

West Traverse Township
Regular Planning Commission
November 10, 2010

Vice-Chairman Repasky called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Present: Kristi Hollingsworth, Neil Ahrens, Paul Repasky, Pete Wallin,
Nancy Sarowski.

Absent: Ann Wilderom, Larry Rychlick.

Visitors: Alford LaCount, Bob Sandford, Randy Frykberg, Sue Matsko.

Approval of Minutes: **Sarowski made a motion to approve the October 13, 2010 meeting minutes as presented. Hollingsworth seconded the motion.**

Vote: All yes.

Review Fee Schedule/Home Occupations: There were questions that had come up regarding the fee schedule for zoning because of a recent home occupation application. It was a very simple project and it did not seem that the \$550 fee was appropriate due to the fact that there were no employees. The occupation was wholly contained inside the house. There was not a lot of work on the part of the Zoning Administrator. It was felt that the Township should be encouraging small businesses rather than discouraging them with large fees for small, simple projects. There was discussion regarding the amount of the base fee for any size project which is \$90.00 and whether there was a different way of assessing fees, such as size or cost of the project. It was agreed that regardless of size of a project, the cost of processing a zoning fee was fair at \$90.00. It was also agreed that external standard maintenance should not require a zoning permit, such as replacing windows, roofing, replacing siding, etc.

There was discussion as to differences between Home Occupations, Home Offices and Home Businesses. It was suggested that the differentiation should be the fact that a simple Home Occupation does not have any employees. There would be more factors to consider if a home based business had employees, stored materials or vehicles at the home, etc. A home occupation with no employees and strictly contained inside the house should not necessarily need a special use review or fee. Randy Frykberg will present new language at the next meeting regarding the home occupation regulations.

Review Zoning Ordinance Relative to New Laws, Especially ZBA Non-Use Variances: Frykberg stated that at the recent ZBA meeting, there was confusion regarding the language in the West Traverse Township Zoning Ordinance about the ZBA. It stated that the ZBA can only deal with "dimensional items". The Zoning Enabling Act states that the ZBA has the authority to grant non-use variances relating to the construction, structural changes or alterations of a building. It was agreed that Frykberg will change the language in the WTT Zoning Ordinance to match that of the Zoning Enabling Act.

Proposed: 11-10-10

Approved: 1-12-11

This new language will be presented at the next meeting in December.

Review WES Zoning Ordinance Regulations: The Planning Commission reviewed an application for a WES at its last meeting. After that review, there were questions raised as to why the color of the WES was so important, why the zoning ordinance states that it can only be white or galvanized steel, and why it can't be a neutral color that would not stand out against its surroundings. There was discussion as to why these colors were agreed upon in the original zoning ordinance. Part of the reasoning was to keep the look of WESs consistent. It was suggested that in the future, any applicant for a Wes must supply the specs from the WES manufacturer.

Review Sign Regulations: The current sign ordinance requires all signs to be at least ten (10) feet from the lot line and no closer than ten (10) feet to the road right-of-way. It was noted that it is very difficult to enforce this regulation, especially when it pertains to temporary signs. Temporary signs do not need a permit and most of them are placed near the road right-of-way. It was agreed that temporary signs should be allowed up to the road right-of-way as long as they are on private property. Frykberg will present this new language at the next meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion on Farmland and Open Space Preservation: Sarowski had a meeting with Tom Bailey, from the Little Traverse Conservancy. She presented an in depth report on her meeting. She stated that there is a lot of expense associated with conservation easements. The property has to be monitored yearly and a report has to be made. She questioned whether this is something that the Township would actually want to get involved with. This will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

Zoning Administrator's Report: None.

Township Board Representative: The Township Board approved the recently revised Harbor Springs Area Public Library Agreement. The Board discussed proposed 2011 road projects.

Planning Commissioner Comments: None

Public Comments: Alford LaCount had some comments regarding the zoning fee schedule.

Proposed: 11-10-10

Approved: 1-12-11

Adjournment: Sarowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Hollingsworth seconded the motion.

Vote: All yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be December 8, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Nancy Sarowski, Secretary

Transcribed by:
Susan Matsko
Township Secretary