

GANGES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes FINAL for August 23, 2005
Ganges Township Hall
119th Avenue and 64th Street
Fennville, MI, Allegan County

Chairman Reimink called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call: Chairman Ed Reimink – present
Secretary Jim Birkes – present
Commissioner Ron Bellenger – present
Commissioner Jackie DeZwaan – present
Commissioner Dortha Earl – present
Commissioner Barry Gooding – present
Board Trustee Terry Looman – present

PUBLIC COMMENTS—None

CORRESPONDENCE

Fax from Cindy Yonkers stating that the Allegan County Planning Commission approved the Private Road and Lake Michigan Frontage amendments.

Notice from the Allegan County Planning Commission about the Land Information Services Presentation on October 31, 2005.

Letter from **Looman** re: the special meeting September 14, 2005 with the land use planner, Katie Kauffman.

Survey from Allegan County re: interest in participating in a Citizens Planner Program for Ottawa and Allegan Counties. **Reimink** to return survey.

BUSINESS SESSION

Gooding moved to approve the July 26, 2005 regular meeting minutes with four (4) noted corrections; **Reimink** supported; motion carried.

Motion to approve the August 23, 2005 agenda was made by **Earl** with the addition to Unfinished Business of Section 7.3A amendment. Motion supported by **Birkes**, and carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Land Use Plan Update

Discussion on hold until after the September 14 special meeting. Katie Kauffman and an associate (planner) to be present. Date and time of meeting to be posted.

Birkes asked the other commission members what their expectations are for the Land Use Plan and what needs to be in it, citing other township plans. He mentioned the need for future goals and objectives to be addressed. **Looman** advised waiting for the September 14 special meeting.

Discussion about zoning ensued, in particular along Blue Star Highway and in agricultural zones.

Election of Officers

Reimink asked if there were any volunteers for the position of vice-chairman – no response. **Earl** nominated **Gooding**. **Gooding** nominated **Bellenger**, who declined. **Earl** moved that **Gooding** be vice-chairman of the Planning Commission; **Bellenger** supported; motion carried unanimously.

Section 7.3A Amendment – Improvement of Nonconforming Buildings and Structures

It was brought to the Planning Commission's (P.C.) attention by Yonkers, Township Clerk, that this amendment was not approved by the commission after a public hearing was held November 30, 2004. **Earl** stated the commission at that time did discuss and agree to the draft, but no motion had been made to accept it. After much discussion by this commission on how to proceed at this time, a special committee of **Birkes**, **DeZwaan**, and **Gooding** was formed to review the ordinance. The township lawyer will then be consulted and another public hearing will be scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

Land Divisions

Concern expressed by the P.C. at the lack of initial involvement it has when a land division request is made. **Birkes** stated that per the Bylaws and MPA manual, land divisions are the responsibility of the P.C. **Looman** recommended and **Bellenger** moved that the P.C. secretary write a letter to the Ganges Township Board requesting that when a land division application is received, the zoning administrator (Al Ellingsen) notify the P.C. at the time he receives the application, providing the P.C. with the following information:

- who submitted the application
- identification of the original parcel
- sizes and dimensions of the new parcels
- a sketch of the above parcels
- a summary of zoning administrator's disposition re: approval or disapproval

Looman supported, and the motion carried.

New Priorities/Action Plans

Reimink submitted the question to other commission members which direction the P.C. should take: make new ordinances or amend present ones. He referred to a list of Ellingsen's (zoning administration) 17 points dated September 9 (ca. 1999), which **Looman** said had been prioritized at one time, and recommended that the list be reviewed again. **Reimink** read off each zoning issue listed, with the commission commenting on each one. It was noted that addressing Section 7.3A will address #2 on the list; the recent amendment of Section 2A.3 addressed #5; #16 has been addressed with the blight ordinance; and #17 has been addressed with the Section 2A.2 amendment. The P.C. determined to place the following five (5) issues on the agenda for the near future:

- nonconforming building expansion (Section 7.3A), #2 on the list
- the sufficiency of the current Home Occupation regulations (Section 3.1C2), #8 on the list
- regulation of sign placement, size, and current use, #9 on the list
- single family dwelling minimum square footage, #10 on the list
- minimum wall width, #11 on the list

Overall, **Gooding** emphasized that spot zoning should be avoided, but that ordinances should also not discourage the financial base of this township. In response to Gooding's question as to the rigidity of the upcoming Land Use Plan update, **Looman** stated the Plan is primarily used as a guideline, and can be subject to change.

In conclusion, **Gooding** recommended that the above prioritized issues be addressed after the September 14 special meeting with the Planner, with **Earl** agreeing.

Bellenger raised the question of the meaning of Section 7E.11C, mining operations extending to new, untouched or virgin areas. He asked if anyone has expanded his operation, expressing concern that the ordinance is being violated. Also, **DeZwaan** reported contacting Shamblin re: concern for noncompliance of this ordinance by a specific business, stating she has received no formal response yet from the zoning administrator. **Birkes** suggested sending a letter to Shamblin stating the P.C.'s understanding that this ordinance be enforced.

Bellenger suggested that it would be beneficial for Ellingsen or Shamblin (zoning administrators) to be present at P.C. meetings for consultation and updated information.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Phil Badra, 2230 Lakeshore Dr., requested that the P.C. make the issue of mobile home parks a priority.

Dawn Soltysiak, 6322 113th Ave., recommended that a moratorium be placed on PUDs (planned unit developments) and multi-use developments until after the Land Use Plan is updated.

Michael O'Connor, 6635 118th Ave., also encouraged the P.C. to focus on the Land Use Plan and to let the Plan be the guide when addressing the zoning issues. He explained this would be a "proactive" approach, not "reactive," as in the past. He disagreed with the P.C.'s land division plan, stating the P.C. would be getting too involved.

Dawn Soltysiak, 6322 113th Ave., stated a moratorium would give the P.C. more power, putting it in the "driver's seat," and allowing it to focus on the Land Use Plan, as well as "tie up loose ends."

Phil Badra, 2230 Lakeshore Dr., agreed that if no moratorium is in place, PUDs will be before the commission.

Rob Soltysiak, 6322 113th Ave., assured that a moratorium could be limited to 6 to 9 months, and should be considered, specifically concerning land division. And he stated the P.C. should receive information about land divisions from the zoning administrator.

Dawn and Rob Soltysiak, 6322 113th Ave., again encouraged a set-term moratorium to allow the P.C. time to focus on the Land Use Plan.

Gooding passed along a suggestion he had receive that Ganges Township be divided into two (2) districts, since what applies to one area (lakeshore) often does not apply to the other (inland, east of the expressway), and vice versa. Reimink stated it could be discussed at the Land Use Plan meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Birkes moved to adjourn; **Looman** supported; motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine I. Troehler
Ganges Township Recording Secretary