

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular meeting of May 6, 2009

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, J. Proos, S. Christians, L. Sostecke, D. Heffron and A. Rumbaugh. Members absent: S. Miller (unexcused). Township Supervisor Frank Force, Treasurer Sabrina Freeman, Zoning Administrator Gregg Converse and Township Attorney Jim Brown also attended the meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

A. Rumbaugh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda

Discussion of forgiveness of sewer surcharges and a special land use follow-up form were added to the agenda. L. Sostecke moved and A. Berry seconded to approve the amended agenda. All ayes. The motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minor corrections were noted by A. Berry. A. Berry moved and D. Heffron seconded to approve the amended minutes. All ayes. The motion carried.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Public Hearing- Tom Skipper, Cannonsburg Sand and Gravel-10025 Belding Road

Mr. Skipper briefly explained his proposal to sell landscape materials at 10025 Belding Road. An audience member asked if any chemicals/fertilizer would be sold at the site. Mr. Skipper said only natural materials would be sold.

D. Heffron asked about the proposed number and size of loaders and trucks on site. He would like clarification about the right to sell equipment at the site. He asked how much product would be at the site and would like a condition that any decaying product is cleaned up at the end of the season. He would like signage conditions clarified in the Special Land Use (SLU) permit.

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A. Berry said the existing area must be cleaned up first. Mr. Skipper said the site should be cleaned up by the next meeting date. He said most of the equipment is stored at another site out of the Township.

J. Proos would like to see language in the SLU regarding how many vehicles can be parked overnight at the site.

J. Brown said this proposal will be considered under section 10.2 (general retail). Any outside sales require a SLU permit and any requests by the applicant are subject to conditions.

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

Vince Eberlein asked if the amount of land allowed for the operation could be increased. A. Rumbaugh said it could be increased if an amended SLU is approved by the Planning Commission.

Bob DeGlopper, neighbor, said he had no problem with the request and the Township should help the applicant during hard times.

Dale Oberlin said it would be great to have this service available at the proposed site.

S. Christians suggested reviewing the amount of product and number and size of loaders needed as well as cleanup of decaying product in the fall. J. Brown said the Planning Commission can set conditions now and review those in the fall. He said the intent of the review should be explained in the SLU. Any expansion of the operation would require another hearing. He suggested setting those increase amounts now to avoid another hearing.

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

Commission members discussed the matter. It was agreed the hours of operation would be daylight hours only from April 1st thru November 1st. Cleanup of the operation will be completed by November 1st. Mr. Skipper requested 1 one ton and 1 ten yard truck. D. Heffron said this would give Mr. Skipper an unfair advantage over other excavators in the Township who are required to store their equipment in a building. Mr. Skipper said his equipment is stored at a gravel pit outside the Township. J. Proos asked if this would be a retail or wholesale operation. Mr. Skipper said he will sell to anyone. Mr. Skipper suggested allowing a maximum capacity of a 2-yard loader with only one loader on site at a time. S. Christians asked if that condition can be changed when the operation is reviewed in the fall. J. Brown said it could be changed. He recommended adding that language to the SLU now. J. Proos asked if there would be a problem

with other excavators by allowing Mr. Skipper to have unstored equipment at the site. J. Brown said there is no zoning problem, but people might be upset. A. Berry suggested allowing the 1-yard loader and the 2-ton truck (up to 2 nights if needed). Mr. Skipper said that would be doable. COMMISSIONERS agreed to allow the occasional sale for disposal of personal equipment with limitations on the length of time that equipment could be for sale.

J. Brown will prepare the SLU permit subject to all conditions discussed at the meeting.

L. Sostecke moved and A. Berry seconded to approve the resolution. All ayes. The motion carried. D. Heffron noted that the SLU permit goes with the land. Commissioners requested that Mr. Skipper attend the June meeting to review the prepared SLU. Mr. Skipper agreed.

7. Review- Karen Willis-12026 MAC Drive- Home Expansion on Non-conforming Lot

Karen Willis briefly reviewed the request to expand the existing home on a non-conforming lot. Commissioners reviewed the request. They asked the applicant if the addition would obstruct views of the lake. The applicant said they did not believe the addition would obstruct lake views as the home sits in a low area and when leaves are on the trees they block the view. Commissioners discussed other houses in the area that have been remodeled and appear to also be on non-conforming lots. G. Converse said the Willis' lot is less than 7500 square feet and falls under stricter requirements.

L. Sostecke moved and S. Christians seconded to schedule the matter for public hearing at the June 3, 2009 meeting. All ayes. The motion carried.

The applicant asked how long they would have to complete the proposed addition if approved. Commissioners said they would have one year to finish the project. The applicant asked if they could ask for a time extension if needed as they are not sure when they will begin the project. Commissioners discussed setting a completion date in the resolution.

8. Review-Outdoor Wood Furnace Ordinance

It was noted that the Township Board returned the proposed ordinance to the Planning Commission for further review of the setback from another house. The proposed ordinance has a setback of 100', but the Board would like the Planning Commission to consider a 300' setback. Commissioners discussed and agreed to amend the proposed ordinance to have a 300' setback from another house.

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A. Berry moved and L. Sostecke seconded to approve the amended proposed ordinance for consideration by the Township Board. All ayes. The motion carried.

9. Update-Rockford Ambulance Substation

Chairperson A. Rumbaugh said the Township Board was not interested in selling land near the Fire Station to Rockford Ambulance for a new substation. Board members were concerned about how the substation would be used if sold at a later date. He asked if a covenant could be added to the sale agreement with restrictions on future use. J. Brown said the land can be conveyed subject to restrictions, but that greatly limits sale of the property.

D. Heffron said when the fire station was built the County Road Commission would not allow another drive to the east. He would not like to see the substation share a driveway with the fire station. Commission members agreed to not consider the Township property for a location of the substation.

Rockford ambulance is looking at the Hessler property, zoned RR, located on the south side of M-44 across from Tower Lake. J. Brown said the proposed use is not allowed in the RR district. Commissioners discussed and agreed to have J. Brown prepare an amendment to the ordinance defining institutional and public uses in the RR district for consideration at the June meeting.

L. Sostecke moved and D. Heffron seconded to schedule a public hearing to amend the definition of institutional and public uses at the June meeting. All ayes. The motion carried.

10. Review- Special Land Use-Tower Lake and Heffron/NAS Mineral Extraction

Commission members discussed how to track the review of conditions set in SLU permits approved BY the Planning Commission. It was noted that the Zoning Administrator, Township Enforcement Officer and Township Clerk are responsible for making sure any conditions of a SLU have been followed. F. Force said the Township Office Manager has prepared a spreadsheet to help track any reviews that need to be done and a tickler file to remind office staff when the review should be completed. F. Force asked commissioners to provide any other suggestions to improve follow-up on these reviews at the next meeting.

11. Discuss- Forgiveness of Sewer Surcharge

F. Force said the Sewer Advisory Committee has requested an opinion from the Planning Commission regarding section 7.05F of the sewer ordinance regarding unoccupied premises. The Sewer Advisory Board said it was unfair to continue to charge sewer customers when a natural disaster (fire, etc.) destroys a home. F. Force said the ordinance currently requires a sewer customer to pay for a sewer

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disconnect permit and have the disconnection inspected in order to stop sewer charges. A reconnect permit and inspection would also be required. Commission members discussed and agreed to leave the ordinance as it is written. F. Force asked the Planning Commission to write a letter regarding their decision to the Sewer Advisory Committee.

12. Discuss- Special Land Use Follow-up Form

This matter was discussed earlier in the meeting.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business, A. Rumbaugh moved to close the meeting at 9:30 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on June 3, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Timmons
Recording Secretary, GTPC

Al Berry, Secretary, GTPC