

MINUTES

DRAFT

**THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
THOMAS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
8215 SHIELDS DRIVE, SAGINAW, MICHIGAN
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022, 7 O’CLOCK P.M.**

Members Present: R. Iamurri, D. Sommers, P. Lynch, K. Beam, D. Bird and J. Curry
Members Absent: S. Yockey
Others Physically Present: D. Sika, Community Development Director
C. Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer

Mr. Iamurri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Sika requested an amendment to the agenda removing items “B” and “C” under New Business.

Motion by Mr. Bird, supported by Mr. Sommers to approve the amended agenda.

VOTE 6 YEAS 0 NAYS 1 ABSENT MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Ms. Beam, supported by Mr. Sommers to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2021 meeting.

VOTE 6 YEAS 0 NAYS 1 ABSENT MOTION CARRIED

Administrative Reviews (informational only)

A. DISH Wireless-new cell antennae at 178 N. Graham Road on an existing tower.

New Business:

A. 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report.

The 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report was presented. It lists all of the activity of the Planning Commission for the respective year.

Motion by Mr. Bird, supported by Mrs. Curry to approve the 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report as presented.

VOTE 6 YEAS 0 NAYS 1 ABSENT MOTION CARRIED

B. Discussion of Sidewalk Maintenance Ordinance.

It was brought to the attention of the Planning Commission of issues with the enforcement of snow removal primarily along the Gratiot Road Business Corridor. The process was explained whereas the code enforcement officer inspects the sidewalks 48 hours after a snow event to make sure they have been cleared of snow and ice as required by ordinance. If they have not a courtesy letter is sent asking for the snow/ice to be cleared within 48 hours. Usually this will be enough to make most of the businesses comply, however, there is a number who choose not to comply. They are then sent a violation letter giving them another 48 hours to remove the snow/ice. If this fails to get them to comply, a Municipal Civil Infraction ticket is issued. This actually gives them 2 weeks to comply and of course pay the fine. If by this time nothing is done, a court ticket is written and then we must wait for a court date which can take up to 90 days. By that point in time, snow is gone, business owner has gotten away with not cleaning the sidewalk and the court will normally give a Permanent Injunction Order and by the next winter we will have to start the process over from the beginning. Several of the businesses have knowledge of how the system works so over and over they do not maintain the sidewalk. A lot of other communities are now requiring the removal of snow/ice and if it is not done they post the property with a 24 hour notice which states if it is not cleared within that time the Township will clear it and charge it back to the property. It is felt that something similar to this would be more successful here to improve snow removal in the business corridor and thus reducing the safety risk that has been created. After discussion among the Planning Commission they were in agreement that a change to the ordinance which allows for the Township to do the removal if it is not completed in the given amount of time would be appropriate. Mr. Sika stated that we will work on the with the Township Attorney and bring the text amendment back to the Planning Commission for review and discussion within the next few months. It is thought that this would be something we'd like to have in place by next winter.

Receive and File Correspondence:

Planning & Zoning News for December 2021 & January 2022 were distributed.

A copy of the letter sent to Mr. Jack Brown who requested a review of the “Small Wind Ordinance” was given to the members.

The Planning Commission was provided with information regarding a training opportunity through The Michigan Association of Planning for a virtual training on March 10, 2022.

Adjournment:

Motion by Mr. Sommers, supported by Mr. Bird to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Motion carried.