

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
August 22, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Chairperson Lauderdale called the regular meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Ross Township Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Lauderdale  
Michael Bekes  
Mark Markillie  
Steve Maslen  
Michael Moore  
Pam Sager  
Sherri Snyder

Absent: None

Also Present: Bert Gale – 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 25, 2022** regular Planning Commission meeting minutes. It was noted that page 2, first paragraph, should be revised to note 'one of the representatives of Off Brothers' instead of 'one of the owners of Off Brothers'. Moore then moved to approve the minutes as amended. Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing – Site Plan Amendment (Skywood Recovery)

The next matter to come before the Planning Commission was consideration of the request by Foundations Recovery Network for site plan amendment of the proposed addition of a modular classroom within an existing parking area on the site of Skywood Recovery Center. The subject property is located at 10499 N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street and is within the R-R District.

Gale provided an overview of the application, noting the following:

- Applicant proposes placement of a 28 ft x 56 ft modular classroom within an existing parking lot on the site of the facility.
- The proposed modular classroom will increase the space used for learning by 20-30 residents.
- The proposed building meets applicable setback, lot coverage, and building height requirements.
- The proposal involves an amendment of the original site plan approved on September 28, 2015, but not an amendment of the special land use permit . . . a public hearing is not required.

Toby Hilton, Director, was present on behalf of the application. He referenced drawings of the proposed modular and explained it is a used facility and will provide space for a classroom, restrooms and a small office. Hilton explained that the center is in need of smaller classroom spaces that serve only 15-20 people and the modular will serve as a temporary measure until longer term arrangements are provided. He confirmed that the proposed location of the classroom will allow for easy connection to existing on-site sewer/water services.

In response to Commission questions, Hilton noted that plenty of parking will still be provided and that the modular will be entirely served by existing infrastructure.

The Commission proceeded with a review of the application pursuant to Section 21.4 – Site Plan Content and 21.6 B. – Criteria for Site Plan Review. The following was noted:

- The application meets the content standards of Section 21.4., noting the utility information provided by the applicant in the presentation.
- Regarding the harmful effects upon surrounding development, it was noted that the classroom will be located within an existing parking area; the parking area is below the grade of the lodge; and, existing vegetation on the site provides adequate screening for the entire facility.
- The classroom will be served by existing drives and parking areas; no change is proposed.
- Regarding adverse effects on adjacent properties, it was recognized that the modular classroom constitutes no change in use and a minimal modification of the site plan. It was further noted that the modular will be located centrally on the property and adequately screened by existing on-site vegetation.

- The proposed modular will be adequately served by existing on-site infrastructure.
- The proposed modular will result in minimal change to the site and will not impact on-site natural features or existing screening, nor modify existing on-site storm water management.

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

Snyder moved to grant Site Plan Amendment for the proposed placement of a 28 ft x 56 ft modular classroom within the parking lot of Skywood Recovery Center. Approval is granted based upon the review findings of Section 21.6 – Site Plan Review Criteria. Moore seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 1. Medical Marihuana Caregiver

Chairperson Lauderdale stated that the Planning Commission completed work on this item and held the public hearing on the recommended text at the August 18, 2022 meeting. He noted that the Township Board will be considering the recommendation at a meeting scheduled for next week.

### 2. Solar Energy Facilities

Chairperson Lauderdale reminded that a review of draft text dated August 18, 2022 had been initiated by the Commission at the August 18, 2022 meeting . . . where it had then been determined to ‘postpone further discussion of the draft text to the August 22, 2022 regular meeting, with direction to Harvey to revise the draft text per the discussion to date.’

He added that it was also agreed that the Planning Commission would strive to complete its discussion on August 22, 2022 and then consider a special meeting date for a public hearing on the draft text.

Harvey provided an overview of the revised draft text, highlighting the modifications made in response to the Commission’s initial review. Planning Commission review of the revised draft text ensued wherein it was noted that the text adequately reflects all requested modifications. The following minor changes were then requested:

- Section 18.9 D. – delete ‘temperature controlled’
- Section 18.9 E. – revise first sentence to read ‘solar panels and related energy storage systems’; delete last sentence

- Article 20, Item 36, C.1. – delete ‘structures and equipment’
- Article 20, Item 36, E. – delete ‘temperature controlled’
- Article 20, Item 36, G. – delete last sentence

Bekes moved to accept the draft text as revised and to schedule a public hearing on same for a special meeting to be held on September 12, 2022. Snyder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Bekes advised that a special Township Board meeting has been scheduled for September 20, 2022 to consider the text amendment that is recommended.

### 3. Master Plan

Bekes reported that after the Township Board’s adoption of the updated Master Plan, it was noted that the Plan’s information on police service in the Township is no longer accurate in light of the Board’s recent action to re-establish the Township Police Department.

He stated that, rather than go through an immediate amendment process, it was decided that the Master Plan should be finalized and released as adopted, and that: 1) updated text on police services can unofficially accompany the Plan; and 2) an official amendment can occur at a future date when other amendments are being considered.

### 4. Definition of ‘fence’ related to sight lines.

Attorney Thall offered an update on the appeal of the ZBA’s interpretation related to the definition of a ‘fence’. He noted that the Judge has now ruled on the case and has essentially reversed the finding of the ZBA. He advised that he will be discussing the matter with the Township Board for direction on ‘next steps’.

### 5. Definition of ‘Structure’

Chairperson Lauderdale reminded of the request by AGS to consider the definition of the term ‘structure’ in the Zoning Ordinance, and the application of the locational and setback requirements that should occur as a result. He noted that limited discussion of the matter was held at the June meeting.

Harvey referenced a Memo titled ‘Regulation of Structures’ dated August, 22, 2022, and provided an overview of the questions posed regarding the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance and the application of the setback requirements to ‘structures’.

She noted the specific provisions of interest/concern in the Ordinance . . . and provided insight on how this matter is addressed in other communities.

Lengthy Planning Commission discussion ensued on the question of whether ‘structures’ should be subject to ‘building’ setback requirements and if there is a way to distinguish some structures for setback application.

Continued discussion of the matter was tentatively scheduled for the September 12, 2022 special meeting, time allowing.

#### REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD

Bekes reported that a special meeting has been scheduled for September 19, 2022 to discuss the expenditure of AARP funds in the Township.

#### REPORT FROM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairperson Lauderdale reported that the ZBA met on August 3, 2022 whereat they considered/granted variance approval from the 40 ft front setback requirement to allow for the reconstruction of existing decks.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

#### MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS

Markillie provided an update on property acquisition efforts related to the North Country Trail.

#### ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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