewing the proposed changes. Thompson wanted to see some limit to the number of recreational vehicles and recreational equipment that could be parked on a parcel at any time. Sika explained that at this time the ordinance does not limit the number but certainly the text could be added. Halm questioned if there is any time frame currently given to allow people to park their RV's in what might be a non-compliant area if they are packing it up or cleaning it etc. Sika explained that we have always worked with the residents anytime they have made us aware of a situation as such. He stated that the Township Supervisor and the Township Manager both expressed a need for a "grace period" included in the ordinance giving time for such things as cleaning, unpacking etc. Sika told the Planning Commission that enclosed in their packet for this month was a rewritten version of these two (2) ordinances. After meeting with the Township Attorney these are the changes that were deemed necessary. It is not however, a final draft. In going over the rewrite there are still some areas to clarify and cover. This will be completed, hopefully prior to the June meeting of the Planning Commission and presented then as a Public Hearing for the text amendment.

B. 2014 Business/Organization of the Year Results.

The Planning Commission were given the results from their votes for the 2015 Business/Organization of the Year:

*First Place Tie- Jack's Fruit Market and The Avenue Hair Studio & Spa
Honorable Mentions-Martin Chevrolet and Apple Mountain*

A time for the presentation will be arranged by Watt and the Planning Commission members will be notified so they can attend each presentation.

Discussion among members brought some new ideas on criteria for selecting the Business/Organization of the Year which included listing the businesses by size, listing improvements on the properties for the previous year and any Code Violations that might exist on the property. All of these will be incorporated into the criteria for the 2016 award.

10. New Business-None

11. Receive and File All Correspondence-Planning and Zoning News-March 2015

Adjournment

Motion by Thompson seconded by LaMountain to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. **The next meeting date is June 17, 2015.**

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