

Vergennes Township

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

December 6, 1999

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on December 6, 1999 at the Township Offices. At 7:00 PM the meeting was called to order by Chairman Gillett. Also present were Commissioners Culross, Dalga, Howard, Jernberg, Nauta, and Pfaller. Absent were Alger and Weber.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES: Motion to table approval until the “attached document” mentioned in the minutes could be reviewed. Motion by Pfaller, seconded by Dalga. All agreed.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING (11/22/99) MINUTES: Motion to approve by Pfaller, seconded by Dalga. All approved.

1. REQUEST & DISCUSSION BY PETE FABER FOR CARLSON FARMS PUD: (re: possibility & method of constructing one or two model homes while private road is being constructed). If allowed, should build as a condition of approval of PUD. There’s a risk, if something goes wrong with the PUD, that without temporary legal land division, the home(s) wouldn’t meet zoning regulations otherwise. Driveways would be on a shared driveway, would not create individual curb cuts onto Lally. Faber would plan models to be 300' apart.

2. RATIFICATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Trustee Geiger-Hessler was disappointed that the Planning Commission wasn’t entirely present at the 11/22/99 meeting.

Motion by Pfaller to adopt the Comprehensive Plan. Seconded by Dalga. All approved via role call vote.

3. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS FROM ZONING

ADMINISTRATOR & ZBA: (see document titled “Zoning Administrator Requests for Ordinance Amendment Consideration,” handed out in meeting packets, for complete text)

Clarification & housekeeping re: accessory buildings:

- 1) 201.304 B 5 - R-A District: Should state that accessory buildings other than agricultural are a permitted use. Commissioners agreed to accept the recommended wording.
- 2) 201.305 B 7 - R-1 District: needs clarification that home occupations & home based businesses are allowed in accessory buildings. Commissioners agreed to suggested wording.
- 3) 201.404 B: re: domestic farm animals, stabling, lot size, and set-back rules. As lots become divided into 1 acre parcels, there is concern that it may be inappropriate to allow

livestock on such parcels. There may be a difference in R-A vs R-1. Some R-1 lots are larger than 1 acre (but may eventually be divided). Concern for supporting FFA and 4-H projects. Concern about side set-back rules - could see reducing to 75-feet to accommodate 300-foot wide lots. After lengthy discussion, this item was assigned for in-depth review and consideration by a sub-committee (Pfaller, Nauta, Alger, and Weber). It will be discussed later by the entire Commission. (Especially, see page 956.1 of ordinances re: numbers of farm animals allowed on lots greater than and less than 5 acres -- need to be explicit depending on lot size).

Motion: by Howard, to reduce side set-back footage for stable/barn/animal shelters to 75 feet in RA. Seconded by Nauta. All approved.

Re: Lake Residential District, ordinance does not reflect that access buildings are a permitted use. Housekeeping item, approved by commission.

Re: putting up small “kit”-style storage buildings, and set-back rules regarding them: Historically, if buildings are under 200 square feet and are not attached to the ground, no building permit is required. Lengthy discussion about this generally included how to define a “minor” accessory building. Sample language was recommended in a memo from Kilpatrick dated 11/29/99 and included in meeting packets. It was noted that the types of kits sold won’t meet the township’s standard that accessory buildings be “similar in material and architectural style” to primary site buildings.

Lengthy discussion about construction, timing and location limitations (again, per the memo from Kilpatrick dated 11/29/99). Cement slabs under these buildings occur about 50% of the time, according to ZA. Also, it was questioned whether to request a fee? (Fees can be set by a resolution of the commission, so as not to have to amend ordinances.)

Re: whether to allow minor accessory buildings to be placed right on the lot line, it was noted that many people store things like ladders and firewood behind them, so something like a 5-foot setback would be appropriate. A site “sketch” would be needed if there’s a set-back applied. Proposed wording, to be cleaned up for future meeting, for Article IV, Section 201-402, paragraph C: “In all zoning districts, up to 2 minor accessory buildings shall be permitted per lot. Minor accessory buildings may be located in the side and rear yards, but not closer than 5 feet from existing lot lines. Minor accessory buildings shall not be located in the front yard. Minor accessory buildings shall not require a building permit, however a sketch detailing placement must be provided showing location of existing buildings and lot lines.”

Because this is not a pressing issue time-wise, the Commission asked ZA and Kilpatrick to clean up the proposed language and revisit it at the January meeting, so as to be prepared for spring, when people tend to install such structures.

Re: Other structures used as accessory buildings: language preventing use of structures such as abandoned mobile homes, tanks, semi-trailers, etc., from being used as “accessory” buildings is recommended as protection. All agreed.

Re: setbacks relating to accessory buildings: Rear set back for lake residential = 30

feet, others = 50 feet. Proposal for reduced rear lot line setback in R-2 and R-3 districts was not appropriate in the view of the commission in that these lots are not designed for large additions. This is an appropriate item for variance applications for individual properties - esp. with regard to septic fields.

Re: mobile home minimum widths: Discrepancy between 22-foot and 24-foot minimums mentioned in different places. Single-wide mobile homes are not allowed. Is anything less than 22 feet still a housing option? Could be if someone wanted to bring in an old used one. Needs research -- will revisit later.

Re: driveway setback/parking & play areas: (not on ZA document, but appears on Agenda under this section): hold for discussion in January.

Re: definitions of V-lot area and Z-lot front line: (not on ZA document, but appears on Agenda under this section): confusing last sentence on p. 949. Kilpatrick to work up sensible wording for future review.

4. UNCLASSIFIED SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: (Township Board wants this only allowed in Commercial & Industrial Districts)

Motion by Pfaller to recommend to the Township Board to approve as noted in memo from Jay Kilpatrick that “where a use of land or use of building proposed in the Commercial (C) or Industrial (I) Districts...”Seconded by Nauta. All approved.

(According to Kilpatrick, a public hearing on the revision is not necessary due to the fact that the change is more restrictive than the one previously considered at the hearing.)

5. REPRESENTATIVE FROM PLANNING COMMISSION NEEDED ON ZBA: Any volunteers should speak up ASAP. Current member is retiring in December.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE(S): January meeting shall stand as scheduled, for January 3rd, 2000. July meeting date shall be changed to July 10 to avoid Fourth of July weekend. September meeting date shall be *Tuesday*, Sept. 5, to avoid the Labor Day holiday.

7. NEW OFFICERS: wait until January to decide.

NEW BUSINESS: Sincere thanks were given to Tim Howard, who is retiring after many years of service to the township! He has been through two Master Plans, development of the PUD and Site Condo options, the Agriculture Ordinance, etc. Tim noted that, when he first stepped onto the Planning Commission, they met quarterly, but only because state law required that many meetings. How times have changed. THANKS, Tim!

Motion to adjourn by Dalga. Seconded by Nauta.

The next meeting is Monday, January 3, 2000 at 7:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Dernocoeur, Recorder