

# Vergennes Township

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 4, 2003

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on August 4, 2003 at the Township Offices. At 7:05 PM the meeting was called to order by Chairman Jernberg. Also present were Commissioners Kropf, Mastrovito, Medendorp, Nauta and Richmond. Absent was Gillett.

**APPROVAL OF JULY MINUTES:** Motion to approve by Nauta, seconded by Medendorp. All approved.

**APPROVAL OF/CHANGES TO AGENDA:** Motion to approve by Medendorp, seconded by Kropf. All approved.

**1. ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: WIRELESS COMMUNICATION ORDINANCE.** Jeanne Vandersloot presented. Discussed concerns from last month. The current document reflects those concerns and includes rewritten definitions, presented at Board meeting. Jim Doezema tweaked it and approved it with those changes. Format as written this evening is the final document. Public hearing could be scheduled next Board Meeting. None of the major original parameters (distance between towers, co-location) has changed, mostly terminology.

**Motion** to recommend approval to the Township Board with the changes as made by Medendorp. Seconded by Nauta. All approved.

**2. ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: AGRICULTURAL GARDEN CENTER.** Jeanne Vandersloot discussed, looking at draft #3. Township lawyer Jim Doezema recommended a few changes, outlined in yellow on tonight's draft. Discussion about location of where produce comes from (locally versus distant). Helps to say "fresh produce" to limit what could be sold. Steve Kropf: "Farm market" could range from fresh produce through cider and jam. Inventory of related items might extend past fresh produce. How to limit the size? Is the point to limit what's offered, or the volume of what's sold? "Locally-grown" may not be the way to create a limit. Could limit to square footage, and then the Planning Commission would see it on the site plan. Perhaps a "seasonal" use. Could this fall under the roadside stand ordinance/Vandersloot: roadside stands have a different intent. There are other regulations that would make that idea not feasible. Medendorp: How about saying that what could be sold is the same as what's in the section of the existing ordinance under RA Zoning, B: Permitted uses, #4.

Vandersloot also pointed out the revised definition of utility vehicle per last month's discussion. Jernberg: suggests "similar-powered lawn and garden equipment" to replace the word "agricultural."

**Motion** by Richmond, seconded by Nauta to make wording changes in the definition section as follows:

- definition of agricultural garden center will say "lawn & garden center"
- remove the words "locally grown"
- where it says "similar-powered lawn and agricultural equipment" replace the word

“agricultural” to “lawn and garden.” All approved.

– change “agricultural” with “lawn” in Section C, #9

**Motion** to schedule a public hearing for September meeting with the changes as noted tonight, by Nauta, seconded by Richmond. All approved.

**3. ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: LIQUOR LICENSE.** Presentation by Vandersloot. Owners of Shady Acres applied for a liquor license in 1998. Have a BYO policy but have had problems. With a liquor license, there are controls. Shady Acres got turned down then re: lack of an ordinance. The Township Board at that time recommended the Planning Commission write a liquor license ordinance, but it hadn't been done, so now it has made its way onto the commission's agenda. The booklet given out to commissioners can guide them. Licenses vary, and two licenses remain available to Vergennes (the first one is already being used by Arrowhead Golf Course). Doezema suggests a stand-alone ordinance be adopted by the Township Board. Next step: develop the local ordinance, probably using the state commission's language and rules/regulations. Licenses are approved/granted by the state, but an applicant has to begin at the local level for original approval. Jay/Jeanne/Jim can draft an ordinance for starters, and the commission asked that this be done.

**4. DISCUSSION: STABLES ON PROPERTY WITHOUT RESIDENCE.** Presentation by Vandersloot. The problem has to do with tax laws regarding equestrian use assessment classifications. The ordinance includes horse stables as it defines agricultural buildings but under assessment standards horse stables are not considered agricultural. Assessor Rashid indicates it's becoming a problem. There is not a problem zoning-wise, but it does exist assessment-wise. Baird: horse raising is considered agriculture. Dept of Agriculture rules seem to conflict with the assessment system. Farm Bureau should address this for policy development. Raising animals versus boarding them is two different things - agriculture versus commercial activity. Fits the rural character concept to have animals instead of houses on the acreage. Do we need to amend the RA zoning or do we leave it (it's currently permitted to build a stable without a house)? **Motion** by Kropf, seconded by Richmond to leave the ordinance alone, as is. All approved.

**General Public Comment Time:** none

Motion to adjourn by Mastrovito, seconded by Kropf. All approved.

The next meeting is September 8, 2003.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kate Dernocoeur, Recorder