

# *Vergennes Township*

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2011

The regular meeting of the Vergennes Township Board was called to order by Tim Wittenbach at 7:00 pm in the Vergennes Township Hall.

Members Present: Tim Wittenbach -Supervisor  
Mari Stone -Clerk  
Jean Hoffman -Treasurer  
Rick Gillett -Trustee  
Al Baird -Trustee

The agenda for the May 16, 2011 meeting was approved by Al Baird; seconded by Rick Gillett. **Motion Carried.** The minutes for the April 18, 2011 meeting were approved as presented. Treasurer's report and bills were read and approved with a motion by Jean Hoffman; seconded by Al Baird. **Motion Carried.**

**Public Hearing – Alec McPherson Special Use Request – Accessory Dwelling-** This public hearing was held in regards to Alec McPherson's property at 1313 Parnell Ave. He wishes to remodel an existing barn on his property, and would like to use it as a guest house. Tim Wittenbach opened the public hearing at 7:06 pm and closed it at 7:07 pm. There were no comments from the public.

**Public Hearing – Ryan Peel Special Use Request – Communication Towers-** This public hearing was held in regards to Ryan Peel's request to build two communication towers in the township. The first proposed tower would be located at 9777 Vergennes and the second would be built at 13101 Beckwith Dr. Their heights would be 120ft and 100ft respectively. Before the public hearing was opened Peel gave handouts to the board that gave more up to date specifications on the towers and informed the board that the property on Beckwith would be required to have red obstruction lights at the top of the tower to comply with FAA regulations. Wittenbach opened the public hearing at 7:07 pm. Jim Teft, of 13101 Beckwith asked Peel if the tower would be required to have a fence around it. Peel replied that the law requires an anti-climbing device for the tower, but does not require a fence. He also will be held responsible for keeping the area around the tower clear of debris. Marianne Teft noted that she thought the tower was going to be placed further back on the property located on Beckwith than what is being proposed now. Peel said that the tower could be moved back a little further and that he could discuss the exact location more with the Tefts later. The Teft's neighbor, Ron Zimmerman, asked if there would be any compensation for the property owners who have the towers built on their property. Peel responded to this by saying that the property owners would be compensated, but that he was not free to discuss the exact terms of the agreement. The Tefts collectively said that they are in favor of the tower on Beckwith being built, while Zimmerman said that he was totally opposed to it and did not want a tower built at all.

**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

### **1. Alec McPherson Special Use Request – Accessory Dwelling-**

Hoffman and Baird both said that they liked McPherson's renovation of the barn structure into an accessory dwelling. Stone asked if McPherson was aware that the accessory dwelling could affect his property's assessment. He said that he was. Gillett motioned to grant Alec McPherson's special use request for the accessory dwelling; seconded by Hoffman. **Motion Carried.**

### **2. Ryan Peel Special Use Request – Communication Towers-**

Zimmerman once again voiced that he was opposed to a tower being built at the Beckwith property. Marianne Teft shared that another provider, RedFrog, was planning to build a tower across the street from where the location of the currently proposed tower is to be located, so either way there was going to be a tower built on Beckwith Dr. Since there were no complaints about the tower located on Vergennes the board proceeded to make two separate motions. Hoffman motioned to approve the special use request for a tower to be built at 9777 Vergennes Ave; seconded by Gillett. **Motion Carried.** The board discussed the main issue regarding the tower at 13101 Beckwith Dr., the proposed location of the tower on the property. They told Ryan Peel to meet with the Tefts to discuss where the tower should be built on their property so that it would suit both parties. Hoffman motioned to approve the special use request for 13101 Beckwith Dr. provided that the Tefts and Peel find a suitable location; seconded by Stone. **Motion Carried.**

### **3. Pink Arrow Quiver Race Request to Close Road – Nancy Russell-**

Nancy Russell was present to represent the race coordinators, and to ask for approval of the closure of Vergennes Rd. on race day. This year they will be holding both a 5k, like they did last year, and a 10k. Russell said that the coordinators of the race have been talking to MDOT, which said that there are no problems with the proposed route. They are requesting that Vergennes Rd. be closed from Alden Nash Rd. to Parnell Ave. starting at 7:15 am. Around 8:15, they would open the Cumberland to Parnell section and then the Alden Nash to Cumberland section around 9:30 am. Baird asked Russell about travel restrictions for residents living in the area. Russell will let her committee know that the residents living in that area must be informed of the schedule and what to expect that morning. Stone motioned to approve the plan to close Alden Nash to Parnell from 7:15 to 9:30 am; seconded by Rick Gillett. **Motion Carried.**

### **4. Township Insurance Bids-**

Three bids were received this year for the township's insurance - Pinnacle, Burnham and Flower, and AIC. Dave Emmett was present to represent AIC, and gave the board a synopsis of his proposal. Tammy Sayles spoke for the Pinnacle proposal, and noted that she had offered three choices, all of which covered the township's needs. After a short discussion, the board agreed that Pinnacle's Trident proposal covered the most for the best price. Stone motioned to approve Pinnacle insurance using the Trident proposal; seconded by Gillett. **Motion Carried.**

**5. Request for Review – Witt's Inn – Kathy Wittenbach -** Stone motioned to excuse Wittenbach from the discussion; seconded by Hoffman. **Motion Carried.** Tim and Kathy Wittenbach recently purchased the bed and breakfast which was formerly known as the McGee

Homestead. They plan to utilize the agri-tourism Ordinance to use the property. Under the current ordinance, a café would not be allowed, and they would like to have one for breakfast and lunch. Zoning Administrator Vandersloot said that adding a provision for a café would have to be written directly into the ordinance. The current ordinance allows for a farm market, educational events, a bed and breakfast, and to do such things as feeding animals, but does not allow for a café. Wittenbach said that they would like to have the café open in the Fall of 2011. Gillett said that he liked the idea and thought that it could be very beneficial to the township. Stone motioned to direct the planning commission to review the ordinance, and to add language to allow a café among other things; seconded by Gillett. **Motion Carried.**

**6. Ordinance 2011-1 – FR District Amendment, River Stairs Access** - This amendment would make it required to have a building permit to build stairs, boardwalks, and any other sort of structure along the river. The planning commission recommended accepting these changes. Stone motioned to adopt this ordinance; seconded by Gillett. There was a roll call. All of the board members voted in favor of the ordinance. **Motion Carried.**

**7. Zoning Administrator – 12950 Beckwith Dr. Civil Infraction Discussion** - Jeanne Vandersloot informed the board that Mr. Langlois had received the Township's letters regarding the un-regulated business and related equipment and vehicles on his property. Baird motioned to issue a civil infraction ticket to Bruce Langlois, and to deny the home-based business request; seconded by Stone. **Motion Carried.**

**8. Summer Office Hours** - Gillett motioned to close the Township's office on Fridays from Memorial day to Labor day; seconded by Hoffman. **Motion Carried.**

#### **Citizen's Comments:**

The board discussed updating the Township Hall's lighting systems. They received two bids - Litesplus and Van Haren Electric. Stone motioned to use Van Haren Electric to update the township's lighting system; seconded by Rick Gillett. **Motion Carried.**

Williams and Works recently reviewed Comprehensive Plan data with the updated census figures for the township. The population of Vergennes has increased, but not as much as was predicted by the plan. They suggest re-zoning certain areas of the Township to accommodate an increasing median age.

Dave Thompson said that he supported what the Township was doing in regards to the property located at 12950 Beckwith.

Ken Skinner asked if there was any progress in regards to the boat launch situation. Wittenbach said that he had gone out to check for possible launch sites off of Beckwith Road last fall, and noted that not only is there a steep drop that they would need to deal with, but it would also be an issue with the DEQ. The discussion will continue as more info comes in.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06PM

Respectfully Submitted,

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