

Vergennes Township
Planning Commission Minutes
Special Meeting, November 24, 1997

A special meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held at 7:00 PM on November 24, 1997, to facilitate work on a proposed amendment to the Vergennes Township Zoning Ordinance concerning home-based businesses and home occupations. The work session was attended by Weber, Wilcox, Gillette, Howard, Pedley and Pfaller. Mari Stone was also present and served as recorder.

The discussion began concerning the purpose of this amendment. It has been a long time since its conception, and the planning commissioners confirmed that it is still the intent to make allowances in the township's ordinance for residents to be able to operate home occupations and home-based businesses legally, but within parameters that would retain the residential look of a premise. It was felt that the transition from Agricultural to Residential in the township has a lot to do with the existence of many of the businesses. The concern is that we don't want to turn into what you see in Ionia County. We want to allow them as long as we can't see them, hear them, smell them or feel them. Commissioners stated that it is not the intent to allow commercial and industrial operations to flourish in residential districts, and that the restrictions should be as stringent, if not more so, as those in the Industrial ordinance.

It was noted that Langworthy has given only two options in his draft; PC sees that there are actually three.

- Home Occupations taking place only within a residence
- Home Occupations with accessory buildings
- Home-based Businesses, which are primarily off-site operations

Suggested that we should ask Langworthy why he did not address the home occupations that use an accessory building. He included suggested language for the PC to look at concerning the regulation of accessory buildings. Langworthy sees a need for this, and the PC will discuss later.

Began to go over the draft from Langworthy step by step. Additions and/or deletions included: (The complete revision is attached to these minutes)

Home Occupations, 4.30, A.: ...and upon the issuance of a Zoning Compliance Permit.

4.30, A., 2.: clarification of total floor area of the dwelling unit

It was suggested that a statement of purpose be included for each of the categories of businesses.

Include references to Americans with Disabilities Act, Firefighters Right to Know Act, and Michigan Occupational and Safety Hazard Act where applicable.

At the end of the Home Occupations section, it was suggested that accessory buildings regulations be inserted. Felt that a formula should be used such as “one accessory building for a home occupation of not more than 13,000 sq. ft. on a lot larger than ____ acres is permitted.”

It was noted that the fee schedule would need updating based on the adopted regulations. It was felt that a fee of \$50 for a Special Use Permit for these businesses would be fair. A fee of \$50 for a Zoning Compliance Permit should be waived for the first year in order to encourage business operators to comply.

Home-based Businesses

4.31, 5, was rewritten to require the same regulations for noise, odor, electrical interference, etc. as the home occupations section.

4.31, 6, parking or storage of vehicles, was restricted to no more than 2,500 sq. ft.

4.31, 8 discussion of this section resulted in keeping the language to allow existing businesses that are already operating beyond the parameters of this ordinance to continue, but may not be expanded without the approval of the ZBA.

Rental Storage Facility

All references to “commercial” were struck in the September 9 draft version. The suggestion was made to include “Rental Storage” as a permitted use in the RA District. Using the draft from Langworthy, language was developed to add a 15. To 201.304 “R-A” Rural Agricultural District, B. Permitted Uses. These facilities must exist at the time of passage of the ordinance, have no change in outward appearance, be on at least a 40 acre parcel on which the owner also resides, and allows no outside storage or parking of vehicles or materials.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45.

Mari Stone, Recorder