

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 9/22/21**

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:00pm via Zoom (meeting ID 897 2382 3584, Passcode 322738) hosted at the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, MI. Chair Eidt called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chair Eidt, Commissioners Stanford, Weston, Tocarchick, Flore, Giese and Davis and Trustee Creagh.

ABSENT: None. Quorum established.

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

Chair Eidt led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Flore, second by Tocarchick to approve the agenda as amended (adding 1784 Harvey SUP and moving Slate of Officers to end).

Motion approved 8 – 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Giese, second by Davis to approve the minutes of July 28, 2021 as amended (adding removal of non-conforming sign at JBJ Site).

Motion approved 7 – 0 (Giese abstaining – not at meeting).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC HEARING

- *Draft language for a proposed text amendment to Section 8.02 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow certain farm animals on non-farm parcels*

Chair Eidt opened the public hearing.

Chris Doozan reviewed the current draft of the amendment indicating this would be a new Section RR, the history behind its development and that 15 sources of information were utilized. He also mentioned that it would not regulate parcels in AG or parcels

covered under GAAMPs. He then briefly reviewed the draft and mentioned that he looked at coops available from stores like Home Depot, Lowes and TSC among others and that they can meet the requirements in the draft.

Discussion by commissioners ensued:

- Location and Setbacks, items I and ii need to be clarified;
- 8.a. needs language to clarify;
- Question about 8.c. and requiring 2 goats;
- Strike language about the selling of eggs;
- Suggestion for CAFOs on page 8 (item b), just reference GAAMPs;
- Question about chicks and identifying roosters from hens, suggest using “mature” roosters prohibited;
- What about drakes? What about peacocks?
- Question about the 18” elevation of coops under design, make it recommendation;
- Discussion about coop/pen size, 1 s.f. vs 3 s.f. and nesting area;
- Correction on page 4 under Buckling Goats, should be “wether” and item g.i.on page 5 “no male goats”

Public comments:

Natalie Feighner had questions about item 5 on page 2 concerning the registration of animals and how that would work, about diseases and the Township’s involvement, and discussion whether free range chickens allowed. It was conveyed that the pen could be as large as the setbacks allow. Commissioner Flore mentioned his parcel of 20 acres zoned RR with chickens allowed in the orchard for pest control. Chair Eidt mentioned the need to supervise the animals and the purpose of the 50’ setback to keep animals off neighbor’s property.

Candace Pilarski mentioned her situation with 2 acres zoned RE and how they would be affected; the draft covers residential districts.

Motion by Creagh, second by Davis to close the public hearing.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Draft of farm Animals on Non-Farm Parcels*

Short discussion about the need to see the draft with the changes.

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Giese that the draft not go to the Township Board until after the next PC meeting.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

Brief discussion that the administration could come up with the registration form.

NEW BUSINESS

- *1099 E. Grand River/Williamston Storage Center: Set public hearing*

It was mentioned that there are several outstanding issues identified in Chris D.'s review memo, especially drainage.

Julie Lawton-Essa, owner stated they have a good design and that resolution of the drainage issue was in process and may involve enlarging the pond.

Some discussion about timeliness of materials.

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Giese to set the public hearing for the November 22 meeting with materials to the PC by 11/12.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

- *Fences in the front yard in the R-1, R-1S, MHP and RM-1 Districts*

Currently 30" is allowed. Some residents have expressed difficulty in finding that height, as 36" or 42" is more common. If a change is proposed it would require a public hearing. Language should be to allow a "higher fence."

More input from Township Board? Subdivision requirements? Samples from Chris D.?

- *Lot coverage in the OS-1, B-1, B-2 and I-1 Districts*

Currently there is no requirement. Discussion ensued.

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Flore to have Chris D. look at fences and lot coverage.

After clarification, motion carried 8 – 0.

- *1784 Harvey SUP for accessory apartment: set public hearing*

Late addition, not on agenda. Much discussion. Apartment has been there for a long time. Building footprint isn't changing. Got info late, didn't get enough info.

Motion by Weston, second by Davis to set public hearing for 11/22/21 meeting.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

- *Ethics Policy*

Much discussion.

- Q on #7, Communication – receiving info outside of public meeting
- Transparency issue, intent is to set standards of behavior
- No conflict of interest

- Q on #12, representing private interests
- Document is pretty sweeping
- Comment from chair that people he has worked with in the Township have been people with the highest integrity

Jim H. to send out signature pages

- *Slate of Officers*

Giese and Davis to form committee and bring to November meeting

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Trustee Creagh reported that the amendment for NIESA approval had been approved.

Also mentioned the forestry grant that is in process. Appreciated Commissioners Giese and Davis for re-upping on the PC.

Chair Eidt informed the PC that Commissioner LaMore would not be continuing his service on the PC. His 23 years is second only to Chair Eidt, and he will be missed.

Q about JBJ and the sign.

Comment about whether the burn ordinance needs to be updated (especially the RR District/Pheasant Run Sub.) It is a general law ordinance.

Howard mentioned that the sand / gravel and short term rentals bills were basically still in committee. Also, October is “National Community Planning Month.”

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

CITIZEN COMMENT

None.

REVIEW

Chair Eidt reviewed the PC’s actions from the meeting:

- Approved the minutes of the July 28, 2021 meeting;
- Held a Public Hearing on the revised draft of the Farm Animals on Non-Farm Parcels proposed Amendment with further discussion at the November 22 meeting;
- Set public hearing for the 1099/Williamston Storage Center for the November 22, 2021 meeting;
- Approved a motion to have Chris D. look at fences and lot coverage;

- Set public hearing for 1784 Harvey / accessory apartment for the November meeting;
- Discussed the Ethics Policy;
- Established a committee of Giese and Davis to bring a slate of officers forward at the November meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Davis, second by Commissioner Weston to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:56 pm.

Jim Howard, Recording Secretary

Secretary Giese