

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 26, 2006**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Allen Harmon with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:
PRESENT: Allen Harmon Bob Cox Rusty Fry
 Jim Lauderdale Owen Murray Garry Lane
ABSENT: Ray Wolfram

Also present was Rebecca Harvey, PC Planning Consultant.

3. AGENDA:
Motion was made by Commissioner Lauderdale, seconded by Commissioner Murray to accept the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.
4. MINUTES FEBRUARY 22, 2006:
Motion was made by Commissioner Lauderdale, seconded by Commissioner Murray to accept the minutes of February 22, 2006, as presented. Motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None
6. PARALLEL PLAT REVIEW FOR THE AUGUSTA CREEK OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT:
Arnie Polmanteer and Dan Lewis were present to discuss the proposed parallel plan for this development.

Commissioner Harmon referred to the letter from the Public Health Dept. and Mr. Lewis' letter responding to that letter. Commission Harmon said he talked to Gary Webster, from Associated Government Services this afternoon in regards to the Public Health Department's letter. He said Anne Couture was present tonight with the wetlands overlay maps for the proposed property.

Ms. Couture handed out colored copies of these maps which show wetlands and proposed conservation areas. The information on the wetlands are from the National Wetlands Inventory. She said the maps were not done to scale and that field verification could modify it. She also said she hopes this will help the PC make a decision on this property. Ms. Couture did not have a copy for the township office or for Commissioner Wolfram, who was absent.

Commissioner Harmon said that in reviewing the Health Dept.'s letter and Mr. Lewis' cover letter, that it looks like he and Mr. Lewis came to different conclusions as to the meaning of the Health Dept.'s letter. Commissioner Harmon wanted the other Commissioner's and Ms. Harvey's conclusion's to the letter.

Commissioner Lauderdale said he spoke with Mr. Rick Coult who was a Ross Township resident from about 1949 or early 1950's to the present time. His parents owned a farm on B Ave and 48th St. Mr. Coult claims he used to hunt on the property in question as a teenager. He also said the vehicles that can be seen on this property are only the tops of vehicles that were stacked on top of each other in the ravines of this property. The owner of this property used it as a car dump, charging \$25 to dump your car there. Commissioner Lauderdale said there should be a large quantity of vehicles buried on this property and believes this is important information for the Health Dept. in regards to the cleanup of this property.

Commissioner Harmon said he spoke to Gary Webster today about the Health Dept.'s letter. Mr. Webster said he had nothing to add for the meeting tonight, but did say he didn't know how the PC could move forward tonight until the property is cleaned up and we have a letter from the Health Dept. stating there is no contamination on this property.

Commissioner Cox asked about the 1000 ft. roadway issue. Commissioner Harmon said that we had legal opinion on this issue stating that because it is an access road the 1000 ft. roadway would not apply. Ms. Harvey said there was no need for a variance on the roadway because the application does not apply in this case.

Mr. Polmanteer said he hired Rose & Westra, an environmental firm out of Grand Rapids, to handle the environmental concerns on this property and decide how best to take care of this issue. Mr. Polmanteer said he hired Prein & Newhof because they are the Township's engineers, thereby avoiding problems because the engineers would know the township's requirements.

Commissioner Harmon said that presently there are 5 lots that may not be buildable and that there may be even more lots indicated as unbuildable after the cars and debris are removed. The slopes may be changed, which could possibly change the ability to install septic systems on the proposed lots. Commissioner Harmon also noted that Dan Lewis, project engineer from Prein & Newhof, is not also acting as the engineer for the township. The township office sent a letter to Prein & Newhof stating that working as the Township engineers and working on private projects within Ross Township has the potential for a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Murray stated that in the past AGS has sometimes said that a project can go forward with contingencies, but so far, this is not the case on this project. Commissioner Harmon said the applicant needs a cleaner report from the Health Dept. before they can move forward with this development.

Commissioner Lauderdale said the PC will review the JFNew Report and the overlays from the 4-Twp. WRC before they will be able to make any decision. He also told the applicants that the PC will be very cautious on this development because of some problems they have had in the past.

Motion was made by Commissioner Lauderdale, seconded by Commissioner Fry to table this parallel plat review until what ever meeting the proper information comes forward that allows the PC to understand the number of lots that are buildable from a parallel plat plan perspective. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Harmon stated that the deadline for the May 24th PC meeting is May 10th and also said he would like a line drawn showing the 100 foot from the wetlands.

7. OLD BUSINESS: ORDINANCE #171:
Commissioner Harmon said the committee did meet today to discuss the open space language in this ordinance and that they would have to meet again to work on the language. Jon Scott voiced his concern with what he sees as inconsistencies in the proposed language. The Commissioners discussed these issues with Mr. Scott.
8. NEW BUSINESS: JOINT PC/TWP. BD. MEETING:
Commissioner Harmon said a joint meeting with the Township Board is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9th, at 7:00 PM, to give the Board some understanding of the proposed changes.

9. OLD BUSINESS: RESIDENTIAL ZONE REVIEW:
There was discussion on the Ag-Preservation District. Ms. Harvey went over her Residential District Rewrite Comparison Summary. Commissioner Harmon asked Ms. Harvey to present the Board with the proposed changes at the joint meeting.

10. REPORTS:
ZBA: Commissioner Harmon spoke about a variance request on an odd shaped lot that had a leg going down to the canal in order to have access to the canal. The applicant was told he needed a variance but the township attorney stated this was not a waterfront lot. Commissioner Harmon would like this to be on the PC's agenda again to discuss the issue of what is a "waterfront lot". Commissioner Fry believes AGS needs to be clear of their interpretation of this issue in order to make a correct judgment. Commissioner Harmon said the ZBA requested some sort of refund from the township to the applicant for this variance request.

TOWNSHIP BOARD: Trustee/Commissioner Murray went over the Township Board Minutes. He said the fee schedule was tabled until the next meeting in order to obtain more information from the Clerk and Treasurer. He also said Fireworks have been approved for the 4th of July. He relayed the discussion on contributing fees to the Cable Commission. The consensus was that the township is contributing roughly \$25,000 a year to the Cable Commission and not getting much in return for those monies. Also, the Trustees are not pleased with how the monies are reported to the township. Currently, Ross Township has pulled out of the funding of the Cable Commission.

Anne Couture gave an update on the 4-Twp. WRC. She said the Council provided the maps tonight for the parallel plan. She believes the PC should require GPS coordinates for the GIS overlays for geographic referencing.

11. COMMISSION COMMENTS:
Commissioner Harmon told the PC that there would be a Public Hearing May 24th which would include text changes in Section 6.9A, 9.34, 9.39, a rezoning request, going from R-1 to R-A, and text changes for the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

Commissioner Cox handed out some proposed language for "dark sky lighting" and definitions for the Commissioners to consider for our ordinance. This language is copied from Texas Township's ordinance and Commissioner Cox said he added the definitions. This will be on the May agenda.

Commissioner Lauderdale noted the letter from Chris Noteboom, Augusta-Ross Fire Chief regarding the New Cingular Wireless site plan.

12. ADJOURNMENT:
Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lane at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Whitney
Recording Secretary