



Armada Township

PLANNING COMMISSION

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Draft Minutes – Regular Meeting – July 6, 2011

Agenda

1. Call to order:
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Approve/Amend Agenda
5. Approval of minutes: Regular Meeting ó June 1, 2011
6. Public Comments
7. Public Hearing ó none
8. Reports and Correspondence
9. Unfinished Business ó none
10. New Business
11. PC Projects
 - Ordinance amendments
12. Public Comments
13. Adjournment

Call to order

Chair Kehrig called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair led the group in the pledge immediately afterward.

Roll Call

Present are: Kehrig, DeCock, Jabara, Finn, Finlay, LeMieux, Swiacki, Sam Boelke, recording secretary and Chris McLeod, planner.

Approve/Amend Agenda

Motion by LeMieux, seconded by Swiacki, to approve agenda as presented. All ayes, motion carries.

Approval of minutes: Regular Meeting – June 1, 2011

Motion made by Finlay, seconded by Finn to approve minutes with the following corrections.

Change to have number 6. Public Comments read: "Heard from floor: Beth Abercrombie regarding a letter received about Stoneridge Estates." Add under number 7 Public Hearing, A4 Public comments insert "Question from Camille Findlay on clarification of, and examples on, usage of the administration review authority." **All ayes, motion carries.**

Public Comments

Board was questioned whether or not they would take comments during discussion. They said they would.

Public Hearing

None

Reports and Correspondence

Reports and correspondences included a project status report for June detailing updates on the Morelli Wetland Mitigation site, Stoneridge Estates and Consumers Energy Ray Station Plant #3, copies of May and June Planning and Zoning News, and a copy of an e-mail from Sam to the planning commission members on new armadatwp.org e-mail addresses to be used for all township business. **Motion by Swiacki, seconded by LeMieux, to receive and file as presented. All ayes, motion carries.**

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

None

PC Projects

Ordinance amendments

Last month we sent our packet of ordinance amendments to the board for their review and approval. There were some concerns and they asked the planning commission to revisit the definition of a farm and the topic of digital signs.

Farm discussion

Kehrig read the e-mail from building secretary Christine White detailing her concerns regarding adopting the Right to Farm as our farm definition. Her position is it's too easy to qualify and it doesn't align with accessory structure ordinance. Her concerns is that too many people will come in and show proof they don't need a permit and she won't have anything to say about it. DeCock made the point that the Right to Farm act is for commercial agriculture production and not for personal use and you have to prove you qualify.

There was much discussion about editing the current PA 116 definition when the planner stated that whatever definition we choose "there is still a burden of proof. He sees it as an administrative and enforcement issue rather than an ordinance issue. He stated the current definition does not require tax returns be brought in. It just requires proof of farm income. There are other options that would satisfy the requirement and any definition bears a burden of proof.

Finlay stated he doesn't think we should change it. There was a lot of thought and effort put into the decision, including the meeting held in January to compare and contrast the PA 116 program with the Right to Farm Act. All the officials at the meeting felt the Right to Farm act was more appropriate for our township than the current PA 116 definition.

Since the building department will have to require some level of documentation, the planner suggested the planning commission provide recommendations on what proof is acceptable to help Christine with administration. Nothing in the current ordinance says you have to submit tax records but many people see it as the easiest method because it is a precise, official document containing the information needed.

Many members of the commission felt that if people don't want to show proof they qualify as a farm, they can just take out a permit.

Motion by DeCock, seconded by Finlay to recommend to the board the Right to Farm act remains as our definition of farm as presented to the Township Board. All ayes. Motion carries.

Motion by DeCock, seconded by Kehrig, to recommend the Township Board develop guidelines on what can be used to qualify and meet the farm definition of commercial agricultural production. All ayes. Motion carries.

Motion made by DeCock, seconded by Finn, to send a list of suggested, but not limited to, examples of verification of commercial agricultural production. Some examples could include:

- **Any state or federal farm program participation. For example, PA 116 or a specialty farm designation**
- **Sales receipts**
- **U.S. income tax form – Schedule F**
- **Certified accountant statement**

All ayes, motion carries.

Sam will give to Christine before the board meeting so she can add to the list if she wants.

Digital signs

Our recommendation was to allow them in residential areas with special land use requirements. It was the feeling of the commission that the board was uncomfortable with digital signs in residential areas because they were worried individual residents or home-based businesses would be applying to put them in and they could be popping up everywhere. The planning commission wanted to emphasize to the board that a special land use qualification comprises a lot of regulations and the planning commission can always disallow. They will include the special land use qualifications with the recommendation. The planner stated the planning commission is a recommending body and the township board has the final say on all special land uses.

Motion by Finn, seconded by Swiacki, to modify the ordinance for digital signs to have section 5.07 Signs, subsection D. new subsection (15) aa read “as a special land use, in all the township residential districts, for non-residential uses.” All ayes, motion carries.

Public Comments

Maureen Finn wants to propose a stop sign be installed on Ridge Road where the trail comes out. She stated the greenery was trimmed back but she still considers it unsafe for trail-users. Swiacki recommended she talk to John Crumb at the road commission.

Adjournment

Motion made by DeCock, seconded by Swiacki, to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. All ayes motion carries.

Next Scheduled Regular Meeting: August 3, 2011

Respectfully submitted:

Sam Boelke
Recording Secretary

Approved:

DJ Kehrig, Chairperson

date