

Williamstown Township
Planning Commission Meeting

Minutes

September 21, 2016

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:30pm at the Williamstown Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, MI. Chair Eidt called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chair Eidt, Vice chair LaMore, Commissioners Giese, Weston, Korson, Davis, Eyster.

ABSENT: Secretary Brown-Timm, Commissioner Deshon. Quorum established.

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Consultant Chris Doozan of McKenna Associates and Planning Assistant Jim Howard.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion by Davis, second by Weston to approve the minutes of July 20, 2016. Discussion: none.

Motion approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Bloomquist stated that Commissioners LaMore and Brown-Timm had been reappointed to new three year terms and thanked them for their service. She also welcomed Jim Howard, the new Planning Assistant. Closed at 7:35pm.

PUBLIC HEARING # 1 –Verizon Cell Tower

Chair Eidt opened the public hearing on a proposed 115 ft. wireless cell tower to be located southeast of the Burkley Road and Turner Road intersection on a 100 ft. by 100 ft. area of leased land. Chris Doozan provided some background on the project and proceeded to discuss his review letter, mentioning that the Township is under a 90 day timeline. Other considerations related to the Special Land Use component:

- loss of farm land (.4 acres),
- compatibility with surrounding land uses, and
- benefits of the project (better wireless service, financial benefit to the leasee).

He then discussed the Site Plan Review component and the 15 standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. It was noted that the revised site plan addressed some of the deficiencies identified, such as the chain link fence (to be black vinyl coated), a maintenance plan (narrative provided by Verizon) and information on the equipment cabinets (supplied as page 3 of the site plan).

Amy Rodriguez from Telecad Wireless introduced herself and mentioned that landscaping would be added on the south side. It was also noted that if the towers aren't properly distanced from each other they can cause interference.

Discussion ensued. Commissioner Weston questioned why colocation on existing towers wasn't feasible. Mr. LaBelle from Verizon reviewed applicable provisions of the Telecommunications Act at length. He stated that it was a high priority and would be slated for construction in 2017. On the issue of posting a security instrument for removal, Mr. LaBelle stated that it typically costs approximately \$25,000. He stated that the typical lease life is 35 years, and this one would start with a five year lease. He further explained that, regarding changes in ownership, the lease runs with the land.

Chair Eidt then called for comments from the public in favor of the project. There were none.

Chair Eidt then called for comments from the public opposed to the project. Several individuals spoke about a number of issues, including: Jeff Bartrem, 3813 Burkley,- Why not colocation? John Schwartz, 311 Turner,- landscaping concerns, the existing not a massive grouping. Wayne Baum, 1123 Summergreen Lane, Lansing/510 E. Grand River, Williamston,- location suggestions. Lynette Baum (same address),- What is the benefit to the Township? Other concerns included a reduction in property values, and the value of the facility.

Mr. LaBelle from Verizon then responded to some of the issues raised and stated that personal property taxes would be paid on the tower. He also felt there would be no net effect on surrounding property values. He further stated that approximately 93% of emergency calls originate from cell phones.

Regarding the landscaping issue he stated that Verizon would screen the entire perimeter around the tower with 6 foot Spruce trees. He also referred the audience to the American Cancer Society's website regarding the radio wave emissions, stating that "towers don't cause cancer." He said that Verizon is waiting for a "NO Hazard to Air Navigation" letter from the state. It was again mentioned that the map does not show other companies' towers.

Motion by Weston, second by LaMore to close the public hearing.

Motion approved.

Discussion:

Motion by LaMore, second by Weston, to recommend to the Board to deny the SUP based on:

- Incompatibility with the Master Plan and the lack of information provided by the applicant regarding other options such as ability to co-locate on existing towers and other viable locations
- Lack of information shown on propagation maps with regard to location of existing towers (not all towers were listed on the propagation maps)
- Also denied based on lack of information for economic benefit to the community

Discussion: comments were made regarding the economic benefit of the project, if another tower was available, location in golf courses or parks, and stealth towers.

Motion approved.

Motion by LaMore, second by Weston to recommend to the board to deny the site plan because there is no landscape plan provided.

Discussion: None

Motion approved.

It was noted that the next Township Board meeting is October 12.

PUBLIC HEARING # 2

Chair Eidt then opened the Public Hearing # 2 on the Sign Ordinance. Chris Doozan provided an overview of his review letter and revisions to Article 7 (the Sign Ordinance).

Chair Eidt then called for public comment from those in favor of the revisions. There were none.

Chair Eidt then called for public comment from those opposed to the revisions. There were none.

Motion by Giese, second by Korson, to close the public hearing.

Motion approved.

Motion by Davis, second by Giese to approve the revisions to the Sign Ordinance and recommend them to the Township Board. Discussion: none.

Motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Site Plan Review – Whitcraft Pond

Mr. Doozan discussed his letter of 9/16/16 reviewing a site plan for a proposed pond on the south side of Epley Road, between Lounsbury and Williamston Roads, parcel # 33-03-03-11-400-017.

The pond would consist of approximately .95 acres with a depth of 17 feet, for recreational/aesthetic purposes. The parcel is approximately 70 acres zoned AG-SF. The pond as proposed would be located 19 feet from the west property line. Primary considerations are safety (slopes of sides) and drainage. The spoils from excavation are to remain on-site.

Mike Harris from Mid-Michigan Ponds spoke in regard to the pond.

Motion by Giese, second by Korson, to approve the site plan/pond with the two conditions recommended by Mr. Doozan:

-A revised site plan to clearly show the slopes of the banks and the sides of the north spoils area;

-Verification that off-site drainage to the north will not increase, otherwise the grade to be modified to retain drainage on-site.

Discussion: none.

Motion approved.

Mr. Williams of Epley Road offered his comments about the pond, which he was in favor of.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Doozan reviewed the proposed revisions to the Subdivision Ordinance.

Motion by Weston, second by Davis, to recommend the Board approve the revisions to the Subdivision Ordinance. Discussion: none.

Motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

ELECTION COMMITTEE

Commissioners Weston and Giese volunteered for the committee to bring back a recommended slate at the November meeting.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Trustee Eyster reported on the following:

- water testing – quality (esp. Arsenic, appears to be well within limits)
- police contract with Meridian Township – approved, extended 2 more years
- accepted donation to parks
- historical tour coming soon

Planning Staff – nothing to report

Planning Commission Chair – nothing to report

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

REVIEW

Chair Eidt commented briefly on the denial of the cell tower (both the SUP and the site plan).

Commissioner LaMore had a question relating to review of some amendments to Meridian Township's Master Plan.

Motion by Davis, second by Weston to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:01pm.

Jim Howard

Recording Secretary

Secretary Joscelyn Brown-Timm

DRAFT