

**Springfield Township
Planning Commission -- Business Meeting
Minutes June 15, 2009**

Call to Order: Chair John Steckling called the June 15, 2009 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Rd., Davisburg, MI 48350

Attendance:

Commissioners Present

Frank Aiello
Dean Baker
Ruth Ann Hines
Roger Lamont
Bill Leddy
John Steckling
Neil Willson

Commissioners Absent

Staff Present

Mike Trout, Supervisor
Laura Moreau, Clerk

Consultants Present

Brian Oppmann, Planner

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Aiello moved to approve the Agenda as submitted. Support by Commissioner Lamont. Vote on the motion: Ayes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Lamont, Leddy, Steckling and Willson. Nays: None. Absent: Motion Carried.

Public Comment:

Denton Humphries, from Boy Scout Troup 192, 12344 Carriage Trail, Davisburg, MI 48350 stated he was working on a citizenship badge which requires choosing an issue that is important to the citizens of the community and he has chosen environmental and wanted to know how Springfield Township's landscaping ordinance protects the environment. Commissioner Lamont stated that Denton referred to section 16.06; Landscaping Ordinance Amendment that is set for a Public Hearing and business on the agenda for this evening; that if this amendment is adopted it would enable the Planning Commission to have some empowerment to allow that existing natural features may serve as screening where a structure is a long way away, which would help the environment by leaving it as it naturally exists and we are very conscious of the natural environment. If there is nothing wrong with the existing screening why remove it and replace it with a berm and trees to meet the intent and goal of the ordinance? Denton asked who was responsible for this issue. Commissioner Lamont explained that it starts at the Planning Commission level that makes recommendations to the Township Board for final approval. Denton requested an interview with one of the Commissioner after the meeting.

Mr. Thomas Weiler, 9291 Hillcrest, Clarkston, MI 48348, stated at the Township Board meeting held last Thursday he mentioned that Cobblestone Lane has become an access road to Bridge Lake, which it is not supposed to be, and wanted to know if the Planning Commission could recommend to the Township Board to have the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) put up no parking signs from Cobblestone Lane to Lake Shore to the lake. Mr. Weiler asked who he should speak to, to have this done. Supervisor Trout said

he was just out there after the meeting last week and had already contacted the Road Commission and it was on their list. Mr. Weiler also inquired about the right-of-ways being cut and Supervisor Trout said they started cutting today.

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of May 18, 2009`

Tom Weiler, 9291 Hillcrest, Clarkston, MI 48348, stated that on page 6, Public Hearing Comments; it shows a statement made by Mr. Underwood as the first comment and he believed that Chairman Steckling read the letter submitted by Mr. Partington first and felt that the tape should be listened to, and the comments put in the proper order. He understands that not every word needs to be type but that it needed to be placed in the proper order and requested the minutes be changed.

Commissioner Aiello moved to approve the Consent Agenda, pending verification of suggested correction of the May 18, 2009 minutes as submitted. Support by Commissioner Lamont. Vote on the motion: Ayes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Lamont, Leddy, Steckling and Willson. Nays: None. Absent: Motion Carried.

The recording was reviewed, and the minutes were verified to be correct as submitted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Zoning Ordinance No. 26, Section 16.06 Landscaping, Greenbelts, Buffers, Screening

Public Hearing opened at 7:40 p.m.

There were no public comments.
Public Hearing closed at 7:41 p.m.

2. Zoning Ordinance No. 26, Section 16.09 Wireless Communication Facilities

Chairman Steckling Opened the Public Hearing at 7:41 p.m. after a brief review of the amendment.
There were no public comments.
Chairman Steckling Closed the Public Hearing at 7:42 p.m.

Old Business:

1. Zoning Ordinance 26, Section 16.06 Landscaping

Chairman Steckling stated that there were several items to review that have been discussed at previous meetings: 1) screening buffers waiver/modification 2) private natural landscaped lots and, 3) prohibited/discouraged plant species. Clerk Moreau stated that the buffers screening amendment should be under New Business and the other two items be under Old Business. Commissioner Lamont suggested separate motions as the public hearings were held separately. This was agreed upon.

a) **Naturally Landscaped Lots**

Commissioner Baker agreed with Chairman Steckling that the Commission had look at this a number of times and moved recommendation to the Township Board for 1st reading. Support by Commissioner Aiello. Chairman Steckling commented that he felt the language should be removed altogether. **Vote on the Motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Leddy, Lamont, and Willson. Nays: Steckling. Absent: None Ayes: 6 Nays: 1, Motion Carried.**

b.) **Prohibited/Discouraged Plant Species**

Chairman Steckling gave a brief overview of the steps and changes already taken to get to the language submitted by Clerk Moreau. He further stated that the language written for any new development requiring a site plan along with revisions to the prohibited plant list. Clerk Moreau agreed this was accurate and gave examples of how the lists and language would work.

Commissioner Aiello moved recommendation of the revised language and plant list attached to Clerk Moreau's memo dated June 8th, 2009 as submitted. Support by Commissioner Willson. Vote on the Motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Leddy, Lamont, Steckling and Willson. Nays: None Absent: None. Motion Carried.

New Business

1. Zoning Ordinance Amendment 16.06 Landscaping – Screening

Commissioner Hines moved recommendation to the Township Board adoption of the language for 16.06 Landscape Greenbelts, Buffers, and Screening as published for Public Hearing. Support by Commissioner Leddy.

Commissioner Lamont reviewed why the language was drafted and explained the need when dealing with small developments on large tracts of land and supported the language.

Commissioner Aiello was concerned about the language not being adequate for when screening requirements are waived for one development due to the large tract of land and then the adjacent parcel develops its land with a different use, then they would be required to screen the entire adjacent line between the two. He doesn't feel the language anticipates a situation like that or how the problem would be solved. Commissioner Aiello does agree with the goal and intent of the language but is not comfortable with it.

Commissioner Baker echoed Commissioner Aiello's concerns and wanted to make sure that we didn't create problems for the second developer/property owner in the future.

Chairman Steckling explained that was not the intention of the language and that the intent was not to alleviate the screening requirements but to be able to say that the screening has been met in another fashion versus planting of additional trees if the development was a long distance from the lot line. But if the development proposed additional structures closer to line with a different use, then they would be required to come back before the Planning Commission for review for full compliance with the screening requirements.

Commissioner Hines stated that she never read the language to mean that screening would be waived all together, but if existing adequate screening was already available that additional screening requirements

could be waived or modified. She concurs with Chairman Steckling that they would have to come back to the Planning Commission if they proposed further development.

Commissioner Willson agrees with Chairman Steckling and Commissioner Hines. Commissioner Lamont stated that if the second development was of a similar use and the structure proposed was approximately the same distance from the line, as was the first development, then I would assume the Planning Commission would make the same decision twice. But if the second development was of greater density and closer to the lot line, then we are looking at something totally different and would be reviewed differently. This language would give the Commission a chance to waive or modify based on the proposed language versus having to require so many trees per foot in some areas where existing is sufficient.

Commissioner Aiello would like to see at least some of the language clarified so that during review of screening for a development, that any possible modifications or waivers would require that all existing screening is located “on the site.” The proposed language requires existing screening at the boundary and he still is not comfortable with this.

Commissioner Leddy suggested putting “On Site” at the beginning right after No. 3, “On Site Screening Requirements”. Commissioner Aiello suggested placing it under letter a) Sufficient natural vegetation is present “on the site” to form an effective screen, and b) Sufficient natural berming is present “on the site” to create a barrier in keeping with the specific type required for the proposed use, and c) There is sufficient distance between the proposed use and the adjoining parcel “boundary” so as to render any additional screening ineffective.

Chairman Steckling then stated again that the intent is not to waive but to allow sufficient existing natural screening for compliance with the ordinance.

Commissioner Hines amended the motion to include the following revisions: under Section 16.06, 3) a) Sufficient natural vegetation is present “on the site” to form an effective screen, and b) Sufficient natural berming is present “on the site” to create a barrier in keeping with the specific type required for the proposed use, and c) There is sufficient distance between the proposed use and the adjoining parcel “boundary” so as to render any additional screening ineffective. Support by Commissioner Leddy.

Commissioner Lamont stated since there have been so many revisions made that he would like to see another draft from Carlisle Wortman before proceeding.

Vote on the Motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Leddy, Steckling and Willson. Nays: Lamont. Ayes: 6. Nays: 1. Absent: None. Motion Carried.

Old Business

2. Zoning Ordinance Amendment 16.09 Wireless Communication Facilities

Commissioner Aiello moved recommendation to the Township Board of Zoning Ordinance No 26, Section 16.09 Wireless Communication Facilities as presented for Public Hearing Support by Commissioner Willson. Vote on the Motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Lamont, Leddy, Steckling and Willson. Ayes: 6. Nays: Absent: None. Motion Carried.

Other Business

1. Priority/Task List

Supervisor Trout explained that some items were dropped from the list as they had already been completed or combined into another area on the list. He asked for suggested items that the Commissioners would like to start working on while Laura and her staff is working on consolidations. Under Site Plan Review some items were combined but need to be addressed by the Planning Commission to try and shorten the process for applicants such as waiting for permits from the MDOT, the health department, road commission and other entities that we have no control over so that we can let the applicants continue the process at the Township level.

Brian Oppmann agreed with Supervisor Trout as the process at the state levels are taking longer and if the requirements are removed that we have no control over it would be helpful for the applicant. Possibly a Concept and Final Review could be combined in some situations.

Commissioner Lamont agreed that all permits are required to be in place currently and it did hold up the process and would agree if we could simplify the process.

Chairman Steckling requested the Commissioners put together a list of items to be reviewed; suggested changes in the site plan requirements and put them up for discussion one by one and place on the agenda for next month. There was discussion about the incentives that expediting the review could offer.

Supervisor Trout also felt that the Commission needed to take a look at soil erosion and the implementation at the Township level and will have Greg Need look at developing language for implementation.

Commissioner Baker would like to see discussion on the safety path issue regarding requirements for either irrevocable letter of credit, cash bond clarified or funding for pathways if not being used on the parcel required to have pathways.

Brian Oppmann stated that he felt the issue regarding bond, letter of credit was fairly clear and that the clarification needs to be whether sidewalks are required on the right side of the road, the left side of the road or both sides of the road, etc. Commissioner Leddy agreed it needed to be clarified as our pathway plan only shows the route not the exact location. It was agreed to Pathways on next month agenda.

Commissioner Aiello suggested a list of questions be brought to next month's meeting.

Public Comment:

There was no public Comment.

Adjournment:

- **Commissioner Aiello moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Support by Commissioner Baker. Vote on the Motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Leddy, Lamont, Steckling and Willson. Nays: None. Absent: Motion Carried.**