Vergennes Township
Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes
November 8, 2000

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Zoning Board of Appeals was held on November 8, 2000 at the Vergennes Township Hall. At 7:04 p.m., Chairman Pete Gustafson called the meeting to order. Also present were Board Members Bob Humphries, Scott Jernberg, Roger Odell, and Kerry Tap. Bill Scheur was absent. There were no other public attendees at the meeting other than Mr . Larkin.

The purpose of this meeting was to consider the variance request by Robert Larkin to construct an addition to his barn at 880 Parnell Avenue, N.E. in Vergennes Township.

Minutes of the August 29, 2000 meeting on the same Larkin request were read silently by each board member. A motion was made by Jernberg and seconded by Odell to approve the August 29, 2000 minutes as read. The motion passed 0 to 4.

There were only three members present at the last meeting – but the group did take opportunity to review the request and visit the property. A record of the 1989 request was retrieved by Jeanne Hoffman for tonight's meeting, along with the Zoning Board of Appeal's action at that time. Since there was no residence on the property, Larkin was seeking a variance to construct a pole barn. Through an agreement with Jim Cook, Township Supervisor at the time, Larkin agreed to remove a house trailer from the property in exchange for a permit to build a barn. Consequently Larkin withdrew his request for a variance at that time.

In 2000, Larkin was told there is a non-conforming use for the property. He seeks a variance to put an addition on the back of the barn constructed in 1989. Gustafson suggested his barn on that lot with no dwelling was probably grandfathered in 1989. However, now that the property is a lot with no residence, the ordinance in Section 201.501 states that a non-conforming use cannot be added onto, or altered unless it complies with the provisions of the ordinance. The present issue is that the lot is non-conforming because it has no residence on it.

The size of proposed addition is 30' x 50' at the rear of a 40' x 65' building (forming a small "T"). Larkin wants to store a 40' motor coach inside as well as some other vehicles that he collects. Odell asked if this would appear as a commercial enterprise. He also asked if all the rest of Larkins' vehicles would be stored inside or would this just make room for more vehicles. Comments in letters received from neighbors noted concern for additional vehicles outside and the overall look of the property.

Discussion ensued about whether all of Larkin's vehicles could and would be stored inside the buildings and whether approval of the variance would benefit the situation and actually enhance the property's look to the neighbors. Further discussion initiated suggestions for a variance with certain "conditions" such as no vehicles being stored outside and Larkin's assurance that the building would not be used for commercial purposes. Tapp raised the question about whether the township could put teeth in the variance and for that reason should it even be granted?

Further discussion involved ideas for reconfiguration of the plans for the addition. Odell suggested that Larkin should come back with a redesigned storage plan to solve the storage

problem and return with a different request. Odell motioned that the board table the request until Larkin can return with a further submission of plans for the addition and surrounding outside storage area. The motion was seconded by Tapp. Motion carried 4-0. Gustafson said that there is no need for Larkin to have to reapply and pay additional fees.

Odell summarized that Larkin return with plans for the following issues:
1. how he would clean up the property
2. how he would re-size/rework the plans for the addition
3. a plan for the two existing fuel tanks on the property
4. a plan for improving the look of the property

Gustafson adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Lindhout