

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular meeting of January 6, 2010

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 6:58 p.m. Members present: A. Berry, J. Proos, S. Miller, L. Sostecke, S. Christians and A. Rumbaugh. Members absent: D. Heffron (excused). Township Supervisor Frank Force, Township Treasurer Sabrina Freeman, Township Clerk Jim Fues, Township 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

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

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Berry noted several minor corrections to the October 7, 2009 minutes. S. Christians moved and A. Berry seconded to approve the amended minutes. All ayes. The motion carried.

5. Public Comments

J. Fues asked the Planning Commission to consider revising the Township Zoning Ordinance, Section 3.36 Walls and Fences. He said the ordinance currently has a maximum fence height of 6'. In order for farmers to keep deer out of their fields a higher fence is needed.

6. Public Hearing-Parks and Recreation Committee-Establish an 8.5 acre park at 11950 Old Belding Road

Dianna Force, Parks and Recreation Committee member gave a brief overview of the Seeley Creek Park project. She said the park will be a natural features park with minimal development used by residents and by area schools as an educational tool.

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J. Proos asked if the Parks and Recreation Committee have funding available for the entire project. D. Force said the Committee will fund the Park with fundraisers, donations and grant money. A. Rumbaugh said he had no problem with the proposal. A. Berry asked if there will be handrails on the board walk. D. Force said the Park will be handicapped accessible. S. Christians said he has been working with the Committee in that regard. S. Miller was concerned that funds would run out before completion of the project. D. Force said the Committee will continue to apply for grants. She said the land has been purchased by the Township and is paid in full.

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

Colleen Smith, adjacent property owner, said although she has nothing against the proposed Park, she was concerned about keeping trespassers off her property. She asked if the Park would be fenced. She also said trails constructed by the Boy Scouts on Township property have not been maintained. J. Fues said the Township is responsible for maintaining those trails. C. Smith was concerned about night time use of the parking lot and the possibility of partying at the site. It was suggested that a sign stating the Park is closed from dusk to dawn be installed.

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

S. Miller asked how many cars could park in the proposed parking lot. D. Force said they are proposing a minimum of 4 cars plus a handicapped parking space with a maximum of 10-12 parking spots. S. Miller asked if the school could use the parking lot. D. Force said it would be a public parking lot.

A. Berry read the proposed resolution out loud. Commission members discussed conditions and agreed to add the following conditions; property boundaries will be marked with signage, a sign stating the Park will be closed from dusk to dawn will be erected and include other signage as deemed appropriate. S. Miller suggested the Planning Commission review this matter once the Park has been operating.

Roll call vote: Ayes: S. Christians, J. Proos, A. Berry, L. Sostecke, A. Rumbaugh and S. Miller. Nays: none. The motion carried.

7. Review Special Land Use - Tom Skipper 10025 Belding Road

Tom Skipper distributed a copy of proposed revisions to the special land use for his outdoor retail operation. He requested that the season be extended from November 1 to November 30. He said in the first year of operation he received many calls from customers in the month of November. He also said Section 4(h)

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as written did not accurately explain agreed upon conditions for allowed trucks on site. He also asked that he be allowed to grade out any remaining mulch to keep for sale in the next season. He provided copies of a letter from Cannonsburg Wood Products stating all mulches (hardwood bark and cedar bark) will break down, will turn to usable topsoil and there are no issues with leaching into the ground.

Commission members discussed the proposed changes. They agreed that wording regulating trucks on site was confusing and should be rewritten and the additional month of operation would be okay. S. Miller asked if small piles of mulch remaining at the end of the season would be graded out and piled up again in the spring for sale. T. Skipper said that was correct. J. Proos asked for a copy of the MSDS report regarding mulch. T. Skipper said he had one copy available at the meeting. Commission members asked for copies for all members to review. T. Skipper provided his copy for the Township to copy and return. The Planning Commission will continue review of this matter at the February 10, 2010 meeting. A. Rumbaugh asked Township attorney J. Brown if another public hearing would be required. J. Brown said the resolution can be changed without another public hearing if it was written incorrectly and the Planning Commission can at its discretion make additional changes specifically listed by motion.

8. Preliminary Review- Rockford Ambulance – Request to Build Sub Station on Belding Road

Deb Gosselin, The Gosselin Group, Inc. and Chuck Palmer, Rockford Ambulance attended the meeting. D. Gosselin provided copies of the proposed site plan and a drawing of the proposed building. She briefly reviewed the proposal for an ambulance station at 12321 Belding Road. She said the applicants are considering a property split and construction of a storage building at a later date. She asked Commissioners for any input on those proposals. Commission members said they had no problem with the proposed property split and discussed the proposed building height and location. Township Zoning Administrator Gregg Converse provided information regarding building height and setbacks. L. Sostecke said the site plan must include additional information such as proposed lighting, signs and landscaping at the public hearing. J. Proos asked if the special land use would apply to the entire parcel if the applicants are considering a property split. J. Brown said the special land use can be applied to the entire parcel. He asked the applicants what type of organization Rockford Ambulance is. Chuck Palmer said they are a nonprofit organization.

S. Christians moved and S. Miller seconded to schedule the matter for public hearing at the February 10, 2010 meeting. All ayes. The motion carried.

9. Public Hearing- Township Zoning Enabling Act

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J. Brown reviewed the proposed resolution to amend the Township Zoning ordinance regarding the Zoning Board of Appeals and public notice requirements in accordance with the Zoning Enabling Act.

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

There were no public comments.

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

A. Berry moved and L. Sostecke seconded to forward this matter to the Township Board and recommend adoption of the proposed ordinance amendments. Roll call vote: Ayes: A. Rumbaugh, L. Sostecke, S. Christians, S. Miller, J. Proos and A. Berry. Nays: none. The motion carried.

F. Force asked if this matter would need to be noticed for the Township Board meeting. J. Brown said it would not.

10. Review- Modification of Ordinance for Non Conforming Structures and Lots

J. Brown reviewed proposed changes to the Township Zoning ordinance regarding nonconforming structures and lots. Commission members discussed the matter. It was agreed to have Township Zoning Administrator Gregg Converse and Township attorney Jim Brown discuss this matter. J. Brown will prepare a revised draft for consideration at the February 10, 2010 meeting.

11. Discussion- Any New Ordinances 2010

Committee members agreed to review section 3.36, Walls and Fences at the next meeting.

12. Discussion- Special Meeting February 10, 2010

All Committee members in attendance said they would be able to attend the February 10, 2010 special meeting. Items on the agenda will include Rockford Ambulance public hearing, continued review of Tom Skipper's landscape operation, discussion regarding Zoning Ordinance section 3.36 Walls and Fences, election of Planning Commission officers and J. Brown's review of proposed amendments to the Township's ordinance regarding non conforming structures and lots. J. Brown will also see if the Planning Commission had previously suggested any other ordinance amendments.

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13. Adjournment

There being no further business A. Rumbaugh declared the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on February 10, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Timmons
Recording Secretary, GTPC

Al Berry, Secretary, GTPC