

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
August 24, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Chairperson Lauderdale called the regular meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. The Planning Commission meeting was conducted through electronic remote access due to Executive Order.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Lauderdale  
Michael Bekes  
Mark Markillie  
Michael Moore (entered at 6:54 p.m.)  
Pam Sager  
Sherri Snyder  
Mike Sulka

Absent: None

Also Present: Bert Gale, AGS – Township Zoning Administrator  
Rebecca Harvey – Township Planning Consultant  
Rob Thall – Township Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The Commission proceeded with consideration of the **July 27, 2020** regular Planning Commission meeting minutes. It was suggested that the phrase ‘He then yielded his remaining time to Doug Callendar.’ should be added to the end of the second full paragraph on page 7. Bekes moved to approve the minutes as amended. Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Public Hearing – Rezoning Request (Allendale Park, LLC)

The next matter to come before the Planning Commission was consideration of the request by Allendale Park, LLC to rezone an approximately 0.64-acre parcel located at 156/160 East Gull Lake Drive from the R-2 District to the C-1 District.

Chairperson Lauderdale noted that following receipt of public comment on the request in July, the Commission postponed consideration of the rezoning application to the August meeting to allow Township staff the opportunity to prepare a review of the request pursuant to applicable zoning ordinance amendment criteria.

Chairperson Lauderdale then referenced correspondence received from Patrick Lennon, legal counsel for Allendale Park, LLC, wherein a continued postponement to the September Planning Commission meeting is requested to allow for exploration of other approaches to the rezoning application, including a Conditional Rezoning application.

The Chairperson then recognized Patrick Lennon for comment. Lennon confirmed the request for postponement to September and the applicant's interest in the Conditional Rezoning option.

Sulka stated he felt there was good conversation on the request at the July meeting, but that he required further direction on the rezoning review criteria referenced by Attorney Thall in July. Attorney Thall explained that the review criteria he referenced is not set forth in the Ordinance but has been established through case law. He explained that the criteria would be reflected in the review proposed to be prepared on the request.

General discussion then ensued regarding the difference between a standard rezoning request and a conditional rezoning request, specifically noting that a conditional rezoning must be initiated by an applicant and not required by the Township.

In response to questions, Attorney Thall advised that the rezoning request will be re-noticed to reflect the additional details of the request proposed to be provided by the applicant.

Sulka then moved to postpone consideration of the request to rezone the subject property from R-2 to C-1 to the September Planning Commission meeting as requested. Bekes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 1. Master Plan Update

Chairperson Lauderdale requested that Bekes proceed with guiding the Commission through a review of the remaining draft updates to the Master Plan, as a continuation of his guidance provided in June.

Bekes noted that the Commission had completed a review of the Introduction and Sections 1-3 in June. He suggested they continue the review beginning in Section 4.

The following review comments were provided:

#### Section 4

- pg 3: Q2 – add MDNR acreage
- pg 3: Q2 – add parenthesis around ‘Yarrow Golf and Conference Resort’ – (throughout Plan)
- pg 3: Q4 – add reference to Stoatin Brae Golf Course
- pg 3: Q4 – add reference to ‘large private agricultural parcels’
- pg 5: **Undeveloped** - remove reference to # of golf courses
- pg 6: update acreage in text and Table IV-1
- pg 8: add reference to residential land use around Stoney Lake and Crane’s Pond
- pg 10: add paragraph on Skywood Recovery (300+ acres of institutional land use)
- pg 11: correct Hunt Club acreage from 82 acres to 109 acres
- pg 13: remove ‘near the site of the former Maple Hills Golf course’
- pg 15: remove ‘is currently for sale’ in last sentence
- pg 16: expand on discussion of Township Park
- pg 16: remove reference to Shady Bend
- pg 18: add reference to Crane’s Pond

#### Section 5

- pg 7: remove ‘strike-out’
- pg 10: add new survey information

#### Section 6

- pg 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet – is the statement accurate/meaningful?
- pg 5: **Road Maintenance** – reference adoption of road special assessment district in 2017 (received KCRC award for road improvement)
- pg 17: c. – remove ‘telephone’; add ‘communications’

#### Section 7

- pg 3: update land area projections in text and Table VII-1

- pg 12: include reference to Township Rec Plan
- pg 12: add text proposed by Markillie
- pg 15: replace ‘Yankee Springs’ with ‘Ross’

It was then agreed that review of the Preliminary Draft would continue in September with a review of Section 8 and the Future Land Use Map.

## 2. Discussion – Outdoor Wood Furnaces

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Planning Commission completed review of the draft ‘outdoor furnace’ text (dated April 27, 2020) in June and directed Harvey to revise the draft text per the Commission’s discussion. The Planning Commission then proceeded with a review of the revised draft text (dated August 24, 2020).

Sager questioned if subsection 4 would apply to existing outdoor furnaces. Attorney Thall explained that since the proposed ‘outdoor furnace’ regulations will be zoning regulations, they will not apply to existing furnaces. Instead, existing outdoor furnaces that do not meet the new standards will be considered lawfully nonconforming.

Markillie stated that he has given further thought to subsection 4.d. and feels the proposed 200 ft setback requirement from the nearest property line to be too limiting. He noted that, even though a 200 ft setback is recommended in the MDEQ model regulations, it would likely eliminate the ability for compliance on many large parcels in the Township.

Markillie suggested that a reduced setback of 125 ft would still offer a separation that would provide the desired protection to adjacent property. Planning Commission members expressed support for the proposed setback reduction.

Bekes then moved to accept the proposed amendment to Section 2.2 – Definition of Terms and the proposed Section 18.7 – Outdoor Furnaces, as revised, set forth in draft text dated August 24, 2020 for public hearing in September. Moore seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Sulka reported that the Township Board approved the proposed amendment to Section 1.3 – Scope (related to RTFA/GAAMPS), as recommended.

Sulka further noted that the Township Board continues to discuss the concept of a special assessment district for Sherman Lake.

## REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale reported that the ZBA met on July 1, 2020 and considered a request for variance approval from the maximum lot coverage standard. He noted that variance approval was granted to allow a 1.1% increase in the lot coverage allowed, noting again the effective decision-making afforded as a result of the changes made to Section 23.8.

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the ZBA did not meet in August, 2020.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

## MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

No member or advisor comments were offered.

## ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

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