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Terry Lilley, Clerk
Beverly J. Spoor, Treasurer



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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

7525 Highland Road • White Lake, Michigan 48383-2900 • (248) 698-3300 • www.whitelaketwp.com

WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
7525 Highland Road
White Lake, MI 48383
March 18, 2010 @ 7:00 p.m.

Chairperson Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called: Mr. Long and Ms. Michalowski were absent.

ROLL CALL: Steve Anderson, Chairperson
David Lewsley (arrived @ 7:05)
Michael Long - **Absent**
Steve Martinko, Vice Chairperson
Peter Meagher, Secretary
Maria Michalowski - **Absent**
Gail Novak-Phelps
Beverly Spoor, Board Liaison
Stan Woodhouse

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

Visitors: 0

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Meagher moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mrs. Spoor supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (6 yes votes)

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes of February 18, 2010

Mrs. Novak-Phelps moved to approve the minutes of February 18, 2010 as presented. Mrs. Spoor 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.

Old Business:

a. Continued Discussion on Temporary Signs

Mrs. Spoor stated the building department official had asked her if he could voice his opinion regarding some of the sign issues at the next meeting. Mr. Woodhouse felt it was important for the building official to voice his concerns. Mr. Iacoangeli added that Mr. O'Neil has had discussions with the building official, who would like to maintain that the signs continue being permitted through his department. Mr. O'Neil would still like technical issues reviewed at tonight's meeting. Ongoing discussions will continue as to which department would be issuing permits, etc. Mr. Anderson suggested the building official put his concerns in writing prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Meagher moved to have the building official put his concerns in writing and allow the commission time to review those concerns prior to coming to the meeting. Ms. Novak-Phelps supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (7 yes votes)

Mr. Birchler reviewed his preliminary draft of sign ordinance changes. With regard to the Building Permit Required section, he noticed there is an exemption that if a sign 16 sq. ft. or less it wouldn't require a permit. For discussion purposes, he feels 6 sq. ft. would be an appropriate size and the sign could not be illuminated. Mr. Lewsley questioned "A" frame signs and Mr. Birchler stated he based this on the larger side measuring up. He noted this would be discussed further this evening in the new section that was added at the end of the ordinance.

Mr. Birchler referenced the Table on page 9, in particular where only one sign is permitted for multi-tenant buildings. The current limit of 32 sq. ft. makes it difficult to get tenant names on it and there may not be visibility on some buildings. He is recommending a 32 sq. ft. limit for single tenant buildings and 50 sq. ft. for multiple tenant buildings.

While the township can't promise everyone absolute visibility of a sign from every vantage point, it can provide consistency. Ms. Novak-Phelps agreed this has to be consistent and added there are some buildings without addresses on them or the street, and this is a requirement of the ordinance.

Mr. Birchler reviewed the new section, which addresses Periodic Portable Business Signs. He reviewed the criteria for these signs to be permitted, i.e., color, fees, maximum display periods, providing a sketch plan, and not to be illuminated, to name a few.

Mr. Martinko questioned the term "business owner", whether it referenced the landlord or the tenant. Mr. Birchler will work on this section again. There was continued discussion on what constitutes seasonal; enforcement; and getting control over the sign design, placement and safety. Also discussed was prohibiting "gorillas on the rooftops".

Mr. Lewsley noted that zoning districts are listed, but there are certain situations in residential where commercial business is going on. He would like to see residential districts included in this. Mr. Iacoangeli noted there is a section in the ordinance that deals with this and Mr. Birchler will look at this again.

Mr. Martinko complemented Mr. Birchler, but feels the township can't be too simple on this ordinance. He would like to see vehicles with promotional messages be addressed on whether they should be defined as temporary signs. Mr. Birchler noted this is a common problem and as long as it's on rolling stock, we can't do anything about it. Mr. Woodhouse suggested (as with another community), the vehicle be moved off the site 50% or more and parked in the rear yard at night. Mr. Birchler stated that if the vehicle is painted and parked or placed for advertising purposes, then it's a sign and regulated by the ordinance. Mr. Meagher asked if some of these rules were similar to other communities. He feels this is a big "bandaid" that won't do much and questioned how this ordinance can be enforced without being anti-business. Being too lax could potentially be a health and safety issue. Mr. Birchler stated the intention is to find a way to permit this activity in an organized fashion. Mr. Iacoangeli added there is an ordinance nearby that prohibits temporary signs within a certain distance to the traveled portion of the road. His biggest issue is with all the signs right out on the road.

There was more discussion on getting everyone on the same page. When that happens, landlords can start being their own enforcement. Mr. Iacoangeli added that a lot of the signs that cause nuisances are small, i.e., politician signs. Gas stations are huge offenders. If landlords were held accountable, they may police this and alleviate some of the policing by the ordinance officer.

Mr. Anderson questioned whether there was a timeframe for implementation of this and Mr. Birchler indicated this would policy directive.

New Business:

- a. Discussion on Planning Commission By-Laws

Mr. Iacoangeli asked if any of the commissioners had any suggestions for making the bylaws more current. Mr. Anderson referenced 2.5 Annual Budget. Since the Planning Commission has never prepared a budget, nor failed to prepare one, the wording should be omitted.

Planning Consultant's Report

Mr. Birchler had nothing further to add.

Director's Report

Mr. Iacoangeli announced that Mr. O'Neil's wife gave birth Monday night to a son, Evan Patrick, 5 lbs. 3oz. Congratulations O'Neil family!

Communications:

Next meeting dates

Regular meeting – April 1, 2010 (possible cancellation)

Regular meeting – April 15, 2010 (Trinity Health)

Adjournment

Mrs. Novak-Phelps moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Mr. Martinko supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (7 yes votes)