

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2005**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM by Chairman Allen Harmon with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:

PRESENT:	Allen Harmon	Anne Couture	Bob Cox
	Garry Lane	Ray Wolfram	
ABSENT:	Owen Murray	Jim Lauderdale	

Also present were Rebecca Harvey, PC Planning Consultant, and Pam Mosley, regarding the natural resources inventory.

3. AGENDA:

**Motion was made by Commissioner Couture, seconded by Commissioner Cox to accept the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.**

Item #8: Table until October PC Meeting .

4. MINUTES AUGUST 24, 2005:

**Motion was made by Commissioner Couture, seconded by Commissioner Lane to accept the minutes of August 24, 2005 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

6. NEW BUSINESS: PRESENTATION BY PAM MOSLEY:

Commissioner Couture introduced Pam Mosley to the PC. Ms. Mosley was retained by the 4-Twp. WRC under the Federal 319 Grant to conduct an inventory of the natural resources of the four townships of Barry, Richland, Ross and Prairieville. In doing this inventory Ms. Mosley focused on the fauna and Eric Thobaben focused on the flora. Commissioner Couture said that Ross Township, particularly, has a huge number of special resources.

Ms. Mosley passed out to the Commissioners copies of the completed 4 Twp. Natural Features Inventory for Ross Township, with potential conservation areas (PCA) included.

Ms. Mosley presented slides of some of the flora and fauna that was inventoried and a map of the inventories natural undeveloped areas in the townships.

Commissioner Couture said that one of the first things on the checklist the PC may want to look at in reviewing new proposals is to see if the property in question is in one of the PCA's, and if so, what natural resources are involved. The townships will be receiving more copies of the report and brochures for public use.

7. OLD BUSINESS: SLIDING SCALE ZONING, LOT SIZE STANDARDS, OPEN SPACE, AG-PRESERVATION DISTRICT AND RESIDENTIAL ZONE REVIEW:

Ms. Harvey went over Attorney Rolfe's review on the OSPD Text Amendment. (The tape did not work at this point and for some time forward). Commissioner Harmon said

that Attorney Rolfe will be at the October PC meeting and that the PC should wait and work through this proposed language at the October meeting.

Ms. Harvey then went over the rest of the proposed text changes.

Regarding the sliding scale and lot size standards, Ms. Harvey said she took out the lot sizes in the draft language. She also said she met with Attorney Rolfe and shared some of his comments with the PC.

Attorney Rolfe said he understands what the township wants to do in these proposed zoning changes and how it ties into the plan, but is concerned about the sliding scale approach. It is his legal opinion that this approach is being done across the state in opposition to the Land Division Act. It implies we would be in violation of this Act, but he will have to think some more on this issue. He does think that the same results can be achieved with some other language. He said we could have the ordinance challenged, but so far there have been no challenges in the state.

Ms. Harvey also reported that Attorney Rolfe was very interested in what the township was trying to do with the RR District, and that he had no legal concerns with this issue. He thought it might be formatted so that it would be more understanding to the public. She also said Attorney Rolfe was excited about this issue.

Ms. Harvey said that after the PC accomplishes a couple more steps, we need to get a packet to Attorney Rolfe and have him review it. The PC needs to spend some time brainstorming and coming up with dimensions. The PC also needs to meet with the Township Board and keep them up to date with the PC's work, showing them the concepts and how they would work and getting their blessings. When the PC comes up with some dimensional standards, Ms. Harvey will come prepared to demonstrate how the dimensions will work with the PC's numbers. She will also come up with some criteria on placement.

Commissioner Harmon would like to see placement of the proposed districts on a map, then they could meet with the Township Board, show them the map and discuss this matter together. At that point the PC can decide what they want to do dimensionally. He stated that the Township Board needs to be involved in this process because the zoning district changes will require Township Board approval.

(Tape begins again.) Zoning maps were passed out to the PC. Each commissioner is to draw on the map where they want the proposed zoning districts to be and bring them back to the October PC meeting to discuss. The number of residential zoning districts will go from 7 to 4 districts. The township office will obtain an electronic copy of the zoning map for Garry Lane to review.

The PC will plan on meeting with the Township Board soon, possibly in December.

8. REPORTS:  
*ZBA:* No report – no meeting  
*TOWNSHIP BOARD:* None

4 TWP. WRC: Commissioner Couture explained that the funds from the Federal 319 Grant were exhausted so things were going slower now.

WORKSHOPS: Commissioner Couture said a Kalamazoo River Watershed Workshop would be held October 7 in Battle Creek for anyone who would like to attend.

9. COMMISSION COMMENTS: None

10. ADJOURNMENT:

**Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lane, seconded by Commissioner Wolfram, to adjourn at 8:25 PM. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Whitney  
Recording Secretary