

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
September 18, 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, Secretary Gerald Eidt, Trustee Martin Wright, Commissioners Dali Giese, Rod Imhoff, Ron Cook, Joscelyn Brown-Timm, Ger Schultink and Vice Chair Rex LaMore.

ABSENT: none

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

MINUTES APPROVAL

Commissioner Schultink moved to approve the minutes of August 21, 2012 with the following addition: Discussion of adding a map of right of ways for pipeline/major utility easements.

Seconded by Commissioner Imhoff.

Motion Carries

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Chair Fielek closed public comment at 7:34.

PUBLIC HEARING

Wireless Telecommunications Facilities
Proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance

Chair Fielek explained the process for a public hearing.

Mr. Doozan of McKenna Associates reviewed the reasons and purpose for the amendments to the zoning ordinance. The amendments will bring the Township in compliance as a result to the enabling act amendments that were approved by Governor Snyder. The amendments to Section 8.02 V deal with general requirements and approval procedures. Approval timelines depend on the type of application being made.

Chair Fielek opened the floor to the commissioners for questions.

Discussion:

Would like to see the word Option changed in V. 1 and 2. as it is not an option but different standards or conditions.

Chair Fielek opened the floor for public comment.

Seeing none, Chair Fielek asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Schultink moved to close the public hearing on the proposed amendments regarding Wireless Telecommunications Facilities.

Seconded by Secretary Eidt.

Motion carries.

Commissioner Imhoff moved to recommend the Board adopt the proposed amendments to Section 8.02V regarding Wireless Telecommunications Facilities with a suggested change to remove the word “option”.

Seconded by Commissioner Brown-Timm

Motion Carries

NEW BUSINESS

Election Committee for PC Officers

Chair Fielek opened the floor for volunteers to serve on the election committee. This year will see major changes as Chair Fielek will become Treasurer in November, Trustee Wright is retiring after 12 years of service, Commissioner Cook is retiring after 9 years of service, and Commissioner Imhoff and Planning Assistant Bloomquist are running for Trustee. Chair Fielek’s term expired in September but has been asked to stay on as chair through the October meeting.

Vice Chair LaMore, Commissioner Giese and Commissioner Brown-Timm have agreed to serve on the election committee.

Shannon-ZBA request for review of proposed lot splits

Review of Shared Drives & Lot Split proposal on Haslett Rd.

Lot Split proposal on Shoemsmith Rd.

Chris Doozan of McKenna Associates reviewed the why and how of reviewing the materials regarding the lot split proposals.

18.02e is only available in the AG-C district.

Mr. Doozan described the Haslett Rd parcel: Occupied by wetlands and county drain, 94 acres with a portion being farmed. Applicant is proposing 9 parcels, eight of which are on shared drives.

50.1 acre parcel on Shoemsmith. Large portion being farmed with county drain on the east side of the parcel and some wetlands.

Points for review:

- Art 5.03 of the land division ordinance provides for the PC review. Recommendation only.
- 6.01 (1). Number of lots that can be created.
- 6.08 deals with buildability. If not buildable the assessor does not need to approve the splits, however the owner can submit, to be recorded, an affidavit acknowledging this fact.
- Section 18.02 E. provides for lot splits for non-farm dwellings. The shared drive is an option. Up to Planning Commission to waive the need for 120 foot frontage requirement. The essence of the option is to provide for continued farming or open space.
- Splits calculated under 18.02 apply.
- Wetlands are also pertinent. Substantial amount of wetlands are on parcel.
- 4.02 of wetlands ordinance allows roads for farming within certain criteria.
- Township ordinance requires a 40 ft. wetland buffer.
- Section 2.24 of zoning ordinance deals with what can and cannot be done in buffer.
- Section 26.02 calls for 60 ft. setback from wetlands.

Discussion and questions:

- Delineation of wetlands is only what is in your packet.
- Does not appear to have been a field delineation.
- Importance of reviewing land division, zoning and wetlands ordinance.
- ZBA charge to the Commission: Rule on 120 ft. waiver and recommendation on split

proposals.

- Two areas for review. Administrative process and interpretation.
- The ZBA not only wants the Planning Commission to rule on the waiver of the 120' frontage but would also like the PC interpretation on how the proposed splits relate to all our ordinances. The assessor has the opportunity to ask the commission to review split request. ZBA was concerned about definitions.
- The proposed splits have not been approved. The PC recommendation will help the ZBA make their determination.
- The Planning Commission did not see this driveway configuration and will need to review to make a determination on the required frontage waiver.
- Shoemith decision was made by Supervisor and the ZBA wants the PC to review this split request also.
- The packet contained the ZBA draft minutes, the November PC minutes, ordinances pertaining to application along with the applications.
- Need for urgency and thorough review.
- Amendments to Article 18 were adopted after the application was received. The Article 18 in the packet is the one to use for review.
- The driveway option was not sent to the PC due to similarity with the old drive and the PC did not waive the requirement for the 120' frontage. ZBA felt the process was not followed and that the PC needs to review this.
- Right of applicant to be reviewed under the old article 18.
- Commissioners feel they need more time and expertise.
- Formal staff report and the Assessor's response would be helpful for the review in order to make a recommendation to the ZBA.

David Pierson of McClelland and Anderson, LLC, spoke on behalf of his client, Dr. Shannon. His hope was that the Planning Commission would address these issues and make a determination this evening.

Discussion:

- The request for a recommendation to the ZBA comes from their request at the public hearing. Review of the applications from the consultant aids in deliberation. Decision of the assessor to determine if the planning commission should review an application when recieved.

Comments from Mr. Pierson:

Question: When can the public speak to the issue when our agenda states for public comment for non-agenda only?

Questioning the procedure used to bring this to the Planning Commission for review.

Submitted application to the assessor, understands the planning commissions need to review the shared drive option. One of three criteria needed to approve the shared drive. According to minutes, the PC did not find one of the three in November. Objectives to the two drives were due to, in essence, being one. Revised to show separation. Assessor denied and relied on earlier decision of PC for reason for denial. ZBA determined that the PC should have reviewed the drives. Expressed concerns over other request of the ZBA. He feels the question before the commission is "Do the shared drives meet the criteria." ZBA interested in intent of the ordinance with the number of divisions.

Hoped to have the PC narrow their focus to the driveway issue. Mr. Pierson's interpretation of the ordinance is that the ZBA is not able to ask the PC to review the splits. Wetlands have been delineated by Mr. Marx, however not verified by Township consultant.

Applicant signed a form acknowledging build ability of lots for septic systems. If splits are approved, this does not mean it meets the guidelines under the other ordinances or regulations. His interpretation is that the Township is not liable under the land division act and other ordinances. The Township can approve the division then deal with the other issues that would be recorded with the register of deeds. Potential purchasers would be on notice of buildability.

Discussion:

- Ordinance consistently speaks to one shared drive per parcel, if the commission believes this is in the best interest of the township.
- Commission rules on the 120 ft. frontage. Up to four lots on a shared driveway.
- Call for a public hearing last month was only if required but would not hold one if not needed.
- 8.6 E1. number of splits for Shoemith will be addressed.
- Has had one split for the farm dwelling on Haslett Rd.
- Can nine more be allowed?

Mr. Pierson: Would this plan maintain the rural character. Does it meet the: Suitability and least disruptive. Is it compatible to surrounding land use and would it preserve ag use? Mr. Pierson, on behalf of the applicant expressed the perceived benefits of this plan: Commercial Ag-use. Homes in front of parcel to protect it instead of the back of the parcel. Buffer maintains rural character. Rear facing issue is not relevant due to depth of lots. Rural character is maintained with access to preserved ag-use as farm road is allowed in wetlands. Access through the wetland for access to the back.

Discussion:

- Shared drive without required frontage is not by right. This is an option available with approval for the waiver of the 120 ft. frontage. The applicant is not being denied the right to create splits.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Master Plan Review

5. Economic Analysis

Chris Doozan submitted an updated economic analysis chapter to commissioners and reviewed the updates which included:

- Number of employees chart for major employers. Education and medical are the predominant area of growth. Knowledge based economy. Employers are top 10.
- Percent change was addressed in Table 16. Production equals manufacturing. Insurance is located under office and support.
- Page 5.5 shows the absorption rate of office equipment. The township does not have any Class A office space. The Township is well positioned for growth in office space. What separates class a from class b space: quality of space, services offered.
- Page 5.6 expanded the list for office criteria with the addition of 5, 6 and 7, based on discussion at the last meeting.
- Page 5.7 added language regarding telecommuting. Currently only 2% of employees are working remotely.
- Page 5.9 3rd paragraph addressing some companies returning to the United States.
- Page 5.10 spoke to sense of place.
- Page 5.13 Added the section on agriculture. Narrows down data to tri county and Ingham County.
- Page 5.14 Attempted to figure how much in sales farms are generating and determine revenue per acre. Avg. 160-170 bushels of corn per acre.
- Please send any additional information that could be useful to Chris for possible inclusion.
- Information on high speed internet has been included and the importance for the need of this to be successful.
- Electric vehicle information was added. Will monitor progress of technology and use to consider adding plug ins.

Planning and Board Reports and Review

Township Board

Beginning Oct 1st the office hours will be changed adding hours on Wednesday and being closed on Fridays.

Budget process starting for 2013-14 fiscal year.

Trustee Martin will be retiring after 12 years of service to the Township.

Planning Staff

Introduced Annette Davis. She will be serving on the Planning Commission pending Board Approval. Thank you to Ron Cook for his 9 years of service.

Planning Commission Chair

The board needs to develop a policy before internet access will be available at the meetings.

Review

Wireless Telecommunication Facilities amendments will be presented to the board for consideration.

Committee formed for election of officers.

Shannon discussion- next meeting will be considering the 120 ft. frontage requirement for the shared drives and splits.

Reviewed economic analysis.

Commissioner Giese moved to adjourn.

Supported by Commissioner Brown-Timm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Wanda Bloomquist
Recording Secretary

Secretary Gerald Eidt