

MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, December 11, 2018 --- 7:30 p.m.

Big Rapids Township Hall, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 P.M.

Chairman Amanda Wethington called the regular meeting of the Big Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission to order at the Big Rapids Township Hall on Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Carman Bean, Zach Cook, Mary Davis, Gordon Oliver and Amanda Wethington. Bob Hampson and Mark Sweppenheiser were excused. The record shows a quorum is present. Also Present: Zoning Administrator and Recording Secretary, Brent Mason.

III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Mrs. Wethington asked if any of the Commission members had known conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda for this meeting. No one indicated that a conflict of interest existed.

IV. MINUTES:

Mrs. Wethington asked the Commission to review the minutes of the November 13, 2018 regular meeting. The members took several moments to review the document, then Mr. Cook made a motion to approve the November 13, 2018 minutes as submitted. Mrs. Davis seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with five ayes.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

Item 1. Citizens Advisory Committee for Gravel Pit:

Mr. Mason presented a request from Mr. Dave Hamelund that the Planning Commission consider forming an advisory committee for the Rieth-Riley Gravel Mine at 18220 Taft Road to include membership of a variety of individuals to include a member of our Planning Commission, the Township Board of Trustees, the County Planning Commission or staff, members of the neighborhood and a member of Rieth-Riley Management.

Mr. Hamelund stated that the thought behind the request is that when there is a concern about the gravel pit operation, such as dust, noise, hours of operation, etc., if the concern is not addressed at the time of the initial complaint, rather than having to take two or three months to resolve the concern through the ordinance process, he would like an advisory committee to follow up on the complaint and get an answer to resolve the issue. That would allow all the parties to hear the complaint and a decision could be rendered on the legitimacy of the complaint, which could lead to earlier resolution of the complaint. He feels that it could streamline the process for dealing with potential issues.

Mrs. Davis asked how the current process worked for dealing with complaints regarding gravel pits. Mr. Mason explained that currently, complaints would come to him for determination of

enforcement and he would contact the management at Rieth-Riley to explain the complaint and advise them what the expectations for a resolution would be.

Mr. Bean asked if this authority extended beyond the provisions of the ordinance and Mr. Mason stated that the enforcement authority fell only to the provisions of the ordinance and any special provisions that the Planning Commission may have imposed during the approval of the permit. Mr. Mason stated that the special provisions were the implementation of the recommendations from the Progressive AE letter dated November 5, 2018, specifically that the suggested reclamation bond be required and that vegetation be planted on reclamation to specifically include coniferous shrubs/trees to provide a wind block for the roadway on the east side of the property. Mr. Mason also advised that the permit will contain attachments that include all the documents Rieth-Riley presented during the fact finding of the application process. The project will conform to all requirements of the Mineral Mining Zoning Control Ordinance. Mr. Bean and Mr. Hamelund discussed the authority the proposed committee would have. Mr. Hamelund feels that the committee would either agree with the administrator or take the position that the administrator's assessment of an issue was wrong, thereby prompting action at a different level.

Mr. Davis stated that she believes that usually, getting more people involved in making a decision makes it more difficult, not better. Mr. Hamelund responded by saying that all the members would have a different "voice" that would allow all points of view to be taken into consideration. Mr. Hamelund feels strongly that this process would encourage a timelier resolution of complaints (at the moment) as opposed to the current process provided for in the ordinance, which may take several days or more to resolve.

Mrs. Davis reiterated that she feels the proposed committee would slow the process down as opposed to speed up the handling of concerns. Mr. Hamelund wants to have an option available when following the procedure doesn't resolve the complaint. Mrs. Davis mentioned that if she has a complaint that isn't resolved, she continues to call until she gets an explanation. Township Supervisor Stanek stated that he would prefer that many neighbors call with the complaint rather than have a committee meet for each complaint. Mr. Bean stated that he feels that a citizen's committee of the neighbors from Big Rapids Township and Colfax Township be set up to forward concerns that haven't been dealt with through the current channels. Further discussion amongst the members and the public solidified the thinking that an informal citizen's committee is an acceptable solution to for neighborhood concerns that don't get addressed in a timely manner. Mr. Mason stated that he will do his very best to investigate any complaint in a very timely manner. He is hopeful that between his investigations and Rieth-Riley's response, most issues will be resolved rapidly and to the satisfaction of the neighbors.

Item 2: Language changes for Zoning Ordinance Amendment ZOA 18-002:

Mr. Mason reviewed the request from the Board of Trustees to review a small change to the language that was forwarded to the Board for Trustees for action in December.

The Township Board of Trustees unanimously approved a motion to change the wording in the Land Usage Ordinance Section 153.130 (F)(4) by removing "Township Board" and adding "Zoning Board of Appeals" and send back to the Planning Commission.

This change brings the language in line with the original intent of the ordinance.

(4) The applicant or any aggrieved party may appeal a decision to the (Township Board of Trustees) Zoning Board of Appeals. The application for an appeal will be delivered to the zoning administrator within 21 days of the approval of the minutes for the meeting in which the decision was made.

Mr. Bean made a motion to accept the suggestion of the Board of Trustees on the change of the language for the Land Use Ordinance Section 153.130 (F)(4) by removing "Township Board of Trustees" and adding "Zoning Board of Appeals."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Oliver. The motion was approved unanimously with five ayes.

Item 3 – Review for the Master Plan:

Mr. Mason started that discussion about the review of the 2020 Master Land Use Plan by suggesting that a larger group of citizens needs to be involved in the process. He feels that a sub-committee or advisory committee should be developed to review and suggest changes for the plan update or rewrite. Mr. Mason did acknowledge that in the past, it has been difficult to solicit members by advertising to the general public for volunteer participant committees. He suggested that the Planning Commission members consider recruiting volunteers from the community by directly inviting citizens to participate. We need business people, educators, representatives from the different districts and residents that live and work here, as well as work elsewhere. The more diverse a group we can get to participate, the more accurate the direction of the Master Plan will be. The last version of the Master Plan had input from the Planning Commission and staff only, as no one else responded to the requests for input. Mr. Mason closed by stating that this is an important item that will directly affect the future land use maps and land use ordinance development for the township.

Mr. Stanek mentioned some information he learned at a recent training session he attended. He said that a master plan shouldn't take less than 14 months to review and prepare, and gathering information should be the goal for the first 10 months, then the public hearings and the preparing of the new maps, if applicable, should occur later. These recruits will be sitting and reviewing our plan as well as other plans for information that might be useful in the preparation of a new plan.

Mr. Bean mentioned that the neighboring jurisdictions must be notified that we are beginning the process and have an opportunity to comment on our plan. Mr. Stanek asked if the Planning Commission would like to pursue professional assistance from Dave Bee with the West Michigan Regional Planning Consortium. Mr. Bean thought that might be a good idea. Mr. Bean also mentioned that Mark Sweppenheiser has a lot of experience in that realm. Mr. Stanek said we would still need to do the work and Mr. Bean suggested that we could divvy the process up so that the amount of work each person has to do would be less daunting. Mr. Mason continued by saying that there isn't any action needed tonight, just to keep the process in the back of everyone's mind so that new ideas and recruiting are being done. The process will continue to move on from here.

Item 4 – Preliminary review of the Planning Commission 2018 Annual Report:

Mr. Mason discussed the draft of the 2018 Planning Commission Annual Report. It contains information about 2018 Planning Commission business in a report format for the Board of

Trustees. The members briefly discussed the content of the report and agreed that this report format is acceptable and to continue forward to the January meeting.

Item 5 – Planning Commission Schedule for 2019.

Mr. Mason presented the proposed Planning Commission Schedule for 2019. Mr. Bean moved that the Planning Commission approve the meeting schedule for calendar year 2019 and January 2020. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Davis. The motion was approved unanimously with five ayes.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Mason advised the Planning Commission members that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on November 20th to hear the dimensional variance request for Aldi Inc. at 21481 Perry Avenue. The request was approved and the final site plan will be prepared for review by Progressive AE. It may be possible that the site plan could be on the PC's January agenda.

Mr. Mason also mentioned the list of legal and legislative issues that he printed for the members to review, so that they would be current on items of concern in the legal arena for planning and zoning.

Mr. Mason mentioned the Big Rapids Public Schools High School additions and facility changes that included a stadium, soccer field and baseball diamond upgrades, including a substantial amount of stormwater work at the site. The site plan is currently being reviewed by the Drain Commissioner and by our engineer. The site plan approval process will require that it be reviewed by the Planning Commission after it is reviewed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business for the Planning Commission, Mrs. Wethington adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of December 11, 2018 by: Mr. _____.
Seconded by: Mr. _____. Roll call vote carried with _____ ayes.

Brent R. Mason, Recording Secretary
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

Date Approved