

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 5/25/22**

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, Davis(arrived shortly), Poth 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 Tocarchick, second by Flore to approve the agenda.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Stanford, second by Creagh to approve the minutes of March 23, 2022.

Motion approved 8– 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Closed public comment at 7:07pm.

PUBLIC HEARING

- *Event Barns*

Motion by Creagh, second by Westin to open the public hearing.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

Chris Doozan reviewed the process and the proposed draft of Section 8.02.RR starting with the definition of event barns and the various sections, with special emphasis on items #6 (40 acres

minimum), #10 (only alcohol produced on-site), moving the last sentence under #13 to # 12 (Screening) and #19 (owner-occupied parcel).

Public comments:

Jeff Sweet, 5915 Shoeman expressed concerns about enforcement and fines, loves the community and doesn't want to see this at all, concerned about property next door, please don't change what is working.

Mark Kring, 1141 Gulick mentioned the bad experiences he had in Traverse City, had a question about notifications and fireworks.

Sam Zuke, 6116 Shoeman stated the draft has come a long way, has concerns about noise, drinking, traffic/people trying to get out, who will pay for additional lane or traffic light, parking next door, tailgating.

Jennifer Tubbs, 5915 Shoeman thanked the committee for their work, wants letter and info included in minutes; provided background and time at Watertown Township, stated setbacks are a big issue as well as stormwater runoff or the dust from gravel, did due diligence when buying her property. She reviewed her letter and said the barn next door looks great but has problems (leaking roof, etc.), that the map used by the committee doesn't take into account parcels with joint ownership or combinations.

Todd Granger, 542 Haslett said he owns 200 acres which means he could have 5 event barns but won't do that, mentioned exclusionary zoning, and that once this passes neighbors will have no rights, will have to move, so please don't approve it.

Tony Miller, 5758 N. Williamston Road has 5 acres, says he can't do events and has a beautiful barn, they are growing lavender, appreciate the work the PC has done on this, had to go to the ZBA for his deck, do this on a case by case basis not one size fits all.

David Wilson speaking on behalf of a property owner mentioned the health, safety and welfare aspect and felt that # 10/allowing alcoholic beverages that are produced on-site only is discriminatory, also feels the limits on operations and hours is discriminatory, why limit the number of people if the building can accommodate more per building code, that the limit on the number of events per month may be discriminatory, that the performance guarantee should be spelled out.

Elizabeth Miller, 5758 N. Williamston Road said it should be done on a case by case basis, that there are lots of old barns which are hard to maintain, would like option to have an event on smaller parcels, that one size fits all doesn't work.

Jennifer Tubbs explained that the 100 foot setback puts 150 people very close to her family/kids, and degrades the neighborhood.

Commissioner discussion:

- This goes to Township Board, had Catherine Kaufman in who is an expert on this issue, trying to find middle ground
- Why do this, has exclusions
- Process was reviewed, committee had several experts in, other townships were contacted
- Site plan review and a special use permit will be required for a specific site
- Is there a way to limit the number of licenses? On primary roads only
- Thanks for all of your work
- Why allow new if concern is for old barns and their history
- Easier to build a new building than retrofitting an old one
- Definitions reviewed
- Who polices whether it is an owner-occupied residence?
- Thanks for all of your input.
- Suggest that Chris respond to Jennifer Tubbs's comments

Motion by Creagh, seconded by Davis to close the public hearing but keep the record open until May 27 to accept further public comment.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Davis to amend the agenda to move the ARK/Oddfellows project up ahead of unfinished business.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- o *ARK/ Oddfellows revised site plan*

Chris D. reviewed his memo of 5/18/22 and the conditions for approval stipulated.

Mark Dixon of ARK explained the loading issue, where the company vehicles will be loaded and parked inside the building, and other loading will be done on the south side of the building where the existing loading zone is. He also mentioned that the Drain Commission's office wanted to know the elevation of the water table.

No comments have been received from MDOT or NIESA.

Motion by Stanford, second by Westin to recommend approval of the ARK/Oddfellows site plan to the Township board, with conditions:

(Item b of Chris D's letter)-That the parking calculations be corrected by deleting the Max parking of 125% = 26 wording;

(item e) – transmittal letters to outside review agencies be provided.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Lot coverage in the B-1, B-2, OS-1 and I-1 Districts and stormwater management standards*

Chris D reviewed his report/analysis of 38 affected parcels. Suggestion would be to apply it to parcels one acre or larger.

Discussion:

- Is the concern about future development?
- Gravel vs. paved, isn't gravel treated as impervious?
- Discussion about change in use
- Concerns about parcels out of compliance, additional hoops for businesses to jump through
- Issue of attracting more businesses with more regulations

Motion by Giese, second by Davis to adopt the County's stormwater management standards only as Section 2.25.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Event Barns*

Motion by Westin, seconded by Poth to postpone the issue to the July meeting.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Annual Report*

Brief discussion.

Motion by Stanford, seconded by Davis to accept the report and forward it to the Township Board.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Trustee Creagh reported on the strategic planning session held May 13 and 14, and that the board approved the Farm Animals on Non-farm Parcels Permit, approved the Comcast Franchise Agreement and approved the Cemetery Green Burial RFP.

Commissioner Giese stated the “Get on Board’ workshop through MSU Extension was very good.

Commissioner Stanford mentioned the master plan and the timeliness of its review and update, also a CIP and maintaining a list of ordinance adoption. He also mentioned the solar program he is taking through MSU Extension.

Howard mentioned the avian flu issue and urging neighbors to take extra care with backyard flocks.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chris Doozan’s letter about home occupations was discussed.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Justin Geisel, 5805 Shoeman expressed his concerns about what other persons had commented on regarding event barns and threatening the PC.

REVIEW

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

- Approved the minutes of the March 23, 2022 meeting;
- Approved adopting the ICDC standards for stormwater management;
- Took no action on lot coverage in the OS-1, B-1,B-2 and I-1 Districts;
- Recommended approval of the revised Oddfellows site plan with conditions;
- Held a public hearing for the event barns proposed amendment;
- Approved the annual report for 2021-2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Davis, second by Commissioner Poth to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 pm.

Jim Howard, Recording Secretary

Secretary Giese