

**ROSS TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**
November 28, 2007

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission meeting on **November 28, 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, and Cox turned the meeting over to newly elected chairman, Jim Lauderdale.

ROLL CALL

Those present were: Robert Cox
 Diana Langshaw
 Robb Blain
 Jim Lauderdale
 Garry Lane
 Russell Fry

Absent were: Jeff Price

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

AGENDA

On motion by Cox seconded by Langshaw the agenda was unanimously approved with the following change:

To change item 7 to include discussion of the information on Livestock acreage.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for **October 24, 2007**

On motion by Cox seconded by Lane the Minutes of **10/24/07** were unanimously approved with the following changes:

Page 2, last line: Add "on" after "based"

Page 3, first paragraph: change the phrase "building well as" to "building as well as"

Page 3, last paragraph: change the last sentence to read: "The Commission agreed to delete the Table of Uses in Section 12"

PUBLIC COMMENT on non-agenda items - None

OLD BUSINESS

Lighting Standard Text Amendment Draft

Rebecca Harvey led the discussion. She has updated the opening paragraph of the draft, which incorporates the comments and suggestions from the last meeting as well as comments by Cox after the board made its suggestions and finally some of Harvey's suggestions.

Cox noted that he has changed some of the order of items to reflect the priorities that the Planning Commission has. Additionally, he said that in Indiana lighting was having an effect on local crops, so changes were made to address those issues relative to public streets.

Fry said that when flags are illuminated the light must of necessity spill over into the night sky. He suggested that this may require an exception, since the draft language seems to prohibit light spilling over into the night sky in all cases.

Cox suggested lights that can be mounted on top of a flagpole, or making an exception for the illumination of State and National Flags. After additional discussion, Harvey will make this change.

Lane wondered if businesses know that they will have to change their lighting when a modification of existing lighting is made. He wanted to know how this would be enforced.

In response Harvey said that whenever a business wants to change its site in some way even if it is only lighting, it is supposed to come before the Planning Commission for approval. This allows the Township to address the question of whether the business has a lighting problem. She also said that these issues are generally addressed by complaint.

There was discussion of "sharp cut-off lighting" and temporary lighting such as beacons.

Harvey said that she will relocate the definition of "sharp cut-off" to the definition section. Regulating temporary lighting, she said, may be problematic.

Lane moved to recommend approval of the proposed lighting language to the Township Board for consideration and to hold the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Fry and unanimously **APPROVED.**

Lauderdale said he wanted to make it clear that the Commission would like to have the Township Board's input for the public hearing.

Zoning Changes Draft – Sign Ordinance Draft

These are changes to Section 9.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, and Harvey commented that she has compiled the suggestions made by the Commission at its last meeting and made them part of this draft. She also said that if the Commission were interested in establishing a height standard, members would have to discuss that standard at this meeting.

There followed a discussion of 15 feet as the maximum height for commercial and industrial districts and what standard should apply to residential districts. The Commission agreed to use 15 feet for the commercial and industrial districts and 6 feet maximum height in residential districts.

Fry wanted to know if this would be consistent with Richland Township standards. He believes that consistency among municipalities is desirable.

Lauderdale suggested using the language that the Commission has, since the Commission has been interested in making everything smaller. If there are obvious problems, they can be addressed at the time they come up.

Harvey believes that the sign standards are comparable to Prairieville and Oshtemo, although Texas Township may have a slightly larger standard.

This sign draft is part of the residential update.

Lane moved to accept the changes to the sign ordinance as they were just discussed and to recommend making them part of the existing sign ordinance. The motion was seconded by Blain and unanimously **APPROVED.**

Livestock per acre

Harvey said she has researched other community ordinances and what standards they have. She suggested using “animal unit” as the standard instead of “horse, cow, etc.” A 1200 to 1500 pound animal equates to one “animal unit” and is the approximate weight of a horse. An additional problem is wooded land and areas that contain buildings. These areas are unusable for grazing. She is essentially suggesting using “one animal unit per acre of pasture land”. She would also define “pasture land” as exclusive of sacrifice areas, land containing structures, paddocks, etc. It would be land suitable for grazing. She added that the Township attorney would also want to comment of the draft language that she has created

Also discussed was the minimum parcel size for having animals, whether it should be five acres or ten, and whether the residence, yards, drives, etc. are to be eliminated in this calculation.

The Commission agreed to leave the minimum at five acres of pasture land in order to have animals.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers

There was discussion of having co-vice chairmen, and Langshaw nominated Jeff Price and Rusty Fry as co-vice chairmen. The nomination was seconded by Lane. There being no other

nominations. Langshaw moved to close the nominations and to elect Price and Fry as co-vice chairmen. The motion was seconded by Lane and unanimously **APPROVED.**

REPORTS

ZBA

Lauderdale summarized the denial of the Abushmaeis request.

Township Board

Langshaw reported on the comments by the Fire Chief regarding the Rosenberger street configuration. The Board also discussed the burn ordinance, Sherman Lake weed control, and the appointment of Mr. Harvey to the ZBA position vacated by the resignation of John Scott.

Workshops - None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Cox said that this would be his last meeting. He thanked all of the members for their hard work, and he urged that the Township continue to use the Comprehensive Land Use Plan that the Commission worked so hard on.

He also believes that the Township Board will have to be more aggressive on weed control because of the invasion of the hydrilla plant.

There will be no December meeting.

Lauderdale said that according to the tentative budget, the Commission appears to have sufficient funds for the next year.

Lauderdale commended Cox on all of the work he has done and his valuable input over his tenure as chairman and member of the Ross Township Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Lane seconded by Fry and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Webster
AGS