

Courtland Township Planning Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

The regular meeting of the Courtland Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Rock Wood at 7:00 PM at the Courtland Township Hall. Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Roll Call:** Members Rock Wood, Katy Nelson, Mary Ann Andersen, Al Rau, Andy Moore were all present
2. **Also attending:** Colleen Brown, Zoning Administrator, and Jim Scales, Township Attorney
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Rau wants to switch items 6 and 7. Motion by Andersen supported by Nelson to approve the agenda as amended. Motion was approved with all members voting yes. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Change “mission statement” to “proposal” on page 2, paragraph 2. Motion by Nelson supported by Rau to approve the minutes from June 18, 2019 with the change as noted. Motion was approved with all members voting yes. Motion carried.
5. **Public Comments for items not on the agenda:** None
6. **New Business (formerly item 7):**

A. Discuss Barn Venue Ordinance: Scales reviewed two ordinances. One ordinance would clarify that barn venues could not be included in county club/golf course special land use in the RR district. It would also add as a permitted use a wedding/banquet facility in the commercial district. This would prohibit these types of venues in the RR district and instead permit them only in the C district with site plan approval by the Planning Commission.

The second ordinance would permit a “barn event venue” as a separate land use in the RR district subject to a number of conditions, including, but not limited to, ten-acre minimum lot size, only in barns constructed before 1965. Events would only be allowed from May 15 to Oct 15. Hours of operation are also addressed, as are parking areas, lighting, food/alcohol service, music, restrooms/lavatory facilities, etc. Setbacks would be 125 feet from property lines. Additional discussion was held regarding operations, responsible parties, etc.

Wood asked for public comments. Mariah and Steven Moore indicated they are looking at a property currently offered for sale that has a barn that could be used for events. They want to make sure they are following the ordinances and get some insight from the PC before they make an offer. The property they are looking at is only 3 acres or so and wouldn't handle that many people as the draft ordinance would permit (200).

Kim McIntyre asked about the age of barns. She indicated that a lot of people have nice barns that are not as old 1965, so why would we exclude them? She doesn't want to make the ordinance feel like people can't get together and have a party with friends and neighbors if they have a barn. Commissioners were confident that, as proposed, the ordinance does not address private family functions like reunions, graduation parties, neighborhood get-togethers, etc.

Commissioners further discussed which approach was preferred, and discussed limits on the number of attendees, noise control, enforcement, etc. A public hearing will need to be held at the next meeting on what the PC should do next. **Motion by Moore, supported by Andersen, to set a public hearing at an upcoming meeting to consider both amendments, an amendment to permit them only in the "C" District and the amendment that would permit Barn Event Venues in the RR district, as proposed in the draft dated August 19, 2019 to determine which one should be recommended for approval to the Township Board. Motion was approved with all members voting yes. Motion carried.**

B. Swimming Pool Standards. Attorney Scales reviewed a proposed ordinance that would modify the standards for swimming pools. The Zoning Ordinance requires a fence around all pools, and the building code, which incorporates the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code, allows for there to be no fence in certain instances, such as when the pool is equipped with a powered safety cover. This creates an inconsistency, where the zoning ordinance requires a fence in all cases but the building code does not. The proposed ordinance would defer to the building code to rectify the inconsistency. **Motion by Moore, supported by Andersen, to set a public a hearing to consider the proposed ordinance at the same time as the Barn Event Venue ordinance. All members voting yes. Motion carried.**

7. **Old Business: Master Plan Discussion.** Moore reviewed a letter he prepared with input from Wood to the Township Board that seeks input on the Planning Commission potentially making changes to the zoning ordinance to further implement the Master Plan and encourage growth and development in areas designed to accommodate it (south of 12 Mile and west of Young). Wood thinks that the letter should more explicitly state what some of the implications are so the Board understands the ramifications of potential changes. It could be a controversial change, depending on what is done. Commissioners also discussed sewer capacity, desired location, costs, and how realistic it is to expect large scale development south of 12 Mile. Commissioners generally desired to take a more holistic look at the issue in conjunction with examining the sewer system capacity. Williams & Works provided a proposal to perform a sewer capacity study. Commissioners were supportive of the study. Wood felt that its scope could be broadened somewhat to include future capacity, best locations for extensions, etc. so utility policy and land use policy could be aligned.

Motion by Andersen to recommend the Board approve the sewer study, as proposed by Williams & Works, but also explore potential options for expanding the system, where it should go, and approximate costs. Supported by Rau. Motion was approved with four members voting yes (Moore abstained). Motion carried.

8. **Zoning Administrator Report.** Brown asked when the hearings should be held on the barn venue and swimming pool fences. With little coming up on the agenda and holidays coming up in November/December, Commissioners decided that January 2020 was the desired date.
9. **Township Attorney Report.** Scales noted that there is an agreement between Courtland and Cannon Township that limits how much sewage Courtland can send to Cannon and wants to make sure W&W is aware of that when it conducts its study.
10. **Township Board Representative Report.** There is a new clerk, Sue Hartman, replacing Sandy Frandsen. There were two very qualified applicants and the Township is happy to have her.
11. **ZBA Report.** Nothing to report.
12. **Motion to adjourn by Andersen, supported by Rau, at 8:31 PM. Motion was approved with all members voting yes. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Moore, Secretary