

# Vergennes Township

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 2, 1998

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on March 2, 1998. The meeting was moved to Vergennes Methodist Church to accommodate citizens. At 7:10 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chairman Gillett. Also present were Wilcox, Weber, Pfaller, Pedley, and Howard.

Gillett gave a brief history of the Home Business Ordinance, and opened the Public Hearing at 7:12 p.m.

The following comments were given:

Al Baird - pg. 2 item 5 would like to see "noise" defined. He indicated that an official State of Michigan limiting number of decibels would be his preference. He feels protection is needed for business owners. The word "excessive" was suggested to be used to further define noise.

Bill Schreur - pg. 4 par. 6 - questioned the references to accessory buildings, and what they mean in relation to the rest of the ordinance. - Wilcox stated the ordinance references accessory buildings in numerous places. It was felt by the planning commission that the specific requirements for accessory buildings would be best left to the general ordinance instead of trying to be specific to Home Businesses.

Wilcox noted on pg. 4 under "waiver of fees", it should say "excluding variances". See later recommendation.

Howard pg. 9A Rental Storage - noted we still need to strike the word "Commercial".

Doug Lindhout - Question about sign regulations. PC said to refer to sign ordinance. Can go to ZBA if needed. It was noted that all references to signs should be consistent throughout the HB ordinance.

Joe Knauf - Question on sign allowance by mailbox area. Signs must be setback according to sign ordinance regulations.

Roger Odell - pg. 9 par A and pg. 3 #7 - suggested that we strike references to who approves hours of operation. The PC stated that this information will be part of the application.

Phil Schreur - Comment on fee for variance and first year waiver of fees. - Discussion resulted in the suggestion that 2 to 4 meetings could be planned throughout the first year for the ZBA to deal with multiple HB variance requests.

Tim Wittenbach - pg. 6 #2 question on the necessary surveys - PC responded that an accurate drawing with correct dimensions would be sufficient. In cases of neighbor disputes, it may be necessary to require a survey.

Dean Alger - pg. 10 #3 altering outside appearances - suggested adding "other than normal maintenance".

Public Hearing closed 7:45 p.m.

Approval of Feb. 2 minutes with a motion by Wilcox, seconded by Pedley. Motion carried.

The commission held a discussion of the Public Hearing. They felt that the suggestions were excellent. The proposed ordinance was then reviewed and a list of changes were reviewed. The list is attached to these minutes.

Gillett motioned to recommend to the township board to adopt the proposed Home Business Ordinance, to provide two ZBA meetings within the first year with advance notice of 3 weeks for any variance requests concerning businesses affected by this ordinance at no charge to the applicant, and to waive fees for businesses required to apply for Special Use Permits for a period of one year commencing with the date of adoption of the ordinance. Pfaller seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Gillett, Weber, Wilcox, Howard, Pfaller and Pedley voted yes. There were no dissenting votes. Motion carried.

In other business, Howard pointed out that a high percentage of the ZBA meetings have to do with accessory buildings in front yards. He suggested that in the case of the RA District, a site plan review could help solve the problem, which is prevalent in 5-10 acre lots where the residence is set back a distance from the road. He also thinks there is a need to review the requirements in general concerning accessory buildings. Gillett agreed that it's time to deal with this, and will have the issue on future agendas.

Foreman Farms (second appearance for discussion) - Mark Hammersma was present to review a revised plan. He called it a site condominium project, and stated he would like to use the PUD ordinance in order to be allowed more lots. It was noted that the property is in the water district and will need to be connected to the system. Hammersma feels this is a stiff financial burden, and said that they can recoup some of that money by having more lots. He admitted that this was one of the reasons they felt a PUD was warranted. He stated the project would accommodate 25 lots without the PUD but they would be 1.25 acres average. Discussion was held concerning what the PUD is meant to accomplish. The PC felt that in this proposal, financial benefit is the primary reason for the request.

Wilcox addressed the problem of concentrated septic systems because of the existing soil structure, noting that there is no sewer available. Hammersma responded that the 50 foot

separation between the septic and a well is the problem and with public water available, it does not exist. Pfaller raised the issue of the 50 foot walking trail. He was concerned with

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maintenance and public use, and asked if are they doing the path only to qualify for a PUD. John Scott, an associate of Hammersma, read from the PUD ordinance, and commented that they felt a rural look was being encouraged by having the walking path. The Planning Commission stated they would like to see the path eliminated.

Gillett raised the question of the exceptional drainage qualities of the land, citing the sand and gravel composure, and suggested that perhaps this piece is not suited to a development of this density using septic systems. Wilcox wondered if the site is a natural groundwater recharge area. She suggested looking at soil boring results. Mr. Scott said they have shallow soil borings, and would get copies to the Planning Commission.

Gillett felt that this is a rezoning issue rather than a PUD. Howard motioned to ask the township board to approve funds for a professional planner to assist with the review of this proposed development. Pedley seconded, and the motion carried.

Dave Mullen, Scott Roerig, and Pat Quinlan of Precise Engineering were present for an informal meeting concerning an amendment to their Special Exception Use Permit. They would like to construct a 50x50 storage building for storage purposes. At this time they plan to add no new employees. They stated that someday the existing building of 2500 square feet may be connected to this proposed building to accommodate manufacturing, but this would be in the future. They plan to connect the buildings by asphalt path, and will use the same siding as the main building. Electricity will be installed to run lights, but it will have no water, heating or utilities.

The Planning Commission advised them that they need to submit sealed drawings, including a parking/walkway plan and electrical plan, application, and fee. The Public Hearing will be at the April Planning Commission meeting.

Next Meeting April 13, 1998

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mari Stone, Recorder