

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting of February 7, 2007

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairperson Alan Rumbaugh called the regular meeting of the Grattan Township Planning Commission to order at the Grattan Township Hall at 12050 Old Belding Road at 7:04 p.m. Members present: A. Berry, A. Rumbaugh, L. Sostecke, J. Proos, M. Byrne and Jerry Spitler. Members absent: D. Heffron.

Township Supervisor Frank Force and Township Clerk Jim Fues also attended the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

A. Rumbaugh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

A. Rumbaugh added a discussion of temporary living quarters as item 12. A. Berry moved and M. Bryne seconded to approve the amended agenda. All ayes. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the January 3, 2007 minutes were noted. L. Sostecke moved and A. Berry seconded to approve the amended minutes. All ayes. The motion carried.

Public Comments

J. Fues distributed and explained information he needs for employee personnel files. He also informed Commissioners of the Township Board's discussion regarding education for Planning Commission members. The Township Board would like new Commissioners to have training within the first year of their appointment. He explained various training sessions available.

(D. Heffron arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

Review and Approval- Excavators Ordinance- Final Draft

Chairperson A. Rumbaugh reviewed the proposed ordinance amendment.

. Heffron said a notice to all Township residents was originally scheduled to be mailed with the winter tax bills. He asked how residents could be notified now. Commissioners

suggested using the Township newsletter and the Township's cable television channel. D. Heffron agreed to submit a notice for publication in the newsletter.

L. Sostecke moved and J. Proos seconded to forward this matter to the Township Board for final approval and if so approved include an article in the next newsletter and on the Township's cable television channel to inform residents. All ayes. The motion carried.

Public Hearing- Specialized Storage of Vehicles and Seasonal Items in Agricultural Buildings

A. Rumbaugh reviewed Township Attorney Jim Brown's proposed ordinance amendment regarding the storage of vehicles and seasonal items in agricultural buildings.

L. Sostecke moved and A. Berry seconded to open the public hearing. All ayes.

The motion carried.

Mr. Carlson said he allows some neighbors to store boats in his barn and asked if he would be required to obtain a permit. Commissioners said a permit would be required if the storage facility is charging for storage. Township Clerk Jim Fues noted that the proposed ordinance does not specify that a permit is required if the storage is for profit.

A. Berry moved and L. Sostecke seconded to close the public hearing. All ayes. The motion carried.

There were no additional comments from Commissioners.

L. Sostecke moved and M. Bryne seconded to forward this matter to the Township Board with a recommendation for approval of the amendment to the ordinance. All ayes. The motion carried.

L. Sostecke suggested notifying residents about this matter in the same manner as changes to the ordinance regarding excavators. A. Rumbaugh agreed to submit an article to the newsletter and cable television regarding this matter.

Review- Grattan Township Master Plan

A. Rumbaugh reviewed updated Township statistics regarding growth in the Township. Grattan Township has experienced much smaller growth than other neighboring Townships and household incomes have remained steady in the Township. Mr. Rumbaugh said he spoke with the Township Attorney and Planner about this matter and both agreed that the small changes do not warrant updating the Master Plan.

Commissioners discussed the matter noting the Township has added a storm water ordinance and wetland ordinances since the Master Plan was written. They agreed that the Master Plan is a well-written document that is working well and did not need to be

updated at this time. D. Heffron suggested a review of the PUD ordinance. Commissioners agreed to look at the PUD ordinance at the March meeting.

Pre-review- Proposed Hobby Farm- 7490 Lessiter

Jason Carpenter, Realtor, representing prospective buyers of this property explained the proposed use of the property. The prospective buyers would like to raise and breed 23-50 goats and possibly raise a few cows. The buyer will be starting a new job in the area at the end of April and would like to know if this use will be permitted before they proceed with the purchase of the property.

It was noted that the property is zoned R-L and according to the Zoning Administrator with the Right to Farm Act this property has the same rights as the A1 and A2 District.

D. Heffron was concerned about the possibility of erosion of the sandy soils on this property due to the livestock on the property. J. Spitler asked how large the property is. Mr. Carpenter said there are 4 parcels totaling 25.7 acres with one home and 2 accessory buildings. A small portion of the property is adjacent to a channel to Big Pine Island Lake. There was a discussion about how close to this waterway animals could be located. J. Spitler said State law prescribes animal density and proximity to water and he believed the proposed density would be much lower than prescribed density. He also noted that referring these issues back to State requirements are very specifically covered by Grattan Township ordinance.

J. Proos asked if the applicants were aware of the proximity of Grattan Raceway. Mr. Carpenter said that they were.

Mr. Carpenter said the applicants said the buyers would mostly sell the animals at fairs and there would be no commercial traffic to and from the site.

Commissioners asked if a 25-acre parcel would fall under the Right to Farm Act. It was noted that Gregg Converse has said it would. Commissioners agreed that the proposed use was acceptable with Gregg Converse's approval. Mr. Carpenter asked for something in writing from the Zoning Administrator noting this approval. A. Rumbaugh said Mr. Converse is currently out of town, but he will contact him as soon as possible. He also said discussion of this matter will be in the meeting minutes.

Commissioners said the Right to Farm Act takes precedence in this matter and those guidelines must be followed.

Pre-review- Haunted House and Corn Maze- Bert Carlson- 14058 6-Mile Road

Mr. Carlson explained the proposed seasonal use. He would like to have a farmer's vegetable stand, a pumpkin patch, pumpkin carving, corn maze and a haunted house. A. Rumbaugh said the Township Planner reviewed the application and it appeared the

farming activities would be much easier to allow than the haunted house. The Planning Commission would like to consider a temporary special use permit for the proposal.

The applicant said they plan to hire a consultant to address issues such as safety, fire codes and health department requirements. The haunted house would be constructed in the barn with portable walls. Commissioners asked how they are estimating the size of crowds and parking. The applicant said they have looked at other haunted houses in the area and plan to sell a limited number of tickets for each evening. He estimated 1500 people per night would attend during the peak week of Halloween. He plans to have a gravel parking area in the front with an estimated parking capacity of 60-70 cars and additional parking in a 3-acre grassy area to the left of the driveway. He said the property is 30-acres in size. J. Spitler said there should be adequate parking allowed as there would be no parking allowed along the road. Commissioners discussed the County's clear vision requirement of 550' in each direction along this 55 mph stretch of road. Mr. Carlson said that should not be a problem.

J. Proos was concerned about the Township's liability and said the applicant should make sure they have enough insurance coverage in place. The applicant said they would work with an insurance company that insures haunted houses. A. Rumbaugh said the permit would be denied if the operation were not insured or had any building code violations. Mr. Carlson explained renovations planned for the barn. Mr. Carlson said he had not spoken with the Township Building Inspector about this request yet.

J. Proos asked if this matter would require a public hearing. A. Rumbaugh said it would not. There was a discussion about notification of neighbors. Mr. Carlson offered to contact all the neighbors and get letters from them. Commissioners agreed they would be more comfortable with this request if they had letters from all neighbors within 300'.

The applicant said the operation would be open Thursday-Sunday from 6:00-12:00 p.m. The pumpkin patch would be open in the afternoon. He also suggested opening on Wednesdays for school fundraisers. The total number of days of operation would be from 26, or 31 if they were open on Wednesdays.

J. Spitler noted that the Township's ordinance regarding temporary special use permits only allows 18 days of operation. Commissioners discussed this issue and informed the applicant that it would be a lengthy and costly process to amend the ordinance. They asked the applicant if they would like to proceed with only 18 days of operation as mandated by Township ordinance. They said they would look at only having 18 days of operation. J. Spitler also noted that the ordinance regarding temporary special use permits says the property shall not include any permanent structure or building. Commissioners were not sure if this meant existing structures or new structures and said they would need clarification about this from Gregg Converse.

Township Planner Paul Le Blanc will draw up a permit and Zoning Administrator Gregg Converse will review that document.

Review- Ordinance Reviews 2007

A. Rumbaugh said this matter was discussed already and a review of the PUD ordinance will be on the March agenda.

Discussion- Temporary Living Quarters

A. Rumbaugh said Zoning Administrator Gregg Converse asked the Planning Commission to discuss this issue. Mr. Converse has received a request to allow Charles Smith to continue living in his current home while his new home is built on the property. Mr. Smith said when the new home is complete he would remove bathrooms and the kitchen and then use that building for storage. Mr. Converse has suggested requiring a bond to ensure that stipulation is met. There was discussion about the enforcement of a bond.

J. Spitler said that situation was allowed where he previously lived and was allowed because a building was not considered a dwelling until it was being lived in.

Commission members said they would like to look at this site and continue this discussion.

Adjournment

There being no further business, A. Rumbaugh declared the meeting adjourned at 9:10-p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on March 7, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Timmons

Recording Secretary, GTPC

Al Berry, Secretary, GTPC