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Trustees  
Carol J. Burkard  
Michael Powell  
Todd T. Birkle  
David Lewsley

## WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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### WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting  
7525 Highland Road  
White Lake, MI 48383  
January 5, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called: Ms. McNulty and Mr. Woodhouse were not present.

ROLL CALL: Steve Anderson, Chairperson  
Todd Birkle, Board Liaison  
Steve Martinko, Vice Chairperson  
Sarah McNulty - **Excused**  
Peter Meagher, Secretary  
William Pierson  
Gail Novak-Phelps  
Stan Woodhouse - **Absent**

Also Present: Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director  
David Birchler, Township Consultant  
Lynn Lindon, Recording Secretary

Visitors: 0

#### Approval of Agenda

Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Meagher supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (6 yes votes)

#### Approval of Minutes

a. December 1, 2011

Mr. Birkle moved to approve the minutes of December 1, 2011 as presented. Mr. Pierson supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (6 yes votes)

#### Call to the Public (for items not on the agenda)

Mr. Anderson opened the discussion for public comment on items not listed on the agenda, but none was offered.

#### Continuing Business

a. Continuing work on Clearzoning

Mr. Birchler indicated that he sent via email the layout of all zoning districts, including the overlay districts currently in the ordinance.

He noted that each district could be presented in its entirety in 2 pages, other than form-based districts, which is more comprehensive. He gave an overview of how the districts are color-coded for consistency throughout the ordinance. He also noted there wasn't any significant new information. Any differences have been reviewed for clarity on land uses and there were listings of uses that had old terminology that has been cleaned up. He also discussed the clear vision line as it pertains to distance from buildings and visibility from cars on cornering streets.

With regard to the overlay districts, the Wellhead Protection is a set of standards embodied in another section of the ordinance which is a public water system based on wells. A zone was established previously to protect the recharge area from hazardous materials. The Extractive District is also an overlay, but doesn't have setback requirements. He will continue to work on this section and its presentation.

Ms. Novak-Phelps questioned whether the PD and PDD would be lost with this new structure. She would like the Planning Commission to be flexible enough to allow certain things within developments without precluding.

Mr. Anderson stated he understood that this is still a set of guidelines for format development but that it doesn't preclude the Planning Commission from making adjustments or changes. Mr. Birchler confirmed that there is still discretion afforded to the Planning Commission when approving plans, however, if it varies too far from the physical character that the district is intending to create, it would stray from the basic concept of the form-based code. There are currently 2 compact places in the township where this zoning would be used and developments can get more density and square footage. The intent was to make this zoning attractive to draw development to these areas first. If this gets completely built out, and there is still demand, future planning for expansion can be considered.

Mr. Martinko referenced the compact areas and where the drainage standards would come from. Mr. O'Neil responded that the Engineering Design Standards Ordinance prescribes how much retention is needed for the amount of storm water generated. Mr. Martinko questioned whether this should be labeled to that effect to make sure developments see the full benefit. Mr. O'Neil added that developments have to do something with the water and there is no flexibility with dealing with it, but there is flexibility with the mode of design to achieve the standard set forth.

## **New Business**

### **b. Discussion of a moratorium on electronic changeable signs**

Mr. O'Neil stated that the Planning Commission discussed at the last meeting to have the Board consider a moratorium to prohibit any new electronic changeable signs to be installed from now until the ordinance is adopted. This would allow anyone who has a permit for a sign now can have it repaired if broken, but cannot move it from one end of the site to another. He has looked at regulations, which could be suitable based on other communities, but if the commission's intent is to have them removed, it should recommend a time frame. He could take the recommendation to the Township Board in 2 weeks.

Mr. O'Neil would also like to submit this draft to the Board now to discuss portable signs, etc. and get their feedback to bring discuss at the February Planning Commission meeting for review and revisions.

**Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to recommend to the Township Board a 120-day moratorium on electronic changeable signs effective January 17, 2012. Mr. Martinko supported.**

Discussion on the Motion: Mr. Pierson asked whether this would "scare" businesses away by not allowing these types of signs. Mr. O'Neil referenced the sign at Fisk Corners that serves the multi-tenant building. The tenants like the sign and they think it's cleaner and better for the business, as well as being able to be used for emergency purposes.



Ms. Novak-Phelps noted that the intent is to provide good guidance and ordinance for these types of signs. Mr. O'Neil asked for clarification of what the Planning Commission wants.

Mr. Anderson said as a commission, it doesn't want the signs. Safety and aesthetics are the main issues. Further, once the skyline has changed, we can't go back. He feels we owe it to the public to provide feedback. These signs came up unbeknownst to the township and will continue to grow if it doesn't do something.

Mr. Anderson called the question.

**The MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: Anderson – yes; Martinko – yes; Meagher – yes; Novak-Phelps – yes; Birkle – yes; Pierson – yes. (6 yes votes)**

Mr. Birchler noted that if every community goes this route, it makes it look very generic. There is no creativity of the shape and design and it takes away from the individuality the township has wanted to see. Mr. Martinko emphasized that a business owner takes pride in his business, however, when it comes to marketing, it is the shock and awe factor. The consensus of the group was that they thought these types of signs look chintzy, and there are safety issues. Mr. Birchler added that studies have shown that these types of signs have more information than a motorist going by at 55 mph can absorb.

#### **Liaison's Report**

Mr. Birkle reported that the last board meeting mainly addressed accounting resolutions to clean things up. There was also a spirited discussion on the parks. The board approved by a 4-3 vote on a concept to get a plan done for Hidden Pines Park, which he personally voted against because he is concerned with how the parks will be maintained if the millage does not pass. He is a proponent of trails at this time.

#### **Consultant's Report**

Mr. Birchler reported on projects he is doing for other communities and 2 recreation grants they have written have been recommended for funding. The new Recreation Passport program is proving successful, as it allows you to enter each state park without paying the individual pass.

#### **Director's Report**

Mr. O'Neil requested discussion on Residential Fencing. There could be confusion in interpreting the current ordinance, and they will be cleaning it up. One primary issue is to establish a setback on corner lots, which will remove any doubt or confusion.

He noted there will be a new planning member when the group convenes in 2 weeks.

He announced that a time capsule is being compiled and will contain several documents that the Planning Commission had worked on. Ms. Burkard is looking for more things to put in the capsule. The township library has more information if anyone is interested.

#### **Communications:**

##### **Next meeting dates:**

- Regular Meeting – January 19, 2012
- Regular Meeting – February 2, 2012

#### **Other Business**

- a. Election of officers and ZBA liaison

**Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to elect Steve Martinko as Chair. Mr. Birkle supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (6 yes votes)**

Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to elect Peter Meagher as Vice Chair. Mr. Birkle supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (6 yes votes)

Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to elect William Pierson as Secretary. Mr. Birkle supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (6 yes votes)

Mr. Birkle moved to have Ms. Novak-Phelps remain the Planning Commission liaison to the ZBA. Mr. Meagher supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (6 yes votes)

#### Adjournment

Mr. Birkle moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Pierson supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (8 yes votes)