

APPROVED 11-12-14

Regular Meeting of the Casco Township Planning Commission
October 8, 2014 - 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Barker, Lewis Adamson, Daniel Fleming, Paul Macyauski, David Campbell, Dian Liepe and Judy Graff

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Susan West, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Alfred Ellingsen

1. **Call to Order and review of agenda** - Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. There were no changes to the Agenda.
2. **Approval of minutes of 9/10/14 regular meeting** - Motion by Fleming, supported by Campbell, to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2014 Regular Meeting as written. All in favor, MSC.
3. **Report from the Township Board Representative** – Judy Graff reported on the September, 2014 Township Board Meeting as follows:
 - a. The County has agreed to start police services on January 1, 2015 even though the funds from the Casco Township Mileage to pay for same won't be available until March, 2015.
 - b. With respect to the Bike Trail, the Allegan County Commissioners have agreed to take ownership of Phase 1 once same has been completed. Graff will ask Allan Overhiser who will be running the project.
 - c. The Township will be working on producing a policy book.
 - d. The Township will be constructing a 32' x 32' building for storage of materials/tools for the cemetery. Same will be located next to the Township Hall to the West and will be paid for out of the cemetery fund. Fleming asked why the materials/tools can't be stored in the garage and Graff answered that eventually the garage will be developed for community uses.
4. **Report from the ZBA Representative** – Macyauski reported that there have been no requests heard since the last Planning Commission meeting.
5. **Report from Water/Sewer Representative** - Adamson reported as follows:
 - a. The fall bond payment has been made and things look good for the spring.
 - b. Miami Park has been completed.
 - c. They are down to 16 connections that still need to be hooked-up (6 in Casco and 10 in South Haven). There was some discussion about filing lawsuits for these 16, but Adamson disagreed with this idea because of the cost of attorney fees, etc. Adamson

suggested that they file liens on the property instead. Graff asked if the lien amounts would increase each year and Adamson answered that liens are for a set amount, but that the liens can be updated as needed. Chairman Barker stated that even if a lawsuit is won, there is no guarantee of payment. Ellingsen asked how much would be received from each of these 16 connections and Adamson answered approximately \$11,000.00 each, but that the Township would only receive approximately \$4,000.00 each.

- d. There have been no new connections, but there is a possibility of a couple coming up.

6. Resolutions requiring Planning Commission action: None

7. New Business-Tiny Houses – Chairman Barker asked Graff to give a summary of the article that appeared in September 2, 2014 USA Today paper (copy of this article has been attached to the Minutes of the September 10, 2014 Planning Commission meeting). Graff stated that the article provided an example of affordable housing and housing that would meet multi-generational needs. Graff stated that she mentioned this issue to Allan Overhiser and he stated that he believes this issue should be discussed. Much discussion was had regarding this matter, which include the following:

- a. Fleming indicated that he believes the article to be incorrect when stating that West Texas is the first area to allow these small houses. Further, Fleming stated that he was advised by Overhiser that the original need for the building size requirements was to eliminate trailers being put in Casco.
- b. Ellingsen stated that other Townships have always had minimum building size requirements, but that bigger is not always better and that the concept of “small” has changed over time.
- c. Ellingsen stated that there was an Ordinance in the past that allowed for a blood relative to live in a second building (or a trailer) on one piece of property, but then the issue of what happens when that blood relative dies comes up. You would also have to address the issue of how to tax the property.
- d. Macyauski stated that he believes there should be a way for a blood relative to live in a second home on a piece of property, but that when the blood relative dies, the second home should be removed.
- e. Ellingsen stated that building a small addition to a home could be an alternative. Chairman Barker stated that it is not always physically possible to build an addition.
- f. Graff asked why the Township should be able to say you can’t live in a small house.
- g. Chairman Barker stated that a rental issue of the second dwelling could be a problem.
- h. Ellingsen stated that a property owner might not like having a smaller house next door.
- i. Adamson stated that since we have a minimum lot size ordinance, this issue should be self-regulating.
- j. Ellingsen stated that Saugatuck Township considered allowing two houses on a lot and after 9 months of deliberations, they decided that changing the Ordinances would be a nightmare.

- k. Macyauski stated that he believes we should not eliminate the 25% maximum lot coverage requirement.
- l. Chairman Barker stated that a possible requirement could be that the second dwelling can never be rented out. Macyauski stated that this would be hard to enforce.
- m. Fleming stated that it could be possible for two homes on one lot to be used generation after generation in one family.
- n. Ellingsen stated that if someone was to request a second home on one lot, he would suggest that they build an addition, make a duplex, or divide the property.
- o. Chairman Barker asked if someone could make a request to the ZBA to build a second dwelling on one lot and Ellingsen stated that they could and that the ZBA could place conditions upon the approval of same.
- p. Campbell stated that water and sewer hook-ups could be an issue
- q. Macyauski stated that maybe lot size requirements should not be changed; rather change the structure size requirement. Chairman Barker stated that this would not address the issue of having two dwellings on one lot.
- r. Campbell stated that he has not heard enough evidence of a need to change anything.
- s. Fleming stated that we need to find out the reason for the original standards being implemented.
- t. Graff stated that the needs of people change over time and that we need to continue to make changes, but that you can't make major changes without making things hard for property owners. The first thing we should consider is whether or not there is a need for either allowing small houses to be built and/or to allow a second home on a single lot for blood relatives. She further stated that Allan Overhiser believes there is a need. Macyauski also agreed that there is a need.
- u. Liepe stated that if a property owner wants to build a small house, or if they want to start by building a small house and then adding on later, it seems like a reasonable request.
- v. Campbell stated that he does not believe the article reflects the same circumstances that exist in Casco Township, but does agree that there may be a need for a second dwelling on a single lot for a blood relative. He stated that he does not like the idea of changing the minimum building size requirement.
- w. Fleming stated that one reason issues like this come up is because zoning results in unintended consequences and that every time we go through the Zoning Ordinance Book we should ask ourselves why each Ordinance is needed.
- x. Macyauski asked if there is already an Ordinance that prevents trailers from being put in and Ellingsen stated that there is.
- y. Chairman Barker asked Ellingsen to come up with a couple of different proposals for the Planning Commission to consider at the next meeting regarding having a second dwelling on a single lot for a blood relative and for building a small house on a lot.

8. Old Business: None

9. Public Comment – none

Motion to adjourn by Graff, 2nd by Adamson. All in favor, MSC. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm

Minutes prepared by Susan West, Recording Secretary

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting on November 12, 2014 at 7:00 pm