

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 11/2/22**

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:00pm at the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, MI. Chair Eidt called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chair Eidt, Commissioners Stanford, Weston, Giese, Tocarchick, Flore, Poth (joined the meeting shortly after 7:00pm), Brinker, and Trustee Creagh.

ABSENT: None. Quorum established.

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Consultant Chris Doozan of McKenna and Jim Howard, Planning Assistant.

Chair Eidt led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Weston, second by Tocarchick to approve the agenda.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Stanford, second by Brinker to approve the minutes of October 5, 2022.

Motion approved 8-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None. Closed public comment at 7:05pm.

PUBLIC HEARING

Farm signs of 24 feet on residential parcels

Motion by Brinker, second by Weston to open the public hearing.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

Chris Doozan briefly reviewed the proposed revisions to Article 7 regulations on signs.

Discussion by commissioners (no public present):

- Why 24 sq. ft.?
- Where would the new language fit in?
- What prompted this?
- How many parcels would be affected?
- What about “Chew Mail Pouch” signs, signs painted on barns and names spelled out in shingles?
- The variance process with the ZBA would still be available.

Motion by Weston, seconded by Flore to close the public hearing.

Motion Approved 9-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- o *Farm signs of 24 feet on residential parcels*

Motion by Brinker, second by Flore to recommend to the Township Board that the amendment to Article 7/Signs allowing farm signs of 24 sq. ft. on residential parcels be adopted.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- o *Event Barns*

Discussion about the traffic impact study that is being required, the cost involved and the traffic volume. It was noted that such a study benefitted the Brighton Township facility.

Motion by Weston, second by Poth to recommend to the township board that the event barn amendment be adopted.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- o *Home Occupations (2.06) - Telecommuting*

Mr. Doozan briefly reviewed his memo regarding the recommended text amendment for the commission to examine involving telecommuting.

Commissioner Discussion:

- It was questioned whether this language is needed in the current ordinance.
- Difficulty in seeing the need.
- It is an overly broad interpretation of land use regulations.
- It was clarified that this would allow telecommuting.
- What about home schooling?
- Next step would be to schedule a public hearing, but if the PC doesn't believe that this updated language is necessary then it doesn't need to go to public hearing.

Motion by Tocarchick, seconded by Giese that this topic not be considered any further.

Ayes: Tocarchick, Giese, Weston, Stanford, Flore, Poth, Creagh.

Nays: Eidt, Brinker.

Motion approved 7-2 (issue to be dropped with no further consideration).

- *Home Occupations (2.06) – Medical Marijuana*

Mr. Doozan briefly reviewed some of the items in his October memo regarding the recommended text amendment for the commission to analyze involving Medical Marijuana.

Discussion ensued.

- Concern was raised about item #6 beginning on page 2, needs clarification.
- No signage allowed.
- What about a process for enforcement of odor complaints/doesn't take many plants.
- Some communities use a carbon filtering system for odor mitigation.
- Composting was mentioned , where only 50% of the material can be from marijuana.
- Lighting was brought up as a possible annoyance for neighbors.
- Why in residential, what about commercial?
- Can't be exclusionary, must provide reasonable accommodation.
- Concern about legal challenges.

Motion by Stanford, second by Giese to postpone to the January meeting for revisions.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Slate of officers*

Committee members Giese and Weston briefly discussed their findings.

Motion by Giese, second by Tocarchick to retain the existing group of officers with Eidt as chair, Stanford as vice-chair and Giese as secretary.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Home-based child care providers*

Chris D. reviewed his memo on the issue and that the revisions are needed to bring the Township's ZO into compliance with state law.

Motion by Stanford, second by Brinker to schedule a public hearing on the issue at the January 25, 2023 PC meeting.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Solar and wind energy systems*

Chris D. and commissioner Stanford led a discussion on the issue and the workshop they have been attending.

- Wind towers can be 500 ft to 650 feet in height
- Other issues involve noise, shadow flicker and bird kill
- Should they be permitted, and where?
- Suggestion about creating an overlay zone
- The aesthetics of fencing to neighbors
- Do we need community solar?
- Would a moratorium be appropriate?

Motion by Weston, second by Brinker to have Chris Doozan begin drafting language to update the solar and wind sections of the ZO.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Township Board Report – Trustee Creagh mentioned that the board approved the police assessment roll, that Commissioners Poth and Tocarchick were reappointed to the PC, the recycling grant was approved, the next strategic plan meeting will be in December, and the issue on Damon Road with disruptive holiday decorations.

The electronic sign in Williamston was brought up, also the safe routes to School meeting tomorrow (Thursday) and the Capital Improvements Committee which is tentatively scheduled to meet Monday, 11/7.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

CITIZEN COMMENT

REVIEW

Chair Eidt reviewed the PC's actions from the meeting:

- *Public hearing for farm signs on residential property was held and the amendment was recommended for approval by the township board;*
- *The event barns proposed amendment was recommended for approval by the township board;*
- *The telecommuting issue was dropped from consideration;*

- *Action on the Proposed Medical Marijuana Draft Language was postponed to the January, 2023 meeting;*
- *A public hearing for the home-based child care providers amendment was scheduled for the January, 2023 meeting;*
- *The current Slate of Officers will be retained;*
- *Chris D. was asked to begin drafting revised language for solar and wind energy systems.*

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Weston, second by Commissioner Giese to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Jim Howard
Recording Secretary

Secretary Giese