

Springfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes November 20, 2018

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the November 20, 2018 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
Ruth Ann Hines
Dave Hopper
George Mansour

Commissioners Absent

Jason Pliska
Kevin Sclesky
Linda Whiting

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin Walls, Supervisor
Erin Mattice, Planning Administrator

Approval of Agenda:

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

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the October 16, 2018 meeting

Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2018 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing:

Ordinance Amendment – Section 40-136 Site Plan Review

Mr. Lewan provided an overview of the amendment and how it differs with the current Site Plan Review ordinance.

Chairperson Baker suggested adding a comma after the word, “Committee”, under e.1. as it is shown on page 9. He asked if the Supervisor can alone grant a site plan extension with good cause shown as the language indicates. He also asked if this language is in our current site plan language.

Mr. Lewan replied yes, the Supervisor can grant an extension. The next sentence also makes it possible for the Supervisor to recommend that the Planning Commission review that extension request.

Commissioners and Mr. Lewan clarified that the Supervisor can grant an extension as per the current ordinance and, the Planning Commission will be advised about this extension after it had been granted. The new language reflects the existing language in the ordinance.

Chairperson Baker opened the Public Hearing at 7:42 pm

No public comment was heard.

Chairperson Baker closed the Public Hearing at 7:43 pm

Old Business:

1. Ordinance Amendment – Section 40-136 Site Plan Review

Commissioner Hopper pointed out a typo on page 14. Under ii. there is an comma and “t” that are underlined. He agreed with the comma insertion on page 3 as Chairperson Baker pointed out.

Commissioner Hines asked about the Final Engineering Review. She commented that the final engineering plans would have a direct impact on the site plan and she asked if any of this detail was going to be provided earlier in the process.

Mr. Lewan indicated that much of the engineering will be provided earlier in the process. General grading plan is required. It would be unusual for a plan to get to Final Engineering Review without a general understanding of how the engineering is going to work but if it did cause a problem or major change to the site plan, it would have to come back to the Planning Commission. This new section of the ordinance, Final Engineering Review, is putting the detailed engineering after Planning Commission approval.

Commissioner Mansour commented that it is hard for him because he is used to seeing all the construction details, but he understands it is meant to make it easier for them to concentrate on Planning Commission issues.

Commissioner Hopper commented that the Township Engineer is in on the process all along.

Commissioner Hopper moved that in that the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on this matter, the Planning Commission recommends that the Township Board adopt specific ordinance amendments to Section 40-136, Site Plan Review, as presented tonight with the two minor changes as discussed. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

New Business:

1. General RV – Final Site Plan Amendment, Addition of Wall Sign, 8665 Dixie Highway, Parcel #07-24-101-005

Trista Baker, Allen Industries, introduced herself and Bill Brown, Operations Manager for General RV to the Commission. She summarized the request for a 339 square foot back wall sign for the new General RV building.

Mr. Lewan summarized his review memo dated November 16, 2018. They are requesting a 339 square foot building sign and he noted that a 100 square foot sign would be allowed as per the ordinance. Applicant went before the Zoning Board of Appeals on November 14th and they were tabled for some additional information. Any action that the Commission would take to approve the sign as presented as an amendment to the site plan would have to be contingent on a variance being granted. If the Zoning Board denies the request, the applicant is still allowed a 100 square foot wall sign somewhere on the property. He summarized the information provided by the applicant. The photo simulation showed both the 60-inch letters (requested) and the 32-inch letters (conforming size). The applicant also provided a photometric plan which showed that there would be 0-foot candles at all property lines. The zoning ordinance does allow up to .5-foot candles at the property line. So, the applicant meets the Township's lighting standards according to the photometric plan. There is another section in the zoning ordinance under signage which says, "the light from an illuminated sign shall be directed in a manner that will not interfere with vehicular traffic or with the enjoyment or use of adjacent properties nor directly shine onto adjacent or abutting properties." He indicated that there should be discussion between the applicant and the Commission about the view of the sign to the condo units to the west and how this might impact those units with the visibility of a sign. The sign is being designed to be seen 800 feet to I-75 so it will be visible to the condos to the west. He summarized the items for discussion.

Ms. Baker replied that there are a lot of trees located between the site and the condos to the northwest and her understanding is that those trees will block quite a bit. This is not the case on the church side but with their pylon and lighting they are not as concerned about that side and also, the church times will coordinate. She indicated that they can also put the lights on a timer depending on what the Commission would like.

Chairperson Baker asked if the applicant had assessed what impact a conforming 100 square foot sign would have on the site.

Ms. Baker replied yes, they have evaluated the 100 square foot and others too. They are bringing other options to the Zoning Board of Appeals as directed. She stated that that is why they showed what a 32-inch lettering sign would look like versus the 60-inch lettered sign that they are requesting. The 32-inch sign would have similar lighting and it will not be legible from I-75 and will be more of a distraction because motorists will be trying to read the sign and not be able to.

Chairperson Baker asked if the driver on I-75 was expected to see the proposed sign traveling southbound.

Mr. Brown indicated that only travelers northbound could see the sign, not southbound. They wanted travelers to see their location traveling northbound on I-75.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he doesn't see how the size is going to matter. The merging traffic from southbound Dixie Highway is going to be paying attention to their left shoulder and you are not going to see the sign. He stated that the ordinance allowed 100 square feet would suit their purposes for the signage. He knows that they cannot recommend over 100 square feet. His concern is for the forward lighted letters and how those will affect the neighboring properties. He understands that there are trees and it takes three years to reach maximum opacity, but the condos can be seen plainly. The condos will still be able to see the sign.

Commissioner Mansour stated that he understands the purpose but following the ordinances is the first intent. The site plan was approved with specific intentions, if the sign is so crucial, why wasn't it included in the initial plan? The fact that General RV destroyed the trees that were next to Dixie and then came back and asked for forgiveness did not sit well with him. He understands that they had to plant more trees, but he has developed properties and was responsible for preserving trees. He would like to verify that the approved sign size is installed.

Commissioner Hines stated that she is not in favor of the proposed sign. It is too large, and she is not in favor of anything over the ordinance allowable amount. She is concerned about the neighboring residents and the effect the sign would have on them. She asked what the Zoning Board was looking for at the meeting.

Ms. Baker replied that the Zoning Board requested to see a 50-inch lettered sign instead of a 60-inch lettered sign. The Zoning Board also asked to see an option of a monument out closer to the freeway.

Commissioner Mansour stated that they are also going to have a lot of RV's in the parking lot that are easily visible from the expressway. He asked what the purpose is of having such a big sign, and is it to create a more visible sign at evening or during the day.

Ms. Baker replied it is both. The sizing came from studying the Wixom location. At this location, they have a 42-inch lettering sign and they are 100 feet from I-96. She explained how they researched the sign size and arrived at the current proposed size.

Mr. Brown stated that there will be a lot of RVs on the site, but the motorist will not know it is General RV Center. It should have been on the original site plan, but it was an afterthought when they recognized that they do have visibility on I-75. They looked at listing it as an attraction with MDOT, but MDOT is not willing to do this. There is no recognition except on Dixie Highway by the monument sign that this is General RV Center. The goal is to let motorists going north know who they are.

Mr. Lewan asked about the photo simulation that was in the packet. It looks to him like there is a small window that a motorist is even going to see the sign. They can only see it between the two accessory buildings and driving at a high rate of speed seems to suggest that the applicant is going through a lot of effort for one little spot and the sight ability is negligible.

Ms. Baker replied that it is a short window which adds to the need for the size of the sign.

Commissioner Hines stated that she drove the route tonight and suggested that her car was traveling too fast at the posted speed to see a sign.

Chairperson Baker commented that the driver traveling northbound would not even notice a sign during the day, but possibly at night which is the time that the neighboring residents will notice it. The sign size seems to be more detrimental to the properties abutting this site than something that fits this structure. The proposed sign seems to be way more than is called for. He is not in favor of the 339 square foot sign.

Mr. Lewan and Commissioners provided possible motions that the Planning Commission could offer.

Ms. Baker stated that the team was meeting on site on Tuesday to look at alternatives.

Commissioner Mansour suggested that an additional ground sign would be closer to the property line and it would not create such a negative impact on the neighbors. The intent of the Commission is to make sure that they comply, and they are mindful of the neighbors. He would be more in favor of an additional ground sign.

Commissioner Hines concurred.

Commissioner Hopper replied that they are not looking at a ground sign. He questioned what glare forward facing LEDs would have on the neighboring properties. He suggested different options that the Planning Commission has.

Mr. Lewan summarized the options for a motion for this item.

Commissioner Mansour moved to table the request from General RV for sign size and location until the applicant can submit their sign to the Zoning Board of Appeals and if gaining Zoning Board of Appeals support for approval, it will come back to the Planning Commission for Final Site Plan approval. Supported by

Commissioner Hines. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

2. Ordinance Amendment Discussion – Special Land Use Section 40-145

Mr. Lewan summarized the amendments to Section 40-145 that were included in the Commission packets. He stated that it corrects some of the terminology, so it is consistent with the most recent Site Plan Review standards, added a new section called Review Procedure and changes were made to correctly identify the Township Board as the approving body.

Commissioner Hines asked about the public hearing now being required to be held at the Planning Commission. She asked if it would come to the Planning Commission with a public hearing already scheduled.

Mr. Lewan replied that the intent is that it just gets scheduled in front of the Planning Commission. He added that the Public Hearing is now held in front of the Township Board.

Chairperson Baker asked if there was only one public hearing.

Mr. Lewan replied yes.

Commissioners suggested language to make it clear that there is only one public hearing in front of the Commission.

Supervisor Walls suggested that the word “Board” is removed in #2.

Commissioners agreed.

Supervisor Walls stated that D.1 contains the term “Conditional Use” permit and this term does not exist in the ordinance and he suggested that it be changed to Special Land Use. He suggested that anywhere it says, “Conditional Use”, it should be changed to Special Land Use.

Commissioner Hines moved to schedule a Public Hearing for amendments to Section 40-145 Special Land Uses with changes mentioned. Supported by Commissioner Hopper. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

3. 2019 Meeting Dates and Election of Officers

Commissioner Hines moved to accept the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm for 2019 Planning Commission meetings. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Hines moved to nominate Dean Baker as Chairperson of the Planning Commission for 2019. Supported by Commissioner Hopper. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Baker moved to nominate Ruth Ann Hines as Vice-Chairperson of the Planning Commission for 2019. Supported by Commissioner Hopper. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Hopper moved to nominate George Mansour as Secretary of the Planning Commission for 2019. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

Other Business:

1. Discussion regarding items for Joint Planning Commission/Township Board meeting, January 2019

Commissioners discussed items to be included in the agenda for the Joint Planning Commission and Township Board meeting in January 2019. They went through the Strategic Plan and reviewed items that were still open.

Chairperson Baker suggested reviewing the ordinances related to zoning official and zoning lot. This was a suggestion from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Supervisor Walls stated that he has received language from Greg Need regarding Zoning Official and he will make sure it was on the next agenda. He will ask Greg Need to add information regarding zoning lot.

Mr. Lewan suggested that the Master Plan should be reviewed before 2021.

Supervisor Walls asked if the Strategic Plan should be the primary topic of discussion at the joint meeting. He asked if there are other items that they would like to see added to the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Hopper suggested that the Strategic Plan could be the basis for their discussion. Commissioners agreed.

Commissioners agreed that if Commissioners have additional items they would like added, they can either bring those up at the December meeting or send a correspondence outlining those.

Public Comment:

Board member Vallad summarized General RV's sign variance request in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky, Whiting. Motion Carried.

Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary