

West Traverse Township
Regular Planning Commission & Public Hearing
February 9, 2011

Chairperson Sarowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Kristi Hollingsworth, Neil Ahrens, Ann Wilderom, Nancy Sarowski,
Larry Rychlick, Pete Wallin, Paul Repasky.

Visitors: Alford LaCount, Bob Sandford, Randy Frykberg.

Approval of Minutes: **Wallin made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 12, 2011 as presented. Hollingsworth seconded the motion.**

Vote: All yes.

Public Hearing on Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments: The Public Hearing was opened at 7:00 p.m. to hear any comments regarding an amendment to change the non-use variance language to make it better conform to the State Zoning Enabling Act. There were no public comments. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:02 p.m.

Wallin made a motion to approve the Non-Use Variance language in Section 701:3 as presented, dated 2-1-11, and to recommend it to the Township Board. Rychlick seconded the motion.

Vote: All yes.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:03 to hear any comments regarding the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to Section 402:15, Wind Energy System, to add a non-obtrusive color that blends with the natural surroundings as an allowed color for wind energy systems. There were no public comments. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:04 p.m.

Rychlick made a motion to approve the amendment for Section 402:15 Wind Energy Systems, dated 2-1-11, which adds the sentence "or be a non-obtrusive color with the natural surroundings" and to recommend it to the Township Board.

Ahrens seconded the motion.

Vote: All yes.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:04 p.m. to hear any comments regarding an amendment to the sign ordinance to allow temporary signs to be placed at the front lot line instead of requiring a ten (10) foot set-back. Bob Sandford felt that there would be no way to enforce the proposed language without taking someone to court. He suggested language that would allow Township officials to remove signs that were in violation of the ordinance. There was discussion regarding how some signs may obstruct the vision of drivers and how that could be dangerous. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:17 p.m. Wallin thought the language presented by Sandford would be beneficial and he felt that it worked well in another township who utilizes that same language. It was suggested that

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if a sign is removed, the owner of the sign needs to be notified that the sign was removed and have the opportunity to retrieve it from the Township hall. There was discussion as to who would have the authority to remove any signs.

Wallin made a motion to approve the draft amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for Section 503:1, dated 2-1-11, and add Section 503:6 to allow removal of signs by any elected official or the Zoning Administrator and to recommend it to the Township Board. Wilderom seconded the motion.

Vote: All yes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Discussion of Home Occupation Draft Regulations: Randy Frykberg presented Draft #2 Home Occupations and Home Based Business based on the discussion and suggestions at the last meeting. He suggested that the definition for Home Office would state that the sale of merchandise would not be allowed. It would be restricted to service only. There was concern regarding Home Based Businesses and the possibility of multiple businesses being side by side within a short distance of each other, which could create a problem with increased traffic, noise, nuisance to neighbors. There was discussion as to how to limit the number of people who work at a home occupation site. It was decided that as long as nothing was visible outside the home, anyone, no matter how many, who actually lives at the residence should be able to work there, also. There was discussion in regards to storage of materials for the home based business and whether it should be allowed inside the residence; outside, but not visible, in an accessory building, etc. There was also discussion as to how to refer to these materials, whether they are supplies to make the product or the product itself. It was decided that Frykberg will make up a graph to reflect the allowable uses for each of the three proposed home occupations and this will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Discussion of Day Care Center, Business School, Private Schools, and Charter Schools in the C-1 and I-1 Zoning Districts:

Frykberg presented a draft amendment for Section 304A:2 to be added regarding regulations for Day Care facilities and/or child care centers since there is no reference to these in the current zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission approved of the proposed language and this will be brought back at the next meeting for a Public Hearing.

Discussion on Farmland and Open Space Preservation: It was suggested that the Planning Commission begin the first steps of developing an ordinance regarding conservation easements so that the Township would be in a position to at least be able to accept donations of easements of land if that came about. There would be no cost to the Township for this type of a beginning, but it would be a start. The Little Traverse

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Conservancy has offered to help the Township with writing grants or evaluating property. This will be reviewed again at future meetings.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Frykberg presented a written report.

Township Board's Representative: 2011 road projects were reviewed.

Planning Commissioner Comments: None.

Public Comments: Alford LaCount had comments regarding the Home Office amendments.

The March 9, 2011 meeting will be cancelled. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be April 13, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by:

Pete Wallin, Secretary

Transcribed by:
Susan Matsko
Township Secretary

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