

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

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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 Jim Lauderdale
 Michael Bekes
 Mark Markillie
 Michael Moore
 Pam Sager
 Mike Sulka

Absent: Sherri Snyder

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the agenda should be revised to remove Unfinished Business Item #2, noting that Attorney Thall will be in attendance at the January meeting to present the review of the Zoning Ordinance for compliance with current law on zoning for agricultural use and recent changes to the GAAMPS. The agenda was approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission proceeded with consideration of the **October 28, 2019** regular Planning Commission meeting minutes. Sager requested that the discussion of Unfinished Item #1 – Master Plan Update (pg 8) be amended to include the statement ‘Sager stated through a half hour of research she was able to locate a digital version of the Master Plan and emailed it to Harvey in a format which could be altered to allow for editing so that the long-awaited updates could proceed.’ Bekes moved to approve the minutes as amended. Moore seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Charleston Township Land Use Plan Amendment

Chairperson Lauderdale advised that the Township had received notice of a proposed amendment to the Charleston Township Land Use Plan Map so as to change the planning classification of the Barn Theater property from Rural Residential Estates to Agriculture. The Plan amendment is proposed in support of a requested rezoning of the subject property consistent with the requested planning classification.

The Planning Commission acknowledged receipt of the notice and provided no comment on the proposal.

2. 2020-2021 Planning Commission Budget

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the Department Budget Request for FY 2019-2020, indicating it will be used as a template for developing the Budget Request for FY 2020-2021. In response to questions, Chairperson Lauderdale noted that a proposed budget has not been provided by the Township Board, but consistent with past practice and the request of the Township Supervisor, a proposed Planning Commission budget will be developed using the previous year's budget as a template for submission by mid- January.

Sulka provided 'Spent YTD' totals, noting that past due billings are not reflected in the numbers. He confirmed that the totals reflect the \$4800 approved for the update of the Master Plan. The Commission conducted a line item review and noted the following:

- The fiscal year is 4.01.19 to 3.31.20; expenditures to date (11.25.19) total \$17,749.
- Expenditures for each line item are currently within budget, noting that past due billings are not reflected.
- The 'attorney expenses' associated with the requested GAAMPS Analysis will be reflected in the current budget; potential follow-up work on the subject should be anticipated in the proposed budget.
- The amounts for each line item in the 2019-2020 budget remain acceptable for the 2020-2021 budget, with the exception of proposed increases to the budget for 'printing & publishing' (partially in anticipation of the Master Plan adoption process) and for 'misc & training' in recognition of membership education objectives.

A copy of the proposed Department Budget Request for FY 2020-2021 developed and agreed to by the Planning Commission for submission to the Township Board is attached.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Master Plan Update

Harvey advised that updates to Sections 3 – 8 continue. She noted that she plans to have a preliminary draft of the updated Plan ready for distribution at the January meeting. Harvey agreed to forward an electronic copy of the preliminary draft Plan to the Township Office for the preparation of hard copies of the document for Planning Commission members.

2. GAAMPS

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that Township Attorney Thall’s review of the Township Zoning Ordinance for compliance with current law on zoning for agricultural use and recent changes to the GAAMPS will be presented at the January meeting.

3. Sign Standards

Chairperson Lauderdale referenced the draft sign regulations prepared by Harvey per the request of the Planning Commission. He noted that review of the draft text (dated 4.24.17) was initiated at the September meeting and slated to be continued at a subsequent meeting.

Bekes, who served as Acting Chairperson at the September meeting, provided an overview of the questions raised and the conclusions reached in the first review. He requested that the review continue where it ended in September, with review comments focused on elements of the draft text not yet discussed.

Continued Planning Commission discussion of the draft text ensued, wherein the following was noted:

- The electronic changeable copy sign standard limits a change in message to no more than once every 12 seconds. What is the basis for the 12-second standard and will this render existing electronic signs in the Township nonconforming? It was agreed that limited flashing of signs is desired. Harvey advised that the 12-second standard is a common metric used in sign ordinances. Largent added that she believes it is also consistent with MDOT standards.
- It was confirmed that the standard set forth in C.5. is consistent with road agency standards (ie. signs may not be placed within road rights-of-way).
- Real estate signs and political signs are adequately addressed by the temporary sign provisions.
- Should the Purpose statement also include references to blight and the sign permit process? Harvey noted that ‘blight’ could be seen as an appropriate objective of sign standards . . . similar to the reference to ‘visual pollution’ in subsection 6 . . . but that the sign permit process is an implementation element of the standards and not typically referenced as a ‘purpose’.
- A definition of ‘memorial signs’ should be added to clarify that it does not refer to roadside memorial markers.
- There was a lack of consensus on the merit of allowing electronic or changeable copy billboards in the Township. It was agreed, however, that if they are allowed, they

should be referenced consistent with subsection H. It was further agreed that billboards should be allowed in both commercial and industrial districts.

- The Temporary Sign provision should be modified to allow 4 temporary signs within any residential district. It was agreed that standards of duration could create enforcement issues.
- Subsection K. should be modified to clarify that the sign permit process applies to 'permanent' signs.
- Subsection L. should include a reference to Section 24.4 in the Zoning Ordinance.
- The definition of 'directional sign' should be modified to apply to all sites, not just development sites.
- The methodology for sign area measurement and the concept of 'sign faces' was clarified.

Harvey was then directed to revise the draft text per the Planning Commission's discussion for review at the January meeting.

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Sulka reported that the Township Board approved the proposed amendments to Section 18.4 D. and Section 19.3, as recommended.

Sulka further noted that the Township has signed a contract with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement in the Township and that the police millage is no longer under consideration.

He advised that Chairperson Lauderdale and Planning Commission member Snyder have been reappointed to another term on the Planning Commission.

REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on November 6, 2019 and considered an applicant's request for variance approval from both the rear (streetside) setback and maximum lot coverage standards. The variances were granted after a finding of justification per Section 23.8.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Bekes stated that he will be absent in January but will plan to call in to the meeting.

Sulka and Sager expressed their thanks to the Planning Commission for a positive and educational year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
Township Planning Consultant