

Minutes

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

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

February 16, 2011 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, Dale Halm, and Rick Lorentzen. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, Susan Coggin, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer and ten (10) interested parties.

Members Absent: Chris Thompson and Diane LaMountain.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance.**
2. **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 Mr. Halm to approve the minutes of January 19, 2011 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Hearings:**

1. **Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Section 10-2-2(M), Parking of Recreational Equipment.**

Mr. Sika stated that the proposed ordinance would allow residents the option to keep their equipment on their properties, but regulate the number of recreational vehicles and/or equipment stored in restricted areas. The proposed amendment is as follows:

**10-2-2(M) Parking of Recreational Equipment:** The parking of recreational equipment including travel trailers, campers, boats and similar recreational equipment is prohibited within the required front yard areas of any “R” district and shall not be parked or stored closer than four (4’) feet to any side or rear property line. ***Further, one (1) recreational vehicle and/or equipment may be parked in between the defined front yard and the front of any primary residential structure, but at no time may any recreational vehicles be parked in the defined front yard area.*** Recreational equipment shall have adequate ingress or egress available or potentially available to either public or private right-of way. ***Recreational vehicles and/or equipment must be parked and/or stored on an approved hard surface at all times.***

Mr. Bintz then asked for public comments in favor or in opposition to this proposed amendment. There were no public comments at this time.

Mr. Halm questioned what would be accepted as a hard surface. Mr. Sika explained that it could be asphalt, concrete, stone or even wood chips as approved by the Community Development Department.

Motion by Mrs. McDonald, supported by Mr. Halm to recommend approval to the Township Board the amendment to Section 10-2-2(M), Parking of Recreational Equipment as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Amendment to Section 10-3-3-E, Encroachments Restricted – Residential Parking.**

Mr. Sika stated that this section of the ordinance restricts vehicles from being parked within the front yard area; however, it does not restrict what type of a surface a vehicle may be parked upon. The following amendment will require that they be parked on a hard approved surface:

**10-3-3-E Encroachments Restricted:** Parking as specified and/or provided in any residential district ***shall be maintained at all times on the driveway surface as approved. Recreational vehicle and/or equipment parking is also restricted to the driveway in any residential district and agricultural district which is primarily used for single family. When parking such items in the side or rear yard, all items must be behind the front of the primary residential structure.***

Mr. Bintz then asked for public comments in favor or in opposition to this proposed amendment. There were no public comments at this time.

Motion by Mr. Lorentzen, supported by Mrs. McDonald to recommend approval to the Township Board the amendment to Section 10-3-3-E, Encroachments Restricted, Residential Parking as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

1. **Presentations**:
2. **Dr. Dwight McNally, Gratiot Animal Hospital, 8455 Gratiot Road – Site Plan for Expansion and Construction of Parking Lot.**

Mr. Bintz stated that Dr. McNally of Gratiot Animal Hospital is requesting site plan approval to expand the current parking lot located at 8455 Gratiot Road.

Mr. Terry Gregory of William A. Kibbe and Dr. McNally were present to answer any questions or concerns regarding the proposed site plan. Mr. Gregory stated that they have received a copy of the staff report and will comply with the contingencies listed in the report. Mr. Gregory did state that they would like to discuss the buffering required along the south property line. At this time there are several mature evergreen trees approximately twenty-five (25’) feet in height. They would like to keep this tree line and plant a few more comparable trees to fill in a gap in the middle of this tree line to serve as a buffer. Mr. Gregory stated that they understood the requirement for a fence; however, they would have to cut a large amount of the lower branches from the existing trees in order to erect the fence.

Discussion followed among the Planning Commission members regarding the buffer zone along the south property line. It was the general consensus of the Planning Commission members that the existing evergreen trees along with some new evergreen trees to fill the gap in the middle of the existing buffer area would be an adequate buffer between Gratiot Animal Hospital and the existing residential property.

Motion by Mr. Halm, supported by Mr. Lorentzen, to approve the proposed site plan for Gratiot Road Animal Hospital upon the follow contingencies:

* + - 1. A storm water management plan will need to be submitted and approved.
      2. A final landscaping plan will need to be submitted and approved by the Community Development Department.

1. **Sign Board of Appeals** – None.
2. **Old Business**
   * + - 1. **Tabled Item – Possible Amendment to Section 10-18C-2-3, 10-18C-4-B-2 and 10-18C-4-B-4 – Residential Multiple-Family, Intensive Low Rise District.**

Mr. Sika stated that on January 19, 2011, the Planning Commission held a hearing regarding a possible amendment to the R-3, Residential Multiple-Family, Intensive Low Rise District regarding the creation of more open space within proposed developments. After much discussion, this item was tabled until further research could be completed regarding open space requirements. The following is a revised proposed amendment requiring a recreational area for multiple family dwellings; however, the specific requirements have been removed allowing the Planning Commission the latitude to decide open space requirements on a case by case basis.

**Section 10-18C-2-3: Uses Permitted by Right:**

3. Multiple family dwelling structures, including apartments, condominiums, townhouses and other multi-family structures meeting the following open space requirements:

1. ~~Developments with forty (40) units or more will provide a recreational area within a building for residents to utilize. The size will be a minimum 1,200 square feet. The units may be on the same or contiguous parcels.~~
2. ~~In addition, an outdoor swimming pool and outdoor recreation area must be provided for developments of seventy (70) units or more on the same parcel or contiguous parcels.~~
3. ~~All required recreational areas including building, pools or outdoor play areas may not be located on required setback areas or yard areas already in use.~~
4. ***A recreational area must be provided. All required recreational areas including buildings, pools or outdoor play areas may not be located on required setback areas or yard areas already in use.***

**Section 10-18C-4-B: Minimum Yard Requirements:**

2. Each lot shall have a total side yard of thirty (30’) feet with a minimum of fifteen (15’) feet on one side, provided there shall be a minimum of thirty (30’) feet between contiguous dwelling structures.

4. Each lot shall have a minimum rear yard of forty (40’) feet for one or two family and sixty (60’) feet minimum for multi-family units between contiguous dwelling structures.

Motion by Mrs. McDonald, supported by Mr. Halm to recommend approval to the Township Board the amendment to Sections 10-18C-2-3, 10-18C-4-B-2 and 10-18C-4-B-4, Residential Multiple-Family, Intensive Low Rise District as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

1. **New Business:**
2. **Discussion Only – Possible Amendment to Section 10-2-12-C, Site Plan Requirements – Public Transportation.**

Mr. Sika stated that in December of 2010, the State of Michigan adopted PA 305 and PA 306. PA 305 requires that local Planning Commissions give consideration to public transportation when conducting site plan reviews. PA 306 enhances the consideration of public transportation in planning during site plan review. The following is a proposed update to Section 10-2-12-C of the site plan requirements to include the following text:

10-2-12-C. Site Plan Standards: The planning Commission shall review the site plans in terms of the following standards:

1. Safe and convenient vehicular ingress and egress from the proposed use without interference with surrounding transportation patterns. The Planning Commission shall have the authority to vary setbacks for yards to achieve the use of mutual access in cases where this standard will be furthered by doing so.
2. Provision of bicycle and/or pedestrian access if appropriate and as may be specifically included in the comprehensive plan.
3. Impact of structures, fencing, lighting and landscaping on adjacent land uses and properties.
4. Appropriate consideration of environmental concerns including natural resources, air quality, noise levels and storm runoff.
5. Continuance of established area patterns of landscaping, setbacks, structural materials and street furniture.
6. ***Public Transportation Review – The Planning Commission will review all site plans for consideration of public transportation, but due to the fact that Thomas Township does not have public transportation available at this time, no further action can be taken.***

The Planning Commission recommended that the proposed amendment be published for a public hearing for the next available Planning Commission meeting.

1. **Discussion Only – Resignation of Pat Wurtzel from the Planning Commission.**

Mr. Sika stated that on January 27, 2011, Pat Wurtzel submitted his resignation from the Thomas Township Planning Commission effective February 1, 2011. Pat stated that his position as a Saginaw County Board of Commissioner is causing a conflict with the meeting dates of the Planning Commission. Pat has been on the Planning Commission for many years, and his participation will be missed.

1. **Adjournment:**

Motion by Mrs. McDonald, seconded by Mr. Halm to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. The next meeting date is Wednesday***, March 16, 2011.***

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