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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
7525 Highland Road
White Lake, MI 48383
November 17, 2011 @ 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. Novak-Phelps was excused.

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

Also Present: Jason Iacoangeli, Staff Planner
David Birchler, Township Consultant
Kristen Goetze, Township Engineer
Lynn Lindon, Recording Secretary

Visitors: 0

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Birkle moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Pierson supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (7 yes votes)

Approval of Minutes

a. November 3, 2011

Mr. Birkle moved to table the minutes of November 3, 2011. Mr. Woodhouse supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (7 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 gave a status update on the Clearzoning schedule as of November 17, 2011. They are about 50% complete with the final version. This is a significant reorganization of the ordinance and all the district revisions have been completed and incorporated into the ordinance. He is working on a

list of minor inconsistencies in the current code that he is fixing as he goes. He is also keeping a separate list of a "health analysis", which needs consideration from the Planning Commission for amending the ordinance. He will share a use matrix at the next meeting detailing all the uses of the ordinance and where they would be allowed under each use.

Mr. Birchler reviewed the information that was previously provided via email to the commissioners. With regard to portable signs, he answered questions that arose from the last meeting. The by-right portable sign is allowed without a permit so long as it is located within 20 ft. from a business' door. The annual permit for a sign located outside the 20 ft. will allow for one sign only. At the last meeting, Mr. O'Neil had suggested allowing a "new business" sign for 30 days, but due to the fact there weren't strong comments from the commission, Mr. Birchler stated he left this allowance at 14 days. Mr. Martinko added that 15 days, plus the weekend, would amount to more time for signs to be displayed.

Mr. Birkle stated he is not in favor of a weekend sign and would like to see businesses obtain a permit. Mr. Birchler clarified that permits would be required unless the sign is utilized within 20 ft. from their door. If permits were required to be done on a calendar year, it would make sense for the ordinance officer to have a list. Mr. Birkle added that lack of enforcement has been an issue in the past, but it is improving.

Mr. Iacoangeli indicated that the township has eliminated and confiscated all the illegal signs on the MDOT right-of-way. Some of the businesses that had illegal signs had done so because other businesses were doing it. Everyone the township staff has come in contact with was receptive to the idea of permits and the allowable time to display signs.

Mr. Woodhouse feels there should be a cap on the number of days signs are allowed in a calendar year. Businesses are getting a break by having a sign within 20 ft. of their door.

Mr. Anderson asked what the maximum number of days a sign could be allowed. Mr. Birchler responded that signs would be permitted for 167 days out of 365.

Ms. Goetze stated that the new stores in the Marketplace will want to have signs out on M-59 for their grand opening so cars coming from the east will know they are there. Mr. Birchler indicated that those businesses will each have a sign on the monument and storefront signs.

Mr. Anderson feels this new sign ordinance is better than what currently exists and gives a basis. This might not be the answer to it all, but it is something to "hang our hat on".

Mr. Pierson feels that without any regulation, the enforcement officer will not be able to keep up. This would give a lot of leeway and the township can regulate in a way that everyone feels comfortable with.

Mr. Birchler continued that the majority feels there needs to be regulations that the building department can enforce. Annual permit requirement on a calendar basis provides a clear and appropriate system. Material and design oversight will lend to consistency. There will always be a problem without a set of standards. If the township gets good compliance, it can work with this system. If not, it may have to look at the prohibition route. He is confident that most businesses will abide by the rules.

Mr. Birchler reviewed some of the new definitions incorporated in the revised language. In order to make future interpretation easier, he took the uses and put them into a definition. Each use now requires approval authority. This will eliminate the need to make amendments all the time. The nature of business changes rapidly and the township will see many kinds of new uses that can be grouped into the main 3 categories (Town Center, Pontiac Gateway, and Neighborhood Mixed Use) and then broken down into sub-categories.

Mr. Martinko questioned whether a rejection from the Community Development department could go the ZBA. Mr. Birchler confirmed that this is provided in the statute.

He reviewed the changes in wording and graphics in the 3 new districts and asked the commissioners to review at their leisure and email him any suggestions or changes. He will provide another draft before the next meeting and then it should be ready to go into a draft ordinance.

Liaison's Report

Mr. Birkle reported that the Township approved the 2012 budget. They also approved the concept that the Parks and Rec Committee will survey what other communities are doing with regard to fee structures. The vendor for the conification of the ordinances was approved. Other business includes discussion on the property at M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road, which may go up for tax sale.

Consultant's Report

Mr. Birchler had nothing further to add.

Director's Report

Mr. Iacoangeli asked if the commission would consider canceling the December 15 meeting to allow the ZBA to have a special meeting. None of the commissioners were opposed.

Communications:

Next meeting dates:

- Regular Meeting – December 1, 2011
- Regular Meeting – December 15, 2011 – Canceled

The annual tree lighting ceremony is scheduled for December 7, 2011.

Adjournment

Mr. Birkle moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Mr. Pierson supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (7 yes votes)