

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
March 25, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Chairperson Lauderdale called the regular meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Ross Township Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Lauderdale  
Mike Bekes  
Mark Markillie  
Michael Moore  
Pam Sager  
Sherri Snyder  
Mike Sulka

Absent: None

Also Present: Kelly Largent, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator  
Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant  
Robert Thall – Township Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Lauderdale noted the addition of Item 5) ZO Text Change – Section 18.4 D. and Section 19.3 under New Business, explaining that modifications to the site plan submittal requirements for accessory buildings requiring special land use permit and amendments to the special use criteria have been proposed for consideration. The agenda was approved as modified.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission proceeded with consideration of the **February 25, 2018 9** regular Planning Commission meeting minutes. The following corrections were noted: the spelling of Markillie (throughout the minutes); page 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> full paragraph – clarify that Mark Rodgers is a resident of the Township; and, page 9, Report from Township Board – revise to indicate a report from the Township Board was not offered. Markillie moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Bekes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Public Hearing – SLU/SPR for Residential Accessory Building (Ambro)

The next matter to come before the Planning Commission was consideration of the request by Andrew Ambro for special land use permit/site plan review for the proposed construction of a 540 sq ft residential accessory building that fails to meet the location and rear yard lot coverage requirements. The subject property is located at 1251 West Gull Lake Drive and is within the R-1 District.

Chairperson Lauderdale opened the public hearing.

Largent provided an overview of the request, noting the following:

- The applicant is proposing the removal of a 12 ft x 24 ft (288 sq ft) car port and the construction of an 18 ft x 30 ft (540 sq ft) garage in the same location.
- The garage is proposed to be located in the street-side yard, as required, and will meet building height and side/rear yard setback requirements.
- The subject site is a corner lot . . . requiring a 40 ft front yard setback from both street frontages; 18 ft and 20 ft setbacks are proposed.
- The proposed accessory building will fail to meet locational requirements.
- The proposed 540 sq ft accessory building will result in lot coverage that is 27.6% of the rear yard.
- The proposed accessory building will exceed the 10% rear yard lot coverage standard.
- Pursuant to Section 18.4 D., the proposed accessory building is subject to the special land use permit process.

Andrew Ambro was present on behalf of the application. He explained that the existing car port is in poor condition and needs to be replaced. He advised that the proposed garage is slightly larger than the car port but is proposed to be located similarly and to continue to be served by the same driveway and parking arrangement. Ambro noted that the garage has been designed to match the house.

In response to questions, Ambro confirmed that the street-side yard is relatively flat and will require minimal disturbance. Conversely, the slope of the rear yard would require extensive grading to accommodate the building. He further confirmed that the street-side yard is too narrow to meet the 40 ft front yard setback on both sides abutting the street.

No further public comment was offered on the matter and the public comment portion of the public hearing was closed.

The Commission proceeded with a review of the application pursuant to Section 18.4 D. – residential accessory buildings/structures. It was noted that the proposed building will meet applicable side/rear setbacks, height and locational

requirements but fails to meet the 40 ft front yard setback and will exceed the rear yard lot coverage standard. The following was also noted:

- the proposed accessory building addition is allowable as a special land use;
- the proposed accessory building addition is located in excess of 5 ft from all lot lines;
- the proposed accessory building addition is proposed for accessory residential use;
- a variance is not requested/required for the proposed accessory building addition; and,
- adequate application material has been presented to allow for site plan review pursuant to Article 21.

In consideration of the Special Land Use Criteria set forth in Section 19.3, the Commission concluded the following: the proposed accessory building is proposed to replace an existing accessory structure and will be similarly located; the proposed use will continue to be residential; no modification to the existing driveway location or parking arrangement is proposed; construction will not involve tree removal and will require minimal site disturbance thereby having limited impact on the natural environment or existing storm water drainage patterns; the proposed accessory building will replace a deteriorating structure and be more in character with the existing house and the general neighborhood; the proposed addition will not adversely affect public services or facilities serving the area; the proposed addition will not be detrimental to adjacent properties or the public health, safety or general welfare of the general neighborhood given the proposed use, size and location of the accessory building; and, the proposal meets the standards of Section 18.4D.

It was noted that the site plan presented was acceptable (per Section 21.4) and that the proposal meets the Site Plan Review Criteria set forth in Section 21.6 B.

It was reiterated that the above findings were based on the application documents presented and the representations made by the applicant at the meeting.

Chairperson Lauderdale then moved to grant Special Land Use Permit/Site Plan Approval for the proposed accessory building on the subject site based upon the review findings of Section 18.4 D. – residential accessory buildings/structures, Section 19.3 – Special Land Use Criteria, and Section 21.6 – Site Plan Review Criteria, noting that the site plan presented is acceptable, with the information required by Section 21.4 B., N. and O. waived per Section 21.4 T. Bekes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. 2019-2020 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Sulka moved to adopt by resolution the proposed 2019-2020 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule. Sager seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Election of Officers

Bekes moved the nomination and election of Lauderdale as Planning Commission Chairperson for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Sulka seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Moore moved the nomination and election of Bekes as Vice Chair for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Markillie seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Bekes moved the nomination and election of Moore as Secretary for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Sulka seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

It was noted that it should be confirmed that the Planning Commission Bylaws authorize the use of a recording secretary.

4. 2018-2019 Planning Commission Annual Report

Chairperson Lauderdale provided an overview of the draft report. It was agreed that the draft report is acceptable as presented and shall be forwarded to the Township Board.

5. ZO Text Change – Section 18.4 D.

Harvey presented draft text that would modify the submittal requirements for an accessory building requiring special land use permit. She stated that Section 18.4 D. 4. currently requires a special land use accessory building proposal to meet the site plan submittal requirements of Article 21. Harvey noted that these site plan content requirements are very detailed and largely intended to apply to principal development proposals. As such, it requires both the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission to review and waive each requirement that doesn't apply to an accessory building proposal seeking a special land use permit.

Harvey referenced the draft text and noted that the proposed amendment to Section 18.4 D.4. removes the reference to the site plan submittal requirements of Article 21 and instead provides a list of required information specific to an accessory building proposal. She commented that the proposed amendment will

provide better direction to applicants in the preparation of the site plan; reduce the time/effort by staff and the Planning Commission in determining the completeness of the site plan; and, improve the ability to obtain a site plan that includes the necessary data.

Harvey also suggested the amendment of Section 19.3 – Criteria for Decision so as to collapse and clarify the nine special land use standards. Attorney Thall agreed that modification of Section 19.3 was in order and would serve to streamline the special land use permit reviews.

Planning Commission discussion ensued wherein general support for both proposed amendments was noted. It was agreed that the proposed amendments would give better direction to applicants in the preparation of a site plan and may improve understanding of the special land use approval process.

Harvey was requested to prepare draft amendments to Sections 18.4 D. 4. and 19.3 as discussed for Planning Commission review in April.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Article 15 – Maximum Lot Coverage Requirement (% of Rear Yard) – applicable to Accessory Buildings

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced draft text dated January 28, 2019 that includes proposed amendments to Section 2.2 – Definition of Terms; Article 15 – Schedule of Lot, Yard and Area Requirements (both Table and Footnotes); and Section 18.4 E., as well as the updated Lot Diagram dated January 28, 2019. He noted that the proposed amendments are ready for final review and to be scheduled for public hearing.

Sulka moved to accept the proposed amendments and schedule same for public hearing in April. Bekes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Master Plan Update

Harvey provided a status report on the work completed to date in the update of the Master Plan. Referencing the approved Master Plan Update Proposal, she noted the completion of revisions to the Introduction and updates to the demographic data set forth in the Social Features chapter. Harvey stated that she is working to have the Existing Conditions updates completed for presentation to the Planning Commission in April, with updates to the remaining sections presented in May and a preliminary draft plan prepared by June.

Sulka inquired regarding updates that have been made to the 2002 Master Plan to date. Harvey noted that extensive updates were first made to the 2002 Plan during 2010-2012 to incorporate a zoning plan, update the goals/objectives, and update the future land use classifications.

Chairperson Lauderdale explained that the Plan was then reviewed again in 2018 by committee where it was determined that:

- the review efforts of the committee constitutes the 5-year review required by statute
- the existing Master Plan should receive a minor update - - addressing 'existing conditions' and revising goals/objectives/strategies and implementation elements to reflect current efforts and trends
- a full rewrite of the Master Plan should be considered following the release of the 2020 census information
- the full Master Plan rewrite should include a meaningful public engagement element
- the mechanics of the minor update of the Plan are at the discretion of the Planning Commission

He noted that the Planning Commission subsequently recommended approval of the proposal from Harvey to update the Master Plan according to the findings of the committee.

Sulka stated that the Parks and Recreation Plan is also under review for the required 5-year update. He questioned if the process could overlap.

### 3. Discussion – RT/RC Resort/Recreation District

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the proposed RT/RC District has received review/discussion at six Planning Commission meetings throughout 2018, including a meeting dedicated to public discussion of the draft text/rendering. He questioned if the Commission was prepared to accept the proposed RT/RC District for public hearing.

Sulka and Moore expressed concern with the draft text and requested that the Planning Commission revisit the issues that initiated the development of the proposed district. Limited discussion of same ensued. Due to the lateness of the hour, it was determined to continue consideration of the matter in April.

4. Watershed Protection Strategies

The matter continues remains 'on hold'.

5. Sign Ordinance

The draft sign ordinance remains 'on hold'.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Sulka gave a brief update on the matters under consideration by the Township Board, including recent discussions regarding increasing the membership of the ZBA due to population increases and the adjustment of the fee schedule applicable to Administrative Site Plan Reviews (ASPRs).

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals did not meet in March, 2019. He further reported the noticeable decrease in variance requests/denials associated with accessory buildings since the adoption of 18.4 D.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced notices received regarding Master Plan updates in Charleston Township.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP  
Township Planning Consultant