

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 17, 2012
Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:30 pm at the Williamstown Township Hall located at 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, Michigan. Chairman Michael Fielek called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chairman Mike Fielek, Vice Chair Rex LaMore, Secretary Gerald Eidt, Trustee Martin Wright, Commissioners Dali Giese, Rod Imhoff, Joscelyn Brown-Timm and Ron Cook.

ABSENT: Commissioner Ger Schultink

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Consultant Chris Doozan of McKenna Associates and Planning Assistant Wanda Bloomquist

MINUTES APPROVAL

Commissioner Imhoff moved to approve the minutes of March 20, 2012, with the following corrections: Article 27.02(5)a change: fines to lines, 27.02 ? condominium and subdivision plan. Correct 27.04 M to N(1) Seconded by Commissioner Eidt.

Motion Carries

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Rental Regulations- East Lansing
Annette Irwin from East Lansing

Ms. Irwin explained the rental licensing is required for all rentals. There are different classes of rentals; owner occupied vs. non –owner occupied. There is a process: Apply to have license, insure code compliance, have a public hearing, provide adequate parking, etc. In the 90's many licenses were being issued. Late 90's the zoning ordinance addressed the issue of family and not allowing more than 2 unrelated in a home. This stabilized the neighborhoods. Reached a point where residents needed more control over their neighborhoods. Residential overlay districts were developed as another tool in the toolbox in those areas where residents felt strongly about restricting rentals. Areas could pursue restriction. Residents can develop boundary area and petition interest. Boundaries have to be logical. Minimum number of parcels, meet code as far as boundary, check language and then petition with 2/3 signatures. Gets put into ordinance form, to PC and Public Hearing. Ms Irwin reviewed the three types of overlays. More recently, the request for a license may spur the process of an overlay in a neighborhood. If a petition for an overlay gets introduced to the City council this stops the rental license procedure.

Discussion:

- Could this work without rental licensing. Can you restrict something that isn't regulated?
- Think through enforcement. How do you legally handle zoning.
- Any legal challenges due to no rentals in RO-1? EL has survived challenges. Largest reason they believe is because the residents petition for this.
- Economy has created a problem with housing issues due to vacant homes. Took a close look at what was happening. Not enough data to show the impact of not being able to sell the house.
- Significant expense to bring up to property maintenance code to obtain license by property owner.
- Due to licensing they don't feel that vacant homes would be rented.
- License fee is \$1550 and is a one time fee. Annual rental inspection.(13 months) renewal. \$ 240 renewal and \$160 inspection fee. Owner occupied rental is every 2 or 3 years.
- Inspection covers General maintenance, electrical, smoke alarms, etc.
- Approx 1600 licenses. 28,000 occupants. Inspect minimum of 25% of large units/complexes.
- 60% pass inspection Violations are handled with violation letter noting violations 30 days to repair stating date and time of next reinspection. If items are not taking care of –can ask for extension- can call for second inspection. Then ticket. Can not renew license with out passing the inspection. Issue conditional license- work to be done by a certain date and time.
- License stays with the house. New owner review.
- Blight ordinance for non rental homes. Property maintenance is applied to owner occupied homes also if complaints come in. Send friendly letter to prompt compliance.
- PACE covers parking and code enforcement issues such as grass, parking, etc. Notice sent, then ticket.
- For rentals: who gets letter for blight items? Tenants can be held responsible.
- Boundaries are set by petitioners and checked by zoning. By zoning line, street alley, natural division or border line that is already there. Minimum of 50 or 100 homes.
- Petition is per parcel.
- Approx percent of homes rental? 60% or more.
- PACE is hired by city. City employees reports under police department. Parking meters, parking lots, yard parking. Police use them for other issues. Civil infractions. Litter, shoveling, party litter.
- Typical ticket cost for code enforcement: \$259 for painting. As much as \$500. Can have a formal hearing or informal hearing.
- Has EL considered contracting with Meridian for plumbing, mechanical, and electrical? Nothing for housing inspections.
- Hawks Nest has nothing in by-laws or deed restrictions regarding rentals. Require a deposit with condo board. Register with condo board .Have had a few that have applied for licensing.
- Overlay maps are on line.

Discussion of Blight ordinance:

- International property maintenance code for property could be one option. This would require adoption by the board. Need adoption of a fee structure for inspections of rentals.
- Restriction of keeping bees is in blight ordinance.
- Could the Township contract with the city of EL per case basis?
- Desire to keep government small.
- Number of rentals in the township does not warrant reactionary licensing.
- Board should look more at blight. Suggest blight ordinance should be updated and enforced.
- Yearly Cleanup day has been started to help with the potential blight.

- When blight becomes a safety issue, or noise and odor cross property lines there is a need for enforcement.
- May need to be able to do civil infraction.
- Resolution will let the board know what PC wants the board to do a review of the Blight Ordinance.
- Police authority could enforce blight.
- Board could ask PC to address blight.
- Discussed at last board meeting that blight needs to be addressed.
- Rental licensing is not the way to go at this point.
- Mapleshade could set up association.
- Update blight with enforcement attached.
- Discussed the process Meridian uses for blight. Could this be adopted.
- Does no good to adopt if it's not enforced.
- Township could afford doing enforcement.
- Bring constable back.
- Hire Code enforcement officer.
- Use of Meridian police for some of issues.
- Don't agree with needing something in writing.
- No need for the resolution.
- Chair will take the sentiment of the PC regarding updating the blight ordinance and enforcement.
- Suggestion and offer for PC to look at blight ordinance.
- Blight Ordinance is difficult to update.

Amend the date of the resolution and add a process for enforcement and fee structure.

The last whereas: comprehensive blight control may be needed and may be achieved.

Vice-chair LaMore moved the resolution be presented to the board with the amended date and the addition of the process for enforcement and fee structure in the final whereas along with wording suggesting comprehensive blight control may be needed and may be achieved.

Second by Ron Cook.

Discussion:

Value added for community.

Planning Commission has made an effort to address resident's concerns. Board will need to decide how to respond to the needs of the community.

Ayes: Trustee Wright, Commissioner Cook, Vice Chair LaMore, Chair Fielek, Secretary Eidt, Commissioner Giese, Commissioner Imhoff and Commissioner Brown-Timm.

Ordinance Review: Article 25 through Article 29

Pages:

27-34 (c)1. applications change number of days to 21 and add calendar to days. Change copy numbers to 3- 24x36 and 1- 11x17 hard copy or electronic pdf.

27-36 (B) add: calendar to days, and add: unless a PH is required then 21 days.

27-37 (4.b. add: as reflected in the Master Plan

27-38 5. End last sentence after amendments. D. add: as Specified in: add act information.

27-41 change to: the following elements shall be provided by the applicant for review by the Township:

7.c: Add "and Publication" to the heading

9.a. Add: Township Board shall initiate reversion of the zoning to its former classification.

27-43 e. change "become void" to "expires". Change copy information to reflect 27-34 (c)1

27-44 e. add: for the purposes of this ordinance include other ordinances adopted by the Twp.

3. second paragraph: Period after Ordinance and removed through act information. Change all "Building Official" to "Building Inspector" Third paragraph: remove info between "Building Code" and "except".

27-45 3. After kept: change to: at the Township Hall. Change Official to Inspector throughout page.
27-47 2. Add: this subsection after first of. After Official (or appointment by the Board).
28-1 D. Change Official to Inspector
28-2 Update all Michigan Public Act information.
28-3 Update all Michigan Public Act Information.
28-4 Change Official to Inspector
28-5 C. 6. Prepare and forward. Add: acted on after reviewed. 7. When requested, prepare and forward. 9. Add: Working with the Planning assistant, 10. After text add: "amendments" 11.
Add: Perform other duties as directed by the Board.
29-01 Update Public Act information.
Update signature page.

Annual Report

Annual Report- suggested having the green zone info under rezoning as well.

Planning and Board Reports and Review

Township Board

The Board approved updated building permit fees.
Cemetery improvements will be started in May based on the master plan

Planning Staff

Survey results will be available at the next meeting.
Need volunteers for the art tour.

Review

Presentation of ordinance
Passed resolution regarding blight ordinance

ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Imhoff moved to adjourn.
Supported by Commissioner Cook**

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm

Wanda Bloomquist
Recording Secretary

Secretary Gerald Eidt