

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes January 17, 2017

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the January 17, 2017 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Dean Baker  
Dave Hopper  
George Mansour  
Jason Pliska  
Kevin Sclesky  
Linda Whiting

Commissioners Absent

Ruth Ann Hines

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Planner, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin Walls, Supervisor  
Erin Mattice, Planning Administrator

Approval of Agenda:

**Commissioner Sclesky moved to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Hines. Motion Carried.**

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

**1. Minutes of the December 20, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting**

**Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2016 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Hines. Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing:

None

New Business:

**1. Discussion Item – Planning Processes Improvement**

Ms. Erin Mattice, Planning Administrator, provided an electronic presentation regarding using Office 365 to deliver and store the Planning Commission packets. This process will begin in February 2017. She explained the process and indicated that site plans will still be delivered as full size documents as well as having them electronically.

**2. Discussion Item – Possible Training Topics**

Mr. Doug Lewan, Township Planner, summarized the possible training topic memo dated January 10, 2017. Commissioners discussed these training priorities. Commissioners decided to hold the training topic entitled, “Basic Planning and Zoning Training” during the February 2017 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Lewan will be presenting this training topic. Commissioners also indicated that the training topic, “One Stop Ready Strategies” by Richard Carlisle is another session that they would like to hold at a future Planning Commission meeting.

**3. Discussion Item – Building Height Measurement and possible ordinance amendment**

Mr. Lewan presented his memo regarding Building Height Measurement dated January 17, 2017 and provided to the Commissioners. He stated that he looked at how the Township currently measures building height and the Schedule of Regulations regarding building heights. He provided thoughts on how that might be simplified which came from an ISO Consultant. The ISO way to measure building height is straightforward and it is ground to the eave. The current Township standard has to do with whether the home has a basement or not and the type of roof. A flat roof is measured to the flat roof but a peaked roof or mansard roof is somewhere between the eave and the peak. If a building does not have a basement, it is finished floor to the roof. Sometimes with the pitches of roof, that peak can get higher and higher. The Schedule of Regulation also has the number of stories listed. So, there are three items when looking at height, number of stories, distance in feet without a basement and with a basement which are based on the finished floor grade and the finished floor and the peak of the roof. He stated that in an attempt to simplify things and make all heights less than 32 feet, he proposed changing building height measurement to be measured by the ISO standard. He stated that building height could be changed to the distance from grade to the predominant eave as determined by the Building Official. The term predominant eave is in the current ordinance. He stated that there is an existing definition of grade in the ordinance which alludes to building height but that is not how they currently measure building height. The way it is now is finished floor elevation to the peak. He is not certain of the history of this definition. He proposed other changes to the Schedule of Regulations indicated without basement and with basement would be removed and replaced with in feet. There is a

relatively complicated way that the Township currently measures height and those heights exceed the recommended heights as determined by the ISO Consultant. He indicated that he is trying to bring the Township to the relatively simple way that the ISO consultant measures height.

Commissioner Sclesky asked why the basement would be in the equation for determining height since it is below grade.

Supervisor Walls stated that there was a difficulty dealing with the ordinance that was previously in effect relative to all of the walkout basements that become living area. There were two problems, one is the difference in terrain and the other was trying to determine which ridge and which eave to use. The ISO determination for residential should not be difficult to come up with something reasonable. He is concerned about using 30 to 32 feet when we have a two-story limit.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that what would change around the building would be the grade and what would remain constant would be the finished floor. He suggested using the finished floor as the starting point and eliminate the basement and just build in a factor if it has one or not. If it is below grade, will they be establishing height off of the finished floor?

Supervisor Walls answered yes in the current ordinance.

Commissioner Whiting asked if they were worried about access with a fire truck and if that is where the 32 feet came from; in the back it would be lower so they should not just use the finished floor.

Mr. Lewan stated that the ISO Consultant indicated that it is measured from the lowest level of Fire Department access.

Supervisor Walls stated that the Fire Chief said they are almost always using the front when accessing a building.

Commissioner Mansour stated that with many houses in Springfield Township, the back cannot be accessed by a fire truck.

Supervisor Walls stated that the ISO Consultant indicated that he did not know if they were talking about firemen or fire vehicles having access.

Commissioner Hopper stated that the only districts that do not meet the ISO standard of being below 32 feet are C-2, M-2, E-1 and VC. This is the problem and not with the residential houses. He stated that they need to discuss if they want to limit maximum height or do they want to give the builder an out which would be they could increase the height but they would have to suppress the building or buy a fire truck.

Supervisor Walls stated that the suppression is not the answer because there is also a size factor that has to be considered.

Mr. Lewan indicated that this is only applicable in commercial situations.

Supervisor Walls stated the standard is not only five buildings over 32 feet but there is also a use factor. He provided the history of the current The River church building which is not included anymore. The easiest thing for them to deal with is the height.

Commissioners discussed limiting maximum commercial height.

Mr. Lewan indicated that he would make some changes and amendments and bring it back to the Commission next month.

Old Business:

None

Other Business:

**1. Priority Task List**

Commissioners reviewed the Priority Task List.

Public Comment:

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Whiting moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Pliska. Voted yes: Baker, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Hines. Motion Carried.**

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Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary