

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
September 26, 2007**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission meeting on **September 26, 2007** was called to order by Chairman Cox at approximately 7:00 P.M. at the Ross Township Hall. After the pledge of allegiance the roll was called.

ROLL CALL

Those present were: Robert Cox
 Russell Fry
 Diana Langshaw, arrived late
 Jeff Price
 Garry Lane
 Robb Blain

Absent were: Jim Lauderdale

Also present were: Rebecca Harvey, Planning Consultant
 Gary Webster, AGS

AGENDA

On motion by Cox seconded by Lane the agenda was unanimously approved with the following modifications:

Move Sherman Lake YMCA site plan review to after Public Comment

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for June 27, 2007

On motion by Fry seconded by Lane the Minutes of **6/27/07** were unanimously approved with the following changes:

- Page 1, first paragraph under Item #7 change "to" to "too"
- Page 2, last line Change "Fry" to "Price"

PUBLIC COMMENT on non-agenda items - None

NEW BUSINESS

Sherman Lake YMCA – Site Plan – addition of farm barn

After Webster reviewed the AGS report, Luke Austenfeld stated that only a small amount of hay may be stored in the building. He also said that some animals such as chickens may be housed in the barn, but the Y Camp is uncertain how many animals there will be.

Cox asked about whether neighboring buildings have a bathroom. In response Austenfeld said that port-a-johns will be used.

Fry asked if all ADA requirements will be complied with, and Austenfeld said that the entire facility is grade level accessible.

In response to an additional question regarding accessibility, Webster said that if the building is used as an assembly area, such as for performances, barn dances, etc. then additional requirements under the Building Code would be required that are not required for a structure used as an agricultural building. For example, the building would have to be wired for emergency egress lighting and exit signage. There may have to be panic hardware on doors, and other equipment not usually found in barns.

Price inquired into the necessity for conditionally approving the site plan with the contingency being sanitation permits for future bathrooms, and Webster explained that the submittal requirements require locations of wells, drain fields and septic tanks. None are being proposed at this time so they are not shown on the drawings. This would simply address the future possibility that a bathroom could be added.

Cox took the Planning Commission through the items that AGS identified on its report. The Commission agreed that the scale can be waived and that parking facilities are adequate for the intended use.

There was some discussion about how emergency vehicles will reach the barn.

The Commission also agreed to waive the requirement for land contours at this time and to make the approval contingent upon obtaining sanitation approval when a bathroom is installed.

Fry moved to approve the site plan waiving the scale requirements, accepting the parking facilities as they are, waiving the contours, accepting that there is no unusual fire load, and conditioning the approval upon sanitary permits being secured when a bathroom is installed. The motion was seconded by Lane and unanimously **APPROVED.**

In response to Austenfeld's question regarding what level of drawings will be necessary to obtain a permit, Webster explained that sealed drawings are required.

OLD BUSINESS

Draft Zoning Changes

Rebecca Harvey distributed proposed zoning district language changes and updated the Commission on progress so far. The text was approved by the Commission and forwarded to the attorney last year. Mr. Rolfe supported the changes generally but had some questions. He and Harvey met to discuss them. The new language consolidates some of the zoning districts, and they now tie into the Master Plan. The sliding scale for zoning district requirements were discussed. New provisions of the Right to Farm were included, and provisions for clustered land development. Harvey said that in the end the changes to the previously approved language were very minor. The biggest challenge was what to do with the mobile Home District. Rolfe suggested that because so many of the requirements in the R-4 (Mobile Home District) are already contained in the State Administrative Rules, the redundant Township language could be eliminated. These rules and the Ordinance requirements will be reviewed to see what can be eliminated. There will be one last meeting between Harvey and Rolfe before the October meeting.

Harvey described the Sliding Scale in the Agricultural District, which is now discussed in terms of density rather than lots. She also pointed out the changes in the R-R District relative to the Right to Farm Act. She noted that the language regarding roads in the Clustered Land Development section mirrored the open space preservation language. The lighting requirements of R-3 would be approved by the Planning Commission rather than the ZBA as was the previous situation.

Cox suggested that the Planning Commission review the changes between now and the October meeting and set a public hearing for the November meeting.

Price asked if there is a definition of "Large Tracts", and Harvey said that the language before the Commission is general in nature, and the language in the Ordinance defines what the large parcels are.

Langshaw raised the issue of horse owners not taking care of the horses, manure, insects, dust, and the lack of pasture. She believes that larger setbacks and larger parcels for such facilities may be necessary. Most such barnyards have been denuded of vegetation and are most probably eroding.

Lane asked if the Township can create additional regulations to prevent soil erosion on horse and other animal farms.

Cox responded that this had been an item of discussion when the Planning Commission was working on the Land Use Plan. The Commission may have to return to this issue.

Harvey pointed out that in the Agricultural Preservation District there are no conditions and limitations such as those in the Rural Residential District. Langshaw believes that such standards may be necessary for the AG district as well.

Price asked how the Commission can approach the necessity of larger parcels for horse boarding/riding establishments.

Harvey will research recommended standards that might be used to address this issue, and Cox suggested that this should not hold up the public hearing in November.

Lighting Standards Overview

Harvey presented an overview of Draft 2 of the Lighting Standards. It applies the requirements to all of the zoning districts, however only those projects subject to site plan would be actually subject to the standards. There is no residential standard other than the mounting height and wattage measured in foot candles at the property line.

She pointed out that the foot candle plans for commercial developments are provided by the fixture manufacturer for each fixture.

Langshaw discussed existing lighting and to what standards they must conform.

Cox suggested that glaring lights should also be prohibited when shining onto navigable water ways. There was considerable discussion of preventing glare beyond shorelines.

Webster suggested adding language, which could be added to regulate the foot candles measurable over docks and piers regulated by Township Ordinance.

Cox is concerned with the mounting height of lights and suggested that it be measured “from grade”. He also suggested changing the language that allows a maximum wattage per “lamp” to “fixture”. It was also suggested that the language relative to outdoor advertising signs in Section 9.2 be changed to reference the new standards.

OLD BUSINESS – Members

Fry reported on the trail through Ross Township, which has been previously discussed. The speaker that was to be present could not be at the meeting. Fry suggested that the Planning Commission consider how people using the trail would reach it from north and south. It could be done by designating a strip at the side of the road, a bike path, etc.

Lane concurred saying that a bike path around Gull Lake would be very desirable.

NEW BUSINESS – Members – None

REPORTS

ZBA

Commissioner Lauderdale was absent so there was no report.

Township Board

Langshaw suggested that if the Planning Commission has a budget change it should be brought to the attention of the Township Board before the end of the year.

Workshops

Price said that the only meeting he had planned to attend was canceled.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Cox requested that the members review the Master Plan before the next meeting so that it can be put on the October agenda.

He also said that he will not be able to fill out his term on the Planning Commission, since he has some health issues which drain his energy. He will serve through December 31, 2007, and then Jim Lauderdale will serve until the elections can be held.

Langshaw suggested moving the election of officers up to allow the new chairman to work with Cox for the last month or so.

Lane made a motion to move the election of officers for the 2008 year only up from the January meeting to the October agenda even if Cox remained as chairman until December. The motion was seconded by Price and unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Lane seconded by Langshaw and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Webster
AGS