

Vergennes Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting - August 3, 1998

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The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chairman Gillett. Also present were: Pedley, Howard, and Weber. The minutes of the July 6th & 20th meetings were approved with a motion by Pedley, seconded by Howard.

Gillett began with a review of the July 20th Public Hearing concerning child care, medical & dental facilities in RA & R1. He reviewed a letter from Larry Nix of Williams and Works who had been asked for some input - also a letter from Pfaller who was absent, but expressed his feelings in writing. Nix was of the opinion that these types of operations were substantially commercial in nature, and should be restricted to Commercial Districts. Copies of both letters are attached to these minutes.

Pedley noted that the general feeling of those expressing opinions at the Public Hearing were quite negative concerning the child care facilities. Howard voiced his opinion that inclusion of these types of operations would add uniformity to the ordinance, and to include these uses as Special Uses would assure that each specific case would be handled as an individual request. Gillett wondered if it would be best to use the Home Based Business Ordinance as the regulatory document. Weber expressed his concern about the number of children planned for in the proposed facility on Lally Rd.

Mike Stephens of 11751 Lally commented that in his opinion the Murray Lake community could use a child care facility in the area. Another resident, Scott Jernberg, spoke in favor of the facility also.

Howard had contacted Grattan the sewer authority and found out that it costs \$1,000.00 to apply for a permit. He also reported that no complaints concerning the Grattan sewer have been recorded with the county Department of Public Works.

Roger Kropf was disappointed that the Public Hearing was allowed to be a soapbox for the opposition. He spoke of his family history in the Murray Lake area, mentioning various projects they have sponsored, and assured the commission that, if allowed to construct a child care facility, it would be built to the neighbors satisfaction. He questioned the traffic counts as being accurate, and suggested that the proposed facility would only bring an estimated 10% increase in traffic. He also pointed out that the fears expressed by the neighbors during the Public Hearing were, in his opinion, unfounded, asking "Have anyone of you ever stood by a 100 child day care center for 1 hr. and experienced what it's really like?" He stressed the center would be a community project that will grow a better community, and promised that if there is something wrong, they will make it right. He asked that the Planning Commission look at this logically and perhaps table the issue until next month.

Weber responded that the change would make any of these facilities possible for anyone who would like to apply for a Special Exception Use Permit in R1 & RA. The community would need to develop standards by which applicants can be measured uniformly, and that they could not make a decision based on this circumstance alone. It was suggested that Vet clinics would be logical facilities to add to consideration here as well.

Gillett noted that in his opinion the individual circumstances here don't make any difference - he feels the issue is do we allow stand alone facilities or should they follow Home Based Business requirements?

Howard motioned to table the issue until the full commission can be present, and to have a professional planner present to give input at the September 8th meeting, or else hold a special meeting to accommodate Larry Nix. Weber seconded, and the motion carried. Weber suggested that a checklist of concerns based on the list in Nix's letter be developed for this meeting.

In further business, the commission continued review of the suggested ordinance changes by township attorney Doezema, continuing from the work done at the July meeting. Wilcox offered to compile the amendments as noted and get them to the Planning Commission for the September meeting.

On the September agenda - a revised site plan review application for review and recommendation. Also, accessory buildings - Gillett would like to ask Larry Nix to assist with language for ordinance amendments. He suggested that they consider making front yard accessory buildings Special Exception Use Permits.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Mari Stone
Recorder