

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 24, 2006**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chairman Allen Harmon with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:
PRESENT: Allen Harmon Bob Cox Rusty Fry
 Jim Lauderdale Jeff Price Garry Lane
ABSENT: Owen Murray

Also present was Rebecca Harvey, PC Planning Consultant and Gary Webster, Associated Government Services.

3. AGENDA:
Motion was made by Commissioner Lauderdale, seconded by Commissioner Lane to accept the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.
Item #9 was removed from the agenda. Bob Oudsema, Hillcrest OSPD, is present and would like to have a few minutes to speak to the Commissioners. He will speak during the Public Comments portion of the meeting.
4. MINUTES APRIL 26, 2006:
Motion was made by Commissioner Cox, seconded by Commissioner Fry to accept the minutes of April 26, 2006, as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS:
Bob Oudsema wanted to bring the Planning Commissioners up to date on the Hillcrest OSPD. He told the Commissioners that the removal of the arsenic contaminated soil is about 75% completed at the present. The developers hope to be finished with this portion of the proposed development in the next three to four weeks. Mr. Oudsema said they would like to do a project with both city water and sewer. The developers are hoping the PC will give them an increase in density with these public utilities. He said the new plan is superior to the plan that was previously approved. Mr. Oudsema proposed two plans tonight: Plan A has 590 units, including the Village Greens area, and Plan B has 541 units without the Village Greens area. He said they could live with Plan B but would really like to have Plan A if at all possible. The open space would increase from just over 50% to approximately 58%-60%. They are able to increase the open space because they are reducing the lot sizes. Mr. Oudsema said that both school districts should be happy, because each of them would gain a few more houses in their districts.
Mr. Oudsema said they are also asking to be able to put in an area for storage buildings for the home owners. The storage buildings would be directly linked to the ownership of housing in Hillcrest, and not for anyone else's use. The storage buildings will look esthetically great, scaled down but similar to the Gilmore Barn Car Museum.
Gull Lake Water and Sewer will be in charge of designing, installing and managing the sewer and water systems but the township will own it.
Commissioner Harmon said the current text doesn't allow for an increase in density and would require a text amendment before the PC could grant that request. He also said the proposed text amendment could be on the agenda for the next PC meeting if the applicant brings proposed wording in to the township office. The PC could then undertake and move forward on

this issue. Commissioner Cox said he would like to have the applicant bring an overlay to the PC so they can clearly see what the proposed changes would be. Commissioner Harmon said there would be a two or three step process involved. The first step would be for the applicant to bring in proposed text. The applicant would also need an amended site plan review and the overlays would be of great help for the review.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – TEXT AMENDMENTS:

EXPLAIN REQUEST: Ms. Harvey explained the proposed text changes to the public.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS: None

COMMISSION QUESTIONS: Commissioner Harmon made a clarification as to the meaning of the text change in section 9.34. Commissioner Fry asked how we judge what is 50% of the structure? Gary Webster asked if it is 50% of the living area, or is a garage included? There was discussion on how the 50% of square foot would be calculated. Mr. Webster also asked if the PC contemplated collateral damage, water damage?

The consensus was to change the language from "...the extent of 50% or more of its total square footage at the time..." to "...the extent of 50% or more of said building/structure at the time..."

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMISSION COMMENTS: None

Motion was made by Commissioner Cox, seconded by Commissioner Lane to recommend to the Township Board for adoption the text amendments as adjusted. Motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC HEARING -- REZONING REQUEST:

EXPLAIN REQUEST: Commissioner Harmon explained the request for rezoning 17 acres currently zoned R-1 to R-A. The purpose of the request is to allow for the legal possession of horses on the property. The request has been reviewed by the township attorney and found that such a rezoning request does meet the Long Range Plan.

Attorney Maybee, was present to represent Dr. Abushmaies and Dr. Bedford in this rezoning request. He said his clients are seeking this request in order to have horses and other livestock on the property. The applicants have lived in the house for about 12 years and would like to keep the property in a rural setting with low density. The horses are their own personal horses. They believe this zoning change will not detrimentally affect the neighboring property, create any traffic problems or cause any type of environmental hardship and believe it would be beneficial for the township.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS: Mr. James Geary, 6191 N. 37th St., said he had no objections or problems with what the Abushmaies (Bedford) family is doing now. He would like to know what the ramifications would be to neighboring property owners. He wants to know how this rezoning would affect the neighbors if the Abushmaies (Bedford) sold to another party at a later date. Commissioner Harmon explained the special exception requests that could be used on R-A zoned property. Mr. Geary asked if allowing horses on this property could be done any other way than rezoning. Commissioner Harmon stated it could only be accomplished through a change in

zoning. Mr. Geary was concerned a large livestock/poultry operation could be put there in the future.

Commissioner Cox explained how many horses are allowed on the 17 acres, a maximum of 16 large animals. Dr. Bedford (Abushmaies) said their barn has 8 horse stalls and that they currently have 5 horses for their own use.

COMMISSION QUESTIONS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMISSION COMMENTS: None

Motion by Commissioner Lauderdale, seconded by Commissioner Lane to accept the request for rezoning for 6291 N. 37th Street from R-1 to R-A and recommend the request to the Township Board for approval. Motion passed unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS: CRANE'S POND FINAL APPROVAL:

Charles Scott was present to represent the Crane's Pond OSPD. Commissioner Harmon stated that Attorney Rolfe has reviewed and approved the Irrevocable Conveyance and Master Deed per his letter to the PC. Mr. Webster said that they went through the entire list of pending issues and with the current submittals all conditions have been provided or shown. There were no further Commission questions.

Motion was made by Commissioner Lauderdale, seconded by Commissioner Lane, to grant final approval for the Special Exception Use Request and Site Plan for Crane's Pond OSPD Phase I. Motion passed unanimously.

9. ITEM #9 REMOVED FROM AGENDA

10. NEW BUSINESS: PC & TWP. BOARD COMBINED MEETING UPDATE:

Commissioner Harmon said he thought the combined meeting went very well. The Twp. Board accepted the document from the PC and listened attentively to Ms. Harvey's presentation. The Twp. Board took it under advisement and would like some time to study it. They plan to have a public input meeting sometime in September. Commissioner Lane asked if the Twp. Board had any major objections. Commissioner Harmon said the Board had no major objections but their one major concern was lot sizes. He believes it is just a matter of the Board looking at it. He believes they are in agreement on the zone descriptions, the uses, and the concept of giving the density bonuses in the R-2 & R-3 zones with the presence of sewer and water. He also thinks they are going to be in agreement with the concept of having a different lot sizes for platted vs. open space lots, or the sliding scale. The Board wanted to study this a little longer. Jon Scott raised a question on parallel plats, and what the PC would use for lot sizes and block lengths. Commissioner Harmon thinks the PC is 95% of the way there to approval on the proposed changes.

Commissioner Cox thinks it would be a good idea to have a map for the Twp. Board members to visually see the proposed zoning districts including the Ag-Preservation District. Commissioner Lauderdale said he would encourage this Commission to take some time before they engage the Twp. Board in further discussion and come to agreement on where they really want the districts located. The Commissioners will try to have copies of the map with the proposed districts shown for the PC and Twp. Board to study.

11. REPORTS:
ZBA: Commissioner Harmon said the ZBA had one request for a pergola. The request was denied because the request was driven by design.

Mr. Oudsema had a question on the overlay transparencies requested by the PC. He was directed to deliver the transparencies to the township office.

Commissioner Harmon said he was directed by the Township Supervisor to hold a June PC meeting. Since Commissioner Harmon will be gone at that time, Commissioner Cox will preside over the meeting. Commissioner Harmon said that Stoney Creek, Phase V, will be on the June agenda.

TOWNSHIP BOARD: None

WORKSHOPS: None

4-TWP. WATER RESOURCE COUNCIL: None

12. COMMISSION COMMENTS:
Commissioner Harmon welcomed the newest Planning Commission member, Jeff Price.

Commissioner Cox explained the new sewer system that will be going in around Sherman Lake. Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority will start breaking ground in June.

13. ADJOURNMENT:
Motion made by Commissioner Lane to adjourn at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Whitney
Recording Secretary