

Approved 1-15-15

Regular Meeting of the Casco Township Planning Commission
December 3, 2014 - 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Barker, Lewis Adamson, Daniel Fleming, Dian Liepe, Paul Macyauski, and Judy Graff

ABSENT: David Campbell was excused

STAFF PRESENT: Susan West, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: None

1. **Call to Order and review of agenda** - Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm. There were no changes to the Agenda.
2. **Approval of minutes of 11/12/14 regular meeting** - Motion by Liepe, supported by Adamson, to approve the Minutes of the November 12, 2014 Regular Meeting upon making the following corrections: 1. In 3b - add the words "by the Allegan County Road Commission after the words Tree trimming 2. In 3e – add the word "equipment" after the word cemetery 3. In 3f – change the spelling from Joanna Jessup to Johanon Jessup. All in favor, MSC.
3. **Report from the Township Board Representative** – Judy Graff reported on the November 17, 2014 Township Board Meeting as follows:
 - a. The construction of the storage building for the cemetery equipment has been delayed until Spring, 2015.
 - b. Regarding the North Shore Drain project – There are still outstanding Easements. The Allegan County Drain Commission will be meeting with residents soon. A re-design of the project may be needed.
 - c. There is now a drop box in the entryway of the Township Hall. Please do not use this box for cash.
 - d. A change in the poverty level for taxes has been adopted, to-wit: 20% over the federal rate for poverty.
 - e. The Board of Review has a meeting scheduled for December 9, 2014.
 - f. Allan Overhiser stated that the SHARP Park is basically at a standstill.
 - g. Tom Storr needs to be replaced on the Parks Committee.
 - h. Regarding the South Haven Hospital:
 - i. The number of beds the hospital is licensed for dropped from 82 down to 52.
 - ii. There was an unannounced accreditations report/audit performed before Thanksgiving and the hospital passed with flying colors. This is important because the government's funding is based on accreditations.
 - iii. The Wellness Center celebrated its seven year anniversary.

- iv. The hospital now has certified application counselors available to walk individuals through the open enrollment process for the Affordable Health Care program.

4. Report from the ZBA Representative – Macyauski reported that there have been no requests heard since the last Planning Commission meeting. He further stated that he was pleased that Matt Super has been appointed to the ZBA.

5. Report from Water/Sewer Representative - Adamson reported as follows:

- a. Finances are in good shape; having \$400,000.00 more than this time last year.
- b. There has been continued discussion regarding debt retirement. Adamson stated that he believes that in the future, funds should be set aside for depreciation. Graff asked if some of the older equipment has ever been replaced and Adamson answered no. Graff asked if others on the Water & Sewer Committee agree with Adamson's thoughts regarding funding depreciation and Adamson answered that there are. Adamson further stated that a new sewer plant will be needed in the future.
- c. Chairman Barker asked Adamson to have bond payment information available for the Special Joint Training Meeting scheduled for February 7, 2015.
- d. There was one water connection made.
- e. Attorney Bultje will decide who needs to bring a lawsuit regarding the mandatory hook-ups (the Township or the Authority) and that same will be started soon.

6. Resolutions requiring Planning Commission action: None

7. New Business- Annual Meeting Agenda: Suggestions were made regarding a proposed Agenda for the Special Joint Meeting scheduled for February 7, 2015. Chairman Barker took note of the suggestions and will distribute a proposed Agenda at the January, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

8. Old Business: Duplexes, 2015 Calendar, Zoning Maps -

- a. Regarding the 2015 Calendar: Chairman Barker will provide Cheri Brenner with the calendar for the 2015 Planning Commission meetings so that same can be published in the South Haven Tribune.
- b. Regarding the Zoning Maps: In his Memo to Bruce Barker, dated December 3, 2014 and copy of which is attached hereto as Attachment 1, Al Ellingsen indicated that he will be receiving sample maps from the Allegan County LIS showing greater contrast between the zones.
- c. Regarding Duplexes: There was much discussion regarding duplexes, small homes, and having two homes on one piece of property, which included the following thoughts/remarks (see also Attachment 1 hereto):

- i. Macyauski stated that he saw on the news that a small home, between 300 and 400 sq. ft., was built in Berkeley, California and that it was very efficient and impressive. Macyauski further stated that he does not remember a variance request for a smaller home coming before the ZBA and that he believes that the issue of smaller homes decreasing property values of neighboring lots is a non-issue.
- ii. Fleming stated that we need to weigh out the need of maintaining property value and the need for allowing affordable housing.
- iii. Adamson stated that he believes that the issue of having more than one home on a single lot needs to be addressed. Macyauski stated that a variance request for this issue could be brought before the ZBA now.
- iv. Macyauski stated that maybe the minimum sq. foot requirement should be between 550 or 600 sq. feet.
- v. Adamson stated that if we want to make living in Casco Township affordable, maybe small homes/mobile homes should be allowed in rural areas.
- vi. Chairman Barker stated that we need better information from Ellingsen on this matter for the February Special Joint Training Meeting.
- vii. Liepe stated that some farmers are now using single wide mobile homes on their farms instead of stick built cabins for their workers.
- viii. Liepe stated that she hates telling someone that they can't have a small home or a mobile home without having a good reason why.
- ix. Chairman Barker asked Macyauski what he thought would be the response of the ZBA if someone requested a variance for a 500 sq. ft. home. Macyauski answered that he believes that there is a way to put in a small home anywhere in Casco Township.
- x. Liepe asked Macyauski how many people he thinks would request a variance for a small home. Macyauski answered not many.
- xi. Fleming stated that the Courts have determined that an individual can't own the view of the Lake, so why can someone own a view that can't include a small home or a mobile home. Adamson stated that he believes mobile homes do impact the neighboring property values.
- xii. Fleming stated that he disagrees with Ellingsen's August 3, 2014 memo (Attachment 1 hereto) on the following points: 1. Ellingsen's opinion that we should not be the first in the State to adopt an Ordinance that allows for small homes is untrue because innovation comes from being the first to make a change, and 2. Ellingsen's opinion that the adoption of an Ordinance allowing small homes may bring unintended consequences should not be a reason to not act on this matter.
- xiii. Chairman Barker stated that with regard to the issue on having a blood relative live with you, he likes the idea of a duplex because it is still one building on a

parcel. Further, he stated that duplexes should be allowed everywhere in Casco Township

- xiv. Fleming stated that he believes we shouldn't limit what people can do on their own property and that sometimes the Planning Commission does more hindering than planning.
- xv. Chairman Barker stated that he will ask Ellingsen what we would need to do to allow for duplexes in all districts and what the State's minimum is for building size. Chairman Barker further stated that the matter of small homes and the need to have a blood relative live with you will be on the Agenda for the Special Joint Meeting on February 7, 2015.

9. Public Comment – none

Chairman Barker closed the meeting by stating that he is grateful for the members of the Planning Commission and all the hard work that they do. Further, he wished everyone happy holidays!

Motion to adjourn by Graff, 2nd by Macyauski. All in favor, MSC. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm

Minutes prepared by Susan West, Recording Secretary

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting on January 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm

Attachment 1: Memo dated December 3, 2014 from Al Ellingsen to Bruce Barker

Attachment 1:

Outlook.com Print Message https://ky175.mail.live.com/outlook/printmessage?mk=mk-

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PC Meeting

From: **Al Ellingsen** (skwirely@frontier.com)
Sent: Wed 12/03/14 4:11 AM
To: **Bruce Barker** (brucebarker@hotmail.com)

Bruce,

I will not be at the meeting on Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014. I have an important meeting in Saugatuck at the same time.

I have discussed the maps with Chris from Allegan County LIS and he will send me samples of maps with greater contrast between zones.

The PC needs to continue to discuss what potential changes to the Zoning Ordinance are necessary to allow blood relatives to live with or near their extended family, if that is the prime concern. Duplexes may be one solution but should duplexes be a permitted use in all residential and agricultural zones or should they be a Special Use on a case by case basis? If a duplex is allowed should one unit be allowed to be less than the required 1000 sq. ft.?

I do not believe the township should be the first in the area, or perhaps the State, to be the first to adopt an Ordinance amendment to allow houses under 500 sq. ft.. There may be some unintended consequences that come with that decision.

Al

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