

Vergennes Township

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

October 1, 2001

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on October 1, 2001 at the Township Offices. At 7:03 PM the meeting was called to order by Chairman Nauta. Also present were Commissioners Alger, Medendorp, and Richmond. Absent were Gillett, Jernberg, and Read.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2001 MINUTES: Motion to approve by Alger, seconded by Medendorp. All approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve by Richmond, seconded by Alger. All approved.

Welcome & greetings extended to Dave Austin, from Williams & Works, the new township engineer, who is attending his first Planning Commission meeting. Lives in the City of Lowell.

Note: Joint Planning Commission meeting with Lowell Twp and Lowell City on October 18, 7:00 PM at Vergennes Township Hall – agenda: to consider the long term road plans with Kent County Road Commission. **Also:** Open Space Citizen Committee’s next educational seminar will be Wed., Oct 17 at Wittenbach Center, on water issues – Planning Commissioners invited & encouraged to come.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. COMMERCIAL ORDINANCE: COORDINATING REFERENCE AMENDMENTS. Jay Kilpatrick: With community commercial & general commercial districts being created, the overall ordinance needs to be updated to reflect the “community commercial” concept. Language is also needed to adopt a new zoning map of the changes being proposed, including a public hearing and the proper notices to adjacent landowners. Document has been coordinated re: front and side yard setback, square footage of structures, sign standards, lighting, revised zoning maps and other references of community commercial versus general commercial information.

Q&A: Questions about other existing commercial areas. Acreage north of Vergennes & east of Lincoln Lake will be changed from general commercial to community commercial. Frontage along Lincoln Lake is changed with intention of creating a neighborhood commercial area. Kilpatrick: typically, the landowner should be on board with the concept.

A question was raised whether one of the businesses in the area in question might be engaged in industrial, not commercial, use. Any request to expand that business would probably not be approved if the proposed use of the expansion is not a permitted use.

Discussion about changing zoning rules in areas in transition and when communities are adjusting. How to do this re: working with existing landowners. Kilpatrick pointed out language in the new ordinance proposal allowing flexibility for the Planning Commission in the face of

changing uses/zoning rules, particularly while working with existing businesses (versus building a new business/building).

Public hearing will be set for November. Can approve next meeting, or wait until the next month to allow for further discussion.

Vandersloot: found language about billboards in section 403.e that needs to be adjusted/Jay will make the changes.

Vandersloot: re: the bulk chart/bulk table has a lot of errors and inconsistencies with previous adopted amendments. Will work with Jay to go over and fine-tune to make consistent with various language already approved.

Vandersloot: re: memo to board about section F and C3, "building and landscaping" was to have been written in those sections, so the current draft needs to be checked for consistency. Jeanne will check with Mari Stone.

2. SEMINARS: NUMBER ATTENDEES. Commission went over various upcoming seminars. Chairman Nauta encouraged those in attendance to sign up with him, Mari, or Jeanne.

Re: "adult" commercial uses, Kilpatrick said the township is vulnerable, and he has been asked to draft amendments to the ordinance making them a special use permit and placing restrictions on their location in relation to other uses. It is possible to regulate such enterprises, with very explicit definitions and standards. Board has stated an interest in having Jay pursue development of the language to protect the township from this sort of business in the future expanded commercial district.

3. GOALS LIST FOR 2002 PROJECTS.

1. Open Space Community District ordinance (list of questions submitted to the commission). Commissioners encouraged to come to the special Open Space meeting Monday Oct. 29 to help engage in the discussion.

2. Liquor ordinance – should one be written? If regulating land use, should be written into the land use ordinance. If regulating behavior, the Township Board would have the authority to handle as a stand-alone ordinance.

3. Suggestions from Vandersloot: consider the area around the airport district for possible changes; consider amending master plan for Valley Wood/Grindle zoning from R2 to R1 to alter the density which has created erosion issues on the Flat River.

4. Attention to "adult" business prevention, as per conversation above.

The next regular meeting is November 5, 2001 (plus the joint planning commission meeting on October 18). Motion to adjourn by Richmond. Seconded by Alger. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Dernocoeur, Recorder