

ISABELLA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

April 14, 2011

A Regular Meeting of the Isabella County Planning Commission was held on April 14, 2011 in Room 225 of the Isabella County Building, 200 North Main Street, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Dailey, Gordon Gilchrist, Jim Kremsreiter, Jerry Neyer, Christine Alwood, Bob Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Evelyn Kent

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Tim Nieporte, Community Development Director
Mike Zalewski, Planner/Zoning Administrator
Brandy Harger, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Thompson at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Neyer, supported by Mr. Dailey, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Yes: Dailey, Gilchrist, Kremsreiter, Neyer, Alwood, Thompson.

No: None.

Motion carried.

ELECTION OF SECRETARY

Mr. Thompson opened nominations for Secretary.

Mr. Neyer nominated Ms. Alwood for Secretary.

Mr. Thompson called for any other nominations twice.

A motion was made by Mr. Neyer, supported by Mr. Gilchrist, to close the nominations and a unanimous vote to be cast for Ms. Alwood.

Yes: Dailey, Gilchrist, Kremsreiter, Neyer, Alwood, Thompson.

No: None.

Motion Carried.

By a unanimous vote, Ms. Alwood was declared Secretary.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the March 10, 2011 regular meeting were circulated to the Commission prior to the

meeting for their review.

Ms. Alwood forwarded minor grammatical changes to staff.

A motion was made by Ms. Alwood, supported by Mr. Kremsreiter, to approve the minutes as amended.

Yes: Dailey, Gilchrist, Kremsreiter, Neyer, Alwood, Thompson.

No: None.

Motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS

Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Gilchrist stated there was no meeting last month.

Parks and Recreation – Ms. Alwood stated that a committee has been formed to look at other ways the parks can be funded. In June there will be a tour of the parks, the Board of Commissioners will be invited. Coldwater Park has received a grant for \$10,000 to construct a basketball court.

Board of Commissioners – Mr. Dailey stated that the commission has formed groups to look at the budget; they will be looking at non-mandated services such as animal control, parks and recreation, and zoning.

TOWNSHIP CONCERNS

These township representatives were present and expressed the following concerns:

Jackie Curtis, Denver Township, no concerns at this time.

Bob Neeland, Isabella Township, stated that the township felt that the meeting with the Planning Commission members went well.

Mr. Zalewski stated that he had talked to Rick Ervin, Isabella Township Supervisor, and he had stated that he was impressed with how the meeting at the township went.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

SITE PLAN REVIEW #11-02

Mr. Thompson explained that the Planning Commission will consider taking action on a site plan submitted by Ben Browning to establish a used automobile and equipment sales center. The property is located at 9836 N. Mission Road in Section 14 of Vernon Township. The property is zoned General Commercial (C-1).

Mr. Zalewski stated that this is the property that was requested to be rezoned at the last Planning Commission meeting. The applicant is proposing to establish a used car lot on the property. The business is presently located in Farwell, and the applicant would like to move to this location. The use is allowed in the C-1 district and the applicant's site plan meets the requirements of the zoning ordinance. He also explained that the outdoor sales area must be 50' from a property that has a residence. Mr. Browning will be planting 2 rows of staggered Maple trees along the North property line. A 10' wide landscaped area is required between the road right of way and the parking lot. The applicant didn't necessarily want to plant trees because he wants people to see what is on the property; he has proposed a split rail fence to be placed in this landscaped area. There is an issue with the proposed 4' x 8' sign, it is required to have a 50' setback in the C-1 district, but Mr. Browning will be placing it 16' from the property line. No other district in the ordinance requires that a sign meet the building setback requirement, this is something that needs to be addressed in the new sign ordinance that the board will be working on. His sign can be treated as a temporary sign, as the ordinance allows for the placement of a temporary sign to be placed for a new business or owner for up to three months or as approved by the Zoning Administrator. After the three months has expired, he will then have to apply for the permanent location of the sign, and the sign will have to meet sign requirements at that time. A Health Department permit and Soil Erosion permit must be submitted and should be a condition on approval of his site plan.

Mr. Thompson stated that there is no lighting proposed on the site plan.

Mr. Browning stated that he is not going to have lighting as he does not have it at his current location.

Mr. Gilchrist asked if Mr. Browning would be allowed an extension for a temporary sign if the sign ordinance has not passed or looks like it is not going to pass by the time his temporary sign expires.

Mr. Zalewski stated he could be granted an extension and that he would not be required to move the sign if the new ordinance would allow the sign at the existing location. Mr. Browning is aware that this would be a temporary sign and that if the ordinance does not pass or change, he would have to meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Neyer asked if the applicant would have to come back before the board to have the sign approved.

Mr. Zalewski stated that he would not have to come back before the board.

Mr. Browning stated that he has a concern about putting the proposed split rail fence up. Presentation of the vehicles is 90% of this type of business. Putting up the fence would block the view of vehicles.

Mr. Zalewski stated that the ordinance simply requires a 10' wide landscaped area between the road right of way and the parking lot and could be satisfied by a grassed area; any type of landscape could be required in this 10' area.

Ms. Alwood asked if a berm with shrubs would be a problem.

Mr. Browning stated that in this area, there is a lot of gravel so he is afraid he will not be able to find much that will grow.

Mr. Nieporte stated that the required landscaping would really only need to be grass.

A motion was made by Ms. Alwood, supported by Mr. Neyer to approve Site Plan #11-02 with the following requirements:

- 2 rows of staggered Maple trees spaced 25' on center, to be planted on North property line
- 10' wide grass landscaped area between the parking lot and road right of way
- Allow temporary 4' x 8' sign to be placed at proposed location for 3 months
- Applicant must submit copy of Health Department Approval
- Applicant must submit copy of Soil Erosion Permit
- Approval is contingent upon the rezoning of the property which will become effective on Monday April 18, 2011.

Mr. Thompson read through the requirements for a site plan review and stated that this site plan would meet all those requirements.

Yes: Dailey, Gilchrist, Kremsreiter, Neyer, Alwood, Thompson.

No: None.

Motion Carried

REVIEW OF BETHANY TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Mr. Zalewski explained that Bethany Township is located in Gratiot County adjacent to the Southeast corner of Isabella County. They are in the process of adopting the Gratiot Regional Excellence and Transformation (GREAT) Plan. The Plan is a collaborative effort of all the local units of government in Gratiot County. The Plan provided a detailed history of Gratiot County and the Goals, Objectives and Strategies in the Plan seem to be very consistent with the Isabella County Master Plan.

Ms. Alwood stated that this is a very professional document.

Mr. Neyer stated that this was true a county-wide master plan and more than just a township master plan.

It was the consensus of the board to forward comments to Bethany Township.

REVIEW OF ROLLAND TOWNSHIP FARMLAND AGREEMENTS

Mr. Zalewski explained that Robert Peterson has submitted four separate applications for farmland agreements. The four properties are adjacent to each other in Sections 21 and 28 of Rolland Township. The requests are for two 40 acre parcels, a 43 acre parcel and a 76 acre parcel. All four parcels are zoned Ag-3 and designated as Rural Agricultural Residential on the future land use map for Rolland Township. There are several properties in the area already in the

PA 116 program. The applications appear to be complete and staff has no concerns with the requests.

Mr. Thompson stated that the applications appear to be complete.

Ms. Alwood asked if in question number 19 the applicant can just pick any number of years.

Mr. Nieporte stated yes, the applicant can choose the number of years they would like to be in the program.

Mr. Neyer asked if there has been any mention of the State dropping the PA116 program.

Mr. Nieporte stated that staff has not heard as of yet.

It was the consensus of the board to forward the farmland agreements to the Board of Commissioners with the recommendation that they approve them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Nieporte stated that corporate council would be talking to the Planning Commission about medical marijuana at next months meeting. They will be covering the medical marijuana act, some case law, and walk through some examples. This discussion will take place at the regular Planning Commission meeting, so further discussion should be done at another meeting as we will need to structure it as we will have other things on the agenda.

Mr. Thompson stated that other township boards and planning commissions should be invited to this meeting. He also asked if staff could provide the board with any advanced information.

Mr. Nieporte stated staff would email out any information that they had. He also stated that the census numbers are now on our website. Isabella County was number 4 in population increase according to the 2010 census numbers. He inquired as to whether the board would like to take a look at the fee structure for zoning as it hasn't been increased or looked at in quite a few years.

Mr. Thompson stated that it would be worthwhile to assess the zoning fees.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Ms. Alwood asked about the status of the sign ordinance.

Mr. Zalewski explained that the process of changing the sign ordinance language was much more involved than first thought as it will amend about 11 different sections of the ordinance. The board should have information to look at in the next couple of months.

Mr. Neyer stated that Farm Bureau will be hosting a dinner on April 19th at 5:30 pm in room 320

of the Isabella County Building.

Mr. Thompson stated that July 1, 2011 is the deadline for the townships to have their Planning Commission established by ordinance instead of by resolution.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the call of the Chair at 7:56 p.m.

Christine Alwood, Secretary

Brandy Harger, Recording Secretary