

Vergennes Township
Planning Commission
October 6, 2014

Meeting opened at 7:05 pm.

Roll Call –Mastrovito, Post, Rasch and Gillett present. Jernberg was absent.

Motion Gillette to approve minutes from July 7, 2014 meeting as written, seconded by Rasch. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve the agenda with one addition by Vandersloot to ordinance amendments by Gillett, seconded by Post. Motion passed.

1. Ordinance Amendments – Parking Formulas Public Hearing

Vandersloot reviewed changes. Changes were made earlier in year to some of the special uses in the ordinance. Parking was not addressed at that time. A requirement for ADA spaces was added to all parking spaces/lots per the Michigan Barrier Free Rules and Township Building Code. She basically went through the ordinance and made sure things were similar. Commission members were given copy of changes with red type being deletions and blue type being additions/corrections.

Public Hearing opened at 7:11pm. There were no comments or concerns from the audience. Hearing closed at 7:11pm.

Mastrovito recommended the changes be sent to the Township Board for approval. Gillette motioned to recommend the changes to the Board, Rasch seconded. Motion carried.

2. Jeff McCusker – North Country Trail

Jeff gave an overview on the Trail system in the United States and where the North Country Trail falls into the overall plan. The trail system has been around since 1980 when created by Congress. They are currently working on Optimal Location Review. It is a locally based process to see the best way to connect trails. Most of it is on public land. They are now working with landowners to get easements across private property for the trail to run through.

Most of the trail is natural surface so it blends into the landscape. It is typically a walking trail only but non-motorized use is allowed also. It depends on the area it is in.

The Township signed an agreement with the Association in the spring to help get the trail connected and in place. They are currently interested in getting some type of trail along Page Creek to connect Fallasburg Park to Rogue River Trail near Rockford.

Jeff likes to say “The right trail for the right place.”

There were a few questions from the Planning Commission for Jeff on the trail system and surface.

3. Noise Ordinance

Commission members were sent copies of Keene Township and Portland Township ordinances for noise back in July for review and comment.

Gillette thought keeping it as simple as possible was best. Mastrovito thought it could be kept pretty general.

Both ordinances were similar. The Keene Township ordinance would be something Vergennes could model theirs after. What was the Township Board looking to accomplish with the ordinance? Tim Wittenbach, Supervisor said they needed something simple so the Sheriff has something to back them up on complaints.

Gillette motioned to have the Commission work on the ordinance language using Keene Township ordinance for a baseline. Discuss at the next meeting in January, 2015 to get it ready for Board approval. Rasch seconded the motion. Motion passed.

4. Draft overlay district amendment – Little Farms Plat.

The amendment began with a request for roosters/chickens on a parcel. Then there was a complaint about roosters, ducks and chickens nearly on the property line with smells and noise. When Jeanne looked into it, she realized it was part of a plat and farm animals are prohibited in plats. Other neighbors have animals/horses. The homeowner that has the chickens and ducks is currently keeping them under a farm animal permit typically used for 4H animals. The permit required them to move the pens and shelters and remove the roosters. It is a yearly permit. There are a few options since this plat is not laid out like a typical plat and the acreages are larger. The best way to approach it is to do an overlay district, similar to the Flat River District. There is an underlying zoning and then the amendment applies only to parcels in the district. Jeanne Vandersloot came up with some language to incorporate the 100' wide lots. Typical RA district setbacks needed to be changed because of the widths. She used 40' as a starting point. She reviewed the rest of the ordinance language. Planning Commission needs to review language and send to our Planner to make sure it covers everything and the language is correct.

Post motioned to send what Jeanne has so far to our planner for review. The commission will review further and take recommendations from planner into consideration of final draft. Gillette seconded. Motion passed.

5. Lowell Township Master Plan –

The members had no comments at this time.

6. Update from Joint Planning Commission Meeting September 22, 2014

Jernberg, Mastrovito and Rasch attended the meeting. There was talk of the Lowell Fairgrounds moving out near the highway in Lowell Township. Also, there is another auto parts store going up in City of Lowell. It was a good meeting overall lasting just about an hour.

7. Set Planning Commission 2015 Meeting Schedule

The minimum number of meetings required is four during the year. Dates chosen are January 5, May 4, August 3 and October 5. They were chosen to avoid Spring Break and July 4 conflicts. Motion by Gillette to accept dates as stated, seconded by Rasch. Motion passed.

8. Member Term Expirations

Nate Post is only member this year with a term expiring. He advised Vandersloot and Township Board that he will not be returning. This leaves two spots open on the planning commission as Duane Rasch will be sworn in as a Township Trustee in November. Only one Board member can be on the Planning Commission so Rick and Duane will need to decide who wants to stay on the Commission.

9. Addition to Agenda – Accessory Building ordinance amendment

Members reviewed the proposed amendment to section 201.401 (B) of accessory building ordinance. It was motioned by Gillette to schedule a public hearing for the January 5, 2015 meeting to hear public comment and to recommend approval to the Township Board. Rasch seconded. Motion passed.

Announcements

Ada Township is beginning to amend its master plan so we may be seeing something come through for review and comment.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. Motion by Post, seconded by Gillette.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is January 5, 2015.