

Vergennes Township

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 4, 1998

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on May 4, 1998 at the Township Offices. At 7:00 PM the meeting was called to order by Chairman Gillett. Also present were Commissioners Howard, Pedley, Pfaller and Weber.

APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES: Motion to approve by Weber, seconded by Howard. Motion carried.

FORMAL HEARING: FOREMAN FARMS: Todd Hendricks, attorney for Foreman Farms L.L.C., spoke about the plan for 25 lots under Site Condominium and Planned Unit Development designations.

Concerns: A PUD must be a benefit to Vergennes Township. PUD must demonstrate a unique characteristic. The 25 lots might strain septic capability, with a known groundwater contamination problem nearby (Eastgate), and the project having similar soil structure. It may need an Environmental Impact Study. The Health Department tests for minimum percability, but is there too much percability such that nearby wells could be contaminated? Howard: doesn't see how granting the PUD would preserve anything unique; maximizing economic benefit is not the intent of a PUD. Gillette: traffic impact? Neighboring Lowell Township plans for large developments on the opposite corner along Cumberland. (No study done.) Discussion about home size/restrictive development stipulations.

Summary: Based on the Township Ordinance statement of purpose and intent it was felt that this project doesn't meet all of the requirements.

Motion by Pedley: Do not recommend a PUD in any form on that piece of property. Seconded by Pfaller. Motion unanimously carried.

HARDING REQUEST TO MODIFY JORDAN MEADOWS PLAN:

Ray Zandstra demonstrated an altered plan for 6 sites on 18.83 acres. The 6 sites take almost 12 acres. With PUD zoning, over 1/3rd of site, or approximately 7 acres would remain open space.

Concerns: how open space might be used. Difference of opinion between Township engineer and developer regarding roadside ditches.

Motion by Howard: Recommend to the Township Board approval of the concept of the PUD. Seconded by Pfaller. Unanimously approved.

Zandstra inquired about what to do next, with discussion about following procedures. Commission expressed comfort with moving through the process quickly

because of Zandstra's prior history of appearances made before the Planning Commission since last fall regarding this site.

Motion by Gillette: Accept the site plan for Jordan Meadows Planned Unit Development site condominium project contingent on 3 things: a letter from the health department, agreement between Jordan Meadows and Township Engineer Jim Haggerty about their issues, and approval by ZBA. Seconded by Pedley. All agreed.

DISCUSSION RE: ORDINANCE LANGUAGE FOR DOCKS, STAIRS, BOARDWALKS IN FR DISTRICT:

Discussion about minor language changes. Add definition of "permanent" Vs "temporary." A dock could go out 35 feet or to 3-foot-deep water, whichever comes first. Language about "danger to boaters" does not apply since the river is a no wake zone. Don't use the word "bog." Define "natural materials."

What about places where the river is more than 500 feet wide?

Citizen inquiry: what about a grandfather clause?

Purpose of this ordinance: DEQ only regulates permanent structures. The Township needs an ordinance in order to regulate temporary structures.

Citizen concern re: "no landings": what if property doesn't allow for no landing? Ideas: limit landing size to size of stairs, or apply for a variance.

DISCUSSION RE: PROPOSED ORDINANCE LANGUAGE FOR ACCESSORY BUILDING SETBACKS IN RA:

Several PC members feel that the Zoning Ordinance needs language to accommodate large parcel homeowners who would like an accessory building but because their residence has been located on the rear of the property, need to apply for a variance to have one between their home and the front setback. This issue will increase as lot sizes decrease. Existing ordinances in other towns (Cannon, Ada/Cascade, Lowell) will be looked at and a draft will be worked up.

Motion to adjourn by Gillette. Seconded by Pfaller.

The next meeting is Monday, June 1st at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Dernocoeur, Recorder