

Grattan Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting of May 7, 2008

1. 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 7:00 p.m. Members present: A. Berry, A. Rumbaugh, J. Proos, S. Miller, J. Spitler and L. Sostecke. Members absent: D. Heffron. Township Supervisor Frank Force and Township Attorney Jim Brown also attended the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

A. Rumbaugh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

A. Berry moved and L. Sostecke seconded to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes- Regular Meeting December 5, 2007

S. Miller said neighbors who commented on the mining extraction should have their addresses listed. J. Spitler moved and A. Berry seconded to approve the amended minutes. All ayes. The motion carried.

1. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Review- Slayton Hills PUD-Tom White- Dissolve PUD and Reallocate Land for Splits

Mr. White explained his request to eliminate the PUD zoning for Slayton Hills PUD. He would like to split that land into 6 parcels plus the parent parcel and sell those parcels in order to recoup some of his money. He said he revised his original plan after speaking with Gregg Converse and submitted that revised plan at the meeting. He would like to create 2 larger parcels accessing Slayton Lake . Because those 2 parcels would require a special land use permit, Mr. White asked Commissioners

for their opinions. He said he would abandon that idea if the Planning Commission was not supportive. J. Brown read the standards to be met in order to issue a special land use. A. Berry said he didn't know how a special land use could be approved when one standard says the land is not suitable for future development.

Commissioners discussed the long driveways needed for both parcels to access Slayton Lake . Mr. White said he would like to forget about creating the 2 parcels in order to avoid delay of his request. He asked if he would have to make boundary adjustments. J. Brown said he was entitled to those boundary adjustments.

A. Rumbaugh read J. Brown's resolution out loud.

J. Spitler moved and J. Proos seconded to adopt a resolution to terminate the Slayton Hills PUD. A. Berry read the roll call. Ayes: L. Sostecke, J. Spitler, S. Miller, A. Rumbaugh, A. Berry and J. Proos. Nays: none. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

J. Brown said Mr. White should submit a copy of the termination to Zoning Administrator Gregg Converse.

1. Discussion- Proposed PODS Ordinance

A. Rumbaugh said PODS are becoming more popular and would like the Township to consider an ordinance to regulate their use. He reviewed J. Brown's proposed ordinance. Commission members discussed the location of PODS, length of allowed use and allowable signage on the PODS.

J. Spitler suggested allowing PODS for 30 days and allowing the Zoning Administrator to extend that time if the homeowner demonstrates need. In the case of a remodel/rebuilding, 90 days could be allowed and again allow the Zoning Administrator the option to extend if need is demonstrated.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of the PODS blocking views and the possibility of traffic safety becoming a problem.

Commissioners agreed that this matter required further information and discussion.

1. Discussion- Need for Wind Turbine Ordinance

A. Rumbaugh briefly reviewed a recent newspaper article about wind energy. Although there is not a lot of wind energy in the Township, Mr. Rumbaugh said in his research of the issue he was told it is good for townships to be proactive. On average 1-4 kilowatts of energy is needed for a home. An individual tower could on an intermittent basis supply excess power to the power grid, though in any calendar year it could not supply more power to the grid than used on the property itself.

Commissioners reviewed a handout from the MSU Extension Office regarding siting wind energy systems. They discussed the negative effects such as shadow flicker, damage from ice falling from the blades and injury to birds. They also discussed suggested setbacks, and noise. J. Spitler said he has experienced “blade flicker” and it “will drive you crazy”. There was also a discussion about height restrictions.

A. Berry said the reference material provided was very informative and everything in the handouts should be considered. J. Spitler said the Township should use this material as a guideline and consider where wind turbines should be allowed in the Township. J. Brown said wind turbines are most frequently not permitted in districts with small parcels. S. Miller said the Township should consider the green effect of wind energy.

It was agreed to have Township Attorney Jim Brown prepare a draft ordinance for review.

1. Discussion- Need for Outdoor Wood Furnace Ordinance

A. Rumbaugh said the Township currently does not have an ordinance to regulate the use of outdoor wood furnaces. Township Attorney Jim Brown said these types of furnaces have become a hot topic in the county and many townships are adopting ordinances to regulate their use.

J. Spitler said these furnaces are designed to smolder when the heat is not on. When corn is burned no smoke is generated, but when wood is burned, smoke is generated. He said the Township should allow outdoor wood furnaces, but control their use. He said the State will probably “clamp down” on the use of these furnaces.

S. Miller said this type of wood burning furnace is the safest available. She said the Township should regulate setbacks and require inspections of the installation, allowing only manufactured furnaces, not home built furnaces

A. Rumbaugh reviewed a model ordinance provided by the DEQ. Commissioners discussed the matter. J. Spitler noted that chimneys are not provided with these furnaces and questioned what heights should be allowed. A. Berry said the Township should look at ordinances from other townships. It was agreed to have Township Attorney Jim Brown prepare a draft ordinance for later review.

New Business

There was no new business.

Old Business

There was no old business.

Discussion

There was no discussion.

Adjournment

**There being no further business, J. Spitler moved to close the meeting at 8:55 p.m.
The next regular meeting will be held on June 4, 2008**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Timmons

Recording Secretary, GTPC

Al Berry, Secretary, GTPC