

Vergennes Township

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2014

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
	Vern Nauta	- Trustee
	Rick Gillett	- Trustee
	Jean Hoffman	- Treasurer

The agenda for the May 19, 2014 meeting was approved with two addendums - Fire Board Update and a noise complaint. The motion to approve the agenda with changes was made by Tim Wittenbach; seconded by Rick Gillett. **Motion Carried.** The minutes for the April 28, 2014 meeting were accepted with no changes. The Treasurer's report was read and approved as presented. The invoices to be paid were approved with a motion by Jean Hoffman; seconded by Rick Gillett. **Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing – SEUP for White Barn Weddings, Kim Greenwald

The public hearing began at 7:08 pm. The owner preceded the hearing by stating that she intended to use the barn as a rural wedding reception facility that has indoor restrooms and is handicapped accessible. Michael Snarski was the first citizen to speak and gave a presentation that included multiple reasons that the Board should deny the special use permit. These reasons included: the barn creating commercialism in Vergennes Township, a reduction in neighboring property values, a lack of privacy for neighbors, and a concern that light and sound would resonate into neighbors' residences. Bobby Minier stated that the amount of traffic coming from the reception hall would cause Parnell Avenue to be a much more dangerous road and that there would be drunk drivers coming from wedding receptions that would add to the danger of the road. John Stein was concerned about the amount of traffic especially on a road that many large farm vehicles utilize. Dennis Heffron said he was also concerned about traffic and the poor plans for a parking area around the barns. Curtis Cusack also stated the issues with parking, traffic and the extensive amount of noise that would be caused by the wedding receptions. Robin Covel said she was afraid of a high volume of traffic and stated a concern about the parking plans as well. Joan Herrmann was the last citizen to speak and stated that her primary issue was security because she doesn't want wedding reception guests to wander onto neighbors properties. The public hearing closed at 7:29 pm.

Unfinished Business:

1. SEUP for White Barn Weddings, Kim Greenwald –The Board began by asking Mrs. Greenwald to address the comments made previously. She replied that traffic during events on her premises will still be less than the average amount of traffic during rush hour; music can be restrained by her if it becomes too loud, and that only licensed bar tenders will be allowed to sell alcohol. They plan to use security cameras to monitor disturbances. She added that she had no comments regarding a change in property values and also said they would change the parking lot

into gravel instead of grass if the current plan does not work. Hoffman noted that the barn had seats for two-hundred and forty people but only had eighty-five parking spots. Mrs. Greenwald said they would not usually have that many people and would address that situation if it arose. Stone stated a concern about noise and also noted that the lights on the barn must point downwards in accordance with Township ordinances. Nauta stated a concern about lights from cars leaving the venue shining into neighbor's houses. Mrs. Greenwald responded by saying that all customers would be required to leave by 11:00 pm. The Board then discussed how this would help preserve this barn. Multiple citizens restated their concerns during the Boards discussion. Stone motioned to excuse Wittenbach from voting on this issue; seconded by Gillett. Motion Carried. Hoffman motioned to deny the special use permit; seconded by Stone. **Motion Carried.**

New Business:

1. Planning Commission Recommendation – Zoning Amendment, Ordinance 2014-1 – Due to a recent court decision, the Township now needs to list each permitted use in the Industrial and Commercial Districts. The Planning Commission has recommended adopting the proposed changes. Rick Gillett motioned to adopt the changes; seconded by Tim Wittenbach. A roll call vote was taken, and all voted yes. **Motion Carried.**

2. Sheila Kelly, 10041 Downes – Concern Re: Disturbances at 9999 Downes – Mrs. Kelly was not present at the meeting but has previously stated concerns to the Board regarding disturbances that consisted of explosions and gunshots. The Board was worried about this questionable activity that has occurred over the past several years. The Board plans to contact the Kent County prosecutor and law enforcement regarding the issue.

3. Candidate Forum – Discussion/Date – The Board decided to plan a forum for local candidates appearing on the August 5th Primary ballot on July 21st at 6:00 pm before the next regular meeting. They will also invite county and state candidates to participate.

4. Mike Mastrovito – Complaint Re: Noise Disturbance – Mr. Mastrovito was not present at the meeting, but contacted the Board regarding an extensive amount of noise caused by his neighbors riding motorcycles throughout the day. The Board noted that Vergennes Township has no noise ordinance, and there was not a consensus about the need for one.

5. Fire Board Update – The Board was informed that the new fire truck will be received in July or August. The board also was notified that the payments for the vehicle will be due approximately thirty days after it is received.

Board Discussion – The Board was notified that J&H Oil has temporarily halted construction until they can complete a tall structures permit because of the location near the airport.

Citizens Comments: none

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, _____