

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

MINUTES

MARCH 15, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: CHAIR Eidt, Vice Chair LaMore, Secretary Brown-Timm, Commissioners Giese, Weston, Korson, Davis.

ABSENT: Trustee Eyster.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Davis, second by Giese to approve the minutes of January 18, 2017.

Motion approved 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Giese took the podium to relate an encounter she had with an individual at the Township's Community Park, where "Bob", walking his dog Josie, stated that the park has added longevity to his life.

Carl Bartell took the podium to express his opposition to the proposed Fireworks Ordinance, saying it was unnecessary and redundant since the Township already had the Blight Ordinance it could enforce against fireworks complaints, and his concern about overtime costs having the Meridian Township Police enforce it. (He submitted written comments from Donna Tocarchick who mentioned three factors to consider: Is it necessary? Is it appropriate? What does it cost?.)

Jim Boardway related his experience with a neighbor's fireworks last July during the Burn Ban and expressed his support for the ordinance.

Fred Haring expressed his concern about large fireworks and suggested they should not be used within 1,000 ft. of a subdivision.

Sandy Bartell asked whether the Township considered the density of the population.

Chair Eidt confirmed that any complaint would go to the Meridian Township Police.

(Comment period closed at 7:40pm.)

NEW BUSINESS

1) Draft Fireworks Ordinance

Chris Doozan gave an overview of the draft Fireworks Ordinance, mentioning the 11 holidays where fireworks are allowed the day before, day of and day after (State Act) totaling 33 days; that the definitions are from the State Act and that sparklers fall under low-impact fireworks; the distinction between consumer fireworks versus display fireworks; and the prohibition against sky lanterns.

Discussion ensued: concerns over better defining consumer fireworks vs. display fireworks in terms of Penalties - civil infraction or misdemeanor; it was clarified that the language in Section 5.03 came from the attorney. It was later suggested that a violation of the use of consumer fireworks could be treated as a civil infraction while a violation of the use of display/professional fireworks could be treated as a misdemeanor. The size of display fireworks used in MI and their proper handling/storage was also discussed.

Questions arose regarding the use of fireworks related to the size of a parcel, the population density in the area, and restricting the activity to the user's/owner's property. Can the Township go beyond state law?

Suggestion was made to eliminate Section 3.01-Low Impact Fireworks.

Under Section 3.05 question was raised about what constitutes "under the influence" and who determines it. Also concerns expressed about "imprisonment" and 90 days.

Under Section 4.09, question was raised regarding the safe area radius of 250 ft. (as proposed) versus 150 feet.

Motion by Korson, second by Davis to table. Motion carried 7-0.

Chris Doozan to revise the proposed Fireworks Ordinance and bring back to Planning Commission for the May meeting.

2) Finalize Meeting Dates

Commissioners reviewed the tentative schedule which reflected moving meetings to the fourth Wednesday. Some potential conflicts were noted. It was recommended that, since the November meeting date falls on the evening before Thanksgiving, a decision would be made at the September meeting as to the status of the November meeting (reschedule or cancel, as appropriate).

Motion by Davis, second by Weston to move the Planning Commission meetings to the fourth Wednesday of each month, with the status of the November, 2017 meeting to be determined.

Motion carried 7-0.

Planning Commission Meeting Schedule: 2017-2018

May 24, 2017	July 26, 2017	September 27, 2017	November 22, 2017*
January 24, 2018	March 28, 2018		

*(Tentative – to be determined)

3) Meridian Township Master Plan

Correspondence was included in the packet which informed commissioners that Meridian Township's updated Master Plan is now available for review. Copies of two maps – the Future Land Use Map and the Urban Service Boundary Map - were provided to commissioners.

Commissioners LaMore and Giese volunteered to act as a subcommittee to review Meridian Township's Master Plan and report back to the full commission.

4) Sign Ordinance – Request for clarification from Township Board

The Township Board tabled the Sign Ordinance at its last meeting and was requesting further clarification from the Planning Commission on a few items.

*Section 7.07.E.1: Why keep the last sentence (“Where there are additional permitted uses on the parcel...one additional...sign shall be permitted for each additional permitted use”) since it is in a residential area?

Commissioners felt this would involve very few situations, and that the language was appropriate and should be retained.

*Section 7.07.E.2: Why allow up to 48 sq. ft. in a residential district, and not smaller?

Commissioners felt this was an appropriate size, and the same as in the old/current Ordinance.

*Section 7.08.D.2: Why 48 sq. ft. ... and up to 72 sq. ft.?

Commissioners felt it would be appropriate to delete the last sentence.

*Section 7.08.E.4: Why allow 1 per street *frontage*, rather than 1 per *parcel*?

Commissioners felt frontage was appropriate, and that it allows for a “V” type sign.

*Section 7.08.E.5: Again, why allow up to 48 sq. ft.?

Commissioners determined this was a new limitation on maximum size, since there was no maximum size limit under the old/current ordinance.

*Table – Temporary and Promotional Sign Standards (pg. 7-21):

First 2 items , under Duration – why “anytime”?

Commissioners felt imposing a time limit would unduly restrict items such as house for sale signs.

Why now allow Balloons, Inflatables, Searchlights, Feather Banners and Pennants?

Commissioners felt these are new ways people use to advertise, and that the ordinance should keep up with current activities.

*In addition, please reiterate how non-conforming signs should be addressed.

Commissioners felt the language in Section 7.04.D and E is good and appropriate; that previously lawful signs that become nonconforming under a new ordinance are treated as permitted nonconformities, but the intent is that, over time, the sign will come into compliance with the new ordinance.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

TOWNSHIP BOARD – none

PLANNING STAFF – none, but asked Commissioner LaMore about MAP

Commissioner LaMore updated commissioners on current MAP activities

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR:

Chair Eidt updated commissioners on the status of Community Park, with the Township's purchase of the private inholding at 507 W. Grand River.

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

REVIEW

Chair Eidt reviewed the evening's actions by the PC:

- Review of Draft Fireworks Ordinance with revisions to Chris D. then back to the PC in May
- Finalizing the meeting schedule for the upcoming year (4th Wednesday of each month)
- Commissioners Giese and LaMore to review Meridian Township's Master Plan
- Sign Ordinance responses to Township Board

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Korson, second by Davis to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08pm.

Jim Howard

Recording Secretary

Secretary Joscelyn Brown-Timm