

**Ganges Township Planning Commission**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes FINAL for July 26, 2011**  
**Ganges Township Hall**  
**119<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 64<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Fennville, MI, Allegan County**

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair **VanLeeuwen** called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Roll Call:Chairman: Neil **VanLeeuwen** – Present      Secretary: Phil **Badra**-Present  
Vice-Chair: Jackie **DeZwaan** – Present      Commissioner:Roy **Newman**-Present  
Commissioner: Ross **Wightman** – Absent      Board Trustee: Barry **Gooding**-Present  
Commissioner: Charlie **Hancock** – Present  
Zoning Administrator Tasha **Smalley** was present.

**II. Additions to the agenda and adoption**

Under New Business add “g.” County Planning Commission. Motion by **Gooding** to approve the agenda with the addition, seconded by **DeZwaan**. Motion passed.

**III. General Public Comment**

No Public Comments.

**IV. Correspondence and upcoming meetings/seminars**

None

**V. Public Hearing -None**

**VI. Approval of June 28, 2011 minutes**

June 28, 2011- Motion by **Gooding** to approve the June 28<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting minutes with corrections. **DeZwaan** seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**VII. Old Business**

None

**VIII. New Business**

- a. Signs-**Badra** had provided information concerning signs. **VanLeeuwen** asked how the 10' setback from the property line would affect certain signs. It was decided to add under Announcements such as: no trespassing, no hunting, warning signs. The 10' setback from property lines would not apply to these signs as they need to be along the property line.
- b. Nonconformities – The Township has received a letter from the Township Attorney regarding this issue. If a nonconforming building is more than 60% destroyed it can not be rebuilt. Hancock asked if there was a time limit on how long before a rebuild would have to be completed. If the property has no progress in a year it would lose it's grandfather status and be considered abandoned (15.01 b2), but if there are valid building permits, significant progress or the owners are in contact with the Township officials it would not be considered abandoned and could proceed.
- c. Complete Streets – Information was given concerning complete streets. **Smalley** suggested that the sentence beginning “Finances are not available locally...” be eliminated. **Badra** felt it should remain in the section. **VanLeeuwen** did not feel it needed to be included in the

Master Plan. **Badra** read from the October issue of Planning and Ordinance Magazine concerning this issue. **VanLeeuwen** stated that it does not need to be in the Master Plan, but does need to be discussed, it is not pertinent to our township at this time. Legislation is only for public roads and does not apply to private roads. The Master Plan needs to be looked at every five years, which would be 2012, when it can be looked at again at that time.

- d. Distillery – building occupancy – Fire Code – **Badra** stated that he had talked with **Mr. Compton** and **there was no information in the Fire Code for determining occupancy limit** “the Township has no code but occupancy is determined by the Michigan Building Code of 2009”. **Smalley** stated that usually it is determined by square footage or plumbing code. To determine the occupancy for each building the applicant would have to submit this information. **VanLeeuwen** stated that we needed to add Taverns/Bar to the Parking Requirements Table in Section 8.03 C. The requirement would be 1 parking space per 2 persons allowed within the maximum occupancy. Also funeral home or mortuary will be added as a permitted use in the Commercial District.

used **Bob DeZwaan** – 2259 68<sup>th</sup> Street – asked about the Chapel in the Orchard. If the tent is is that part of the maximum occupancy? The Fire Code would limit the requirements to just the building.

**Gooding** said the plumbing/amenities are what determine the maximum occupancy. Septic system capacity is determined by the county. **Smalley** stated that the building code is the highest and best use. Also **Smalley** will confirm if the employees are included in the occupancy determination.

- e. Essential Services – Should be added to General Provisions, but would not be required to have staff or PC approval. This can be talked about again to get the wording correct in the definition and Ordinance.

**Bob DeZwaan** – 2259 68<sup>th</sup> Street – concerning the substation on 64<sup>th</sup> Street and it's oil reserve. People were thankful that the Planning Commission did look at the information before it was started. He felt that each item like this should be looked at to determine what is essential.

- f. Open Meetings – There was much discussion as to what should or should not be emailed between members. This is an area we need to be very careful in how it is conducted. Polling seems to be acceptable, but any discussion could be in violation. Decisions need to be made in public.
- g. Allegan County Planning Commission – Since this has been dissolved as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, “when” there are questions as to the process for how Ordinance changes, rezoning, etc will be submitted. **Smalley** will get the statute mandates and report back at the next meeting.

## IX. Administrative Updates

- A. Township Board-**Gooding** stated that the Township Board is working on developing a new drain district, which would probably affect the **Sutherland** and **Wyndom Woods** areas. There are also two new Fire/1<sup>st</sup> Responders: **James Knight** and **David Sargent**. **DeZwaan** asked how this new drain district will be determined. If petitioned at goes to the County, if it is dropped than the Township would be responsible for the engineering fee.
- B. Zoning Board of Appeals – **Smalley** had nothing to report.
- C. Zoning Administrator – **Smalley** had nothing to report.

## X. Future Meetings Dates

August Regular Meeting will be Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00PM at the Ganges Township Hall.

**XI. General Public Comment**

**Jim Birkes** – 2344 70<sup>th</sup> Street – In response to the Open Meetings issue, it comes down to avoiding the appearance of discussing items through email. The Township Attorney has been asked before about this and his advice was to not use email except in sharing information, no opinions, and try to avoid anything like a dialogue between members.

**XII. Adjournment**

Motion was made by **Gooding** and supported by **Newman** to adjourn. Motion carries unanimously. Adjourned at 9:20PM.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Diana VanDenBrink**  
**Ganges Township Recording Secretary**