

Vergennes Township
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
August 14, 2000

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on August 14, 2000 at the Township Offices. At 7:00 PM the meeting was called to order by chairman Gillett. Also present were Commissioners Baird, Jernberg, Lenihan and Warning. Alger, Culross, Nauta and Weber were absent.

APPROVAL OF JULY 10 MINUTES: Motion to approve by Lenihan, seconded by Baird. All approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Gillett requested the addition of a group discussion regarding the Permanent Retention of Open Space Committee.

OLD BUSINESS – None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. REZONING REQUEST FROM RICHARD AND SHIRLEY COOPER.

Overview presented by Richard Cooper. He has 157 acres located at the corner of Alden Nash and Foreman and is requesting it be rezoned from R-1 to R-3 in order to develop the property. He bought the property approximately 10 years ago. Cleaned up broken farm equipment scattered around the property and tore down an old barn. He requested the house with 1 acre be split off. A test well was drilled and soil borings drilled around the property. The results were mostly sand and gravel samples. He went on to explain that in 1993 the Lowell Township requested an easement on his property to hook up the High School to sewer. Cooper agreed, providing any homes developed on the property be allowed to hook up to the sewer anytime in the future. He felt this was now a good time to develop the property with the new Meijer store going in, improvements in the roads over the past few years and a good location between the high school and middle school. Cooper has been approached by many developers, but hasn't decided on anything specific. His goal is to preserve the woods and creek that runs through the property and have areas of open space.

Questions/comments from the Commission: Why such a big request from R1 to R3? Why not R2 instead? That's a big variance from 50 to 600 homes. Cooper stated this was the most economical route and that he did not intend to put 6 units per acre. He also mentioned that developers are not interested in developing the property if it were to stay R-1.

Why are you asking for this now and not years earlier? Gillett stated that this request was denied previously, approximately 7-8 years ago due to no demand for this kind of development. Cooper stated the overall growth in the area was a big factor in

requesting the R-3. Gillett commented that one positive is the sewer and water is already in place and the master plan did target this area as a possible higher density development site.

Baird asked what was the zoning around the new Meijer store? No one was sure, but would be checked out.

The commissioners asked Jay what is felt about the rezoning to R-3. Jay stated he has the right to ask. The Planning Commission will need to set the date for the public hearing and give their recommendation to the board. The master plan looks 20 years out and we just need to ask if this is the right time for this type of development. Are the utilities, roads, etc. there to support it? There is not that big of a step from R-3 to R-2.

Can a trailer park go in there if the R-3 is approved? Jay stated Yes, this could open the doors to higher density developments.

Does the City of Lowell have the capacity to handle this demand? Cooper reminded them that the Lowell Township has a legal obligation to support the requested hookups due to the agreement made in 1993.

A concern was brought up regarding the open space. Would this be the unusable swamp land as many developers do? Cooper stated there was no swamp land on his property and offered to walk the property with anyone interested.

Motion by Jernberg to schedule a public hearing on Monday, September 25th at 7:00pm. Seconded by Baird. All approved. A special meeting date was required due to Cooper out of town for the next two meeting dates.

- 2. PERMANENT RETENTION FOR OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION.** Gillett asked the Planning Commission to support the individuals on this committee. He would like them to help look for different ways and ideas to give to the community on how to develop their property. Add additional options to their tool box and find more ways to preserve the rural character. Not asking them to join the committee, but rather support them and look at the ordinances in supporting their goals. Jeanne mentioned her recent tour to a new development near Brighton. It was a very impressive planned community with effective use of open space.

Motion to adjourn by Gillett. Seconded by Lenihan.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Kyllonen