

Casco Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

November 20th, 2024

6:00 PM

Casco Township Hall

Members Present: Andy **Litts**, Kelly **Hecker**, Dan **Fleming**, Greg **Knisley** Ryan **Brush**

Members Absent: Dian **Liepe**, Irene **Wood**

Audience: Allan **Overhiser**, David & Mary **Campbell**, Julie **Cowie**, Debbie Weaver?

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman **Litts** 6:02PM

2. Review and approve agenda:

A motion was made by **Hecker** to approve the agenda, after they move 8.a to 8.d.; supported by **Fleming**. All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Public comment:

Julie **Cowie** – announced that she will be adding a link to the Township website to her editorial page Casco Township news.com. The website will promote community news and start selling advertising in the spring of 2025.

Dave **Campbell** pointed out that the survey had closed 11/15/2024, not the end of the year as the October minutes stated. Correction was noted.

4. Correspondence – None

5. Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by **Fleming** to approve the October 16th, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes, with corrections. Supported by **Hecker**. All in favor. Motion carried.

6. Public Hearing: None

7. New Business:

a. The 2025 Casco Township Planning Commission (PC) Regular meeting dates will be on the 3rd Wednesday at 6 pm at the Casco Township Hall. Workshops are tentatively scheduled for Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct on the 4th Wednesday at 6pm, as needed. A motion was made by **Hecker** to approve the 2025 Calendar, supported by **Fleming**. All in favor. Motion carried.

b. Any other business that may come before the commission.

Goodrich presented a list of the Open Meetings Act necessary information for Minutes. **Goodrich** noted that a list of the audience in attendance is not a requirement and requested to omit this information on future minutes, stating that it can be difficult to find the names and address of the commenters at times. The PC determined that they would like **Goodrich** to continue to document the audience attendees *that make a public comment* and would create sign in sheet to assist Goodrich.

8. Old Business:

a. Draft text Minimum Dwelling Size Requirement.

Section 3.20 Principle Dwelling size requirements. It was suggested that they Keep Section 3.20 F And add (O) for the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Requirements; with (F)'s language being added to the ADU text. **Knisley** stated that he had done some research into the Michigan Building Code (MBC) and International Building Code (IBC) and found that a dwelling could be approximately 120 square feet and meet the required minimum size and clearances to be considered habitable space. **Fleming** agreed that the minimum size could be dictated by the MBC.

b. Draft test Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).

Litts wants to add language that the ADU cannot be split from the primary dwelling unless it meets the dwelling requirements (minus the 24' width requirement), as well as the setback and lot coverage requirements. **Fleming** questioned who the PC is trying to protect and suggested that it should be based on the Consumers budget, taste, and lifestyle. **Hecker** asked about Migrant Housing standards and Smalley replied that the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has different/lesser requirements than the MBC does.

Cowie suggested allowing Duplex's into more of the Districts and lessening their size requirements. **Overhiser** commented the cost of water and sewer hookups limits the development of duplexes. **Campbell** liked the idea of letting the MBC regulate the minimum size but Cowie disagreed and stated that there should be minimum standard in the Ordinance or the Township will look Weird. Mary **Campbell** and another audience member also believe that the Zoning Ordinance should have a standard that must be met.

Smalley suggested reducing the ordinance language to a minimum of 720 sq. ft. dwelling requirements, but it doesn't have to be on the ground floor. **Fleming** again asked what the basis is for this standard. **Litts** responded that it provides consistency.

Knisley made a motion to reduce the dwelling minimum square footage from 1000 to 720 sq. ft., remove the ground floor requirement and keep 3.20 (C) The dwelling unit shall have

a minimum horizontal dimension across any front, side and rear elevation of 24 feet at time of manufacture, placement or construction., Supported by **Litts**. All in Favor. Motion carried.

Fleming made a motion to remove the minimum horizontal dimension requirement. No support. Motion failed.

c. Draft additional allowed uses in AG district & road frontage requirements in AG District.

Fleming asked how far the Allegan County Road Commission requires driveway to be separated from each other. The answer was 75'. **Fleming** wondered how that works with a 50' wide lot. **Cowie** interjected that distances imposed were related to Farming Tractor stopping distances. **Brush** responded that answer doesn't make sense.

It was asked how many variances had been granted in the AG district for parcel size and/or road frontage requirements. **Smalley** stated that there had been a few and that she would check her records. **Smalley** also reminded the PC members that **Overhiser** had requested them to review the AG District Chart of Uses and consider adding some additional farming ancillary uses to the chart.

d. Review Master Plan draft.

Cowie asked how much discussion/decisions had been made, to date. The PC responded that they had been waiting on the survey results before proceeding. The total response was 153 surveys, or approximately 6% of the Township residents. The responses have not been compiled yet.

In general the PC members are not pleased with boiler plate/template language that is being used. Also the fact that many of the things described do not apply to this rural farming community. The consensus was to send the 1.0 Introduction section back to McKenna to have the flowery fluff language removed and pretty much take the existing text and just update the numbers. **Hecker** and **Knisley** agreed to work out the specifics.

9. Administrative reports:

Zoning Administrator – **Smalley** presented her October report.

Township Board Representative – **Fleming** reported that the Board had discussed the renovation of the Twp. Hall Garage. **Fleming** also reported that the Township had celebrated Cheryl Brenner's and Paul Macyauski's service to the community. **Fleming** also reported that he had been sworn in for another term as a Board trustee and took this opportunity to read some relevant oath quotes.

Rufus King signer of the Constitution from Massachusetts who helped author the oath clauses of the Constitution "in the oath which our laws prescribed we appeal to the

Supreme being to deal with us hereafter as we observe the obligation of our oaths. The pagan world were and are without the mighty influence of this principle which is proclaimed in the Christian system.

John Witherspoon said, “an oath is an appeal to God the searcher of hearts for the truth of what we say and it always supposes the calling down of His judgment on us if we lie. Persons entering into public office are obliged to make oath that they will faithfully execute their trust. In vows there is no party but God and the person himself who makes the vow. An oath therefore implies a belief in God and his Providence and is indeed an act of worship.

Oliver Wolcott, signer of the Declaration of Independence. “The Constitution enjoins an oath upon all the officers of the United States. This is a direct appeal to that God who is the avenger of perjury. Such an appeal to Him is a full acknowledgment of his being and Providence”.

John Quincy Adams “The Constitution had provided that all the public functionaries of the Union, not only of the general (Federal) but of all the state governments, should be under oath or affirmation for its support. The homage of religious faith was thus superadded to all the obligations of temporal law to give it strength”.

George Washington, in his farewell address gave this warning. "...where is the security for property, for reputation and for life if the sense of religious obligation deserts our oaths...?"

ZBA Representative – **Liepe** was absent

10. Public comment: **None**

11. Adjourn 9:06 pm

Attachments: available upon request

Minutes prepared by:

Jennifer Goodrich, Recording Secretary