

Vergennes Township

Regular Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2006

The regular meeting of the Vergennes Township Board was called to order by Tim Wittenbach at 7:00 pm in the Vergennes Township Hall.

Members Present: Tim Wittenbach - Supervisor
 Mari Stone - Clerk
 Jean Hoffman - Treasurer
 Vern Nauta - Trustee
 Al Baird - Trustee

The agenda for the July 17, 2006 Regular board meeting was approved as presented. Motion by Nauta; seconded by Wittenbach. **Motion approved.**

The Treasurer's Report was read. There was one notation on the bills with regard to the receptionist's pay. She has taken on more responsibility and is now the Deputy Treasurer as well as Building Inspector's assistant. Stone felt it appropriate to increase her pay to the \$12.00/hour deputy pay. It would be difficult to separate the duties and pay on different scales. Hoffman concurred. Stone made motion to increase receptionist/deputy treasurer/building inspector assistant's pay to \$12.00/hour. Hoffman seconded. Roll call vote – **motion approved.**

Treasurer's report and bills were approved with above change. Motion by Nauta; seconded by Stone. **Motion carried.**

Special Guest Kevin Wisselink of The Rapid gave a short presentation on bus service in Kent County. In the last 10 years, ridership has doubled. He also wanted to let us know about a program called "County Connections." It is a point to point service in Kent County. If you call the day prior, The Rapid will come to your location and take you to another (i.e. the airport) for \$14.00 one way. This service is available 24/7. If you call for same day service, there is a \$5.00 surcharge. He handed out pamphlets with more information to all in attendance and left some for the Township to hand out. Question by Stone as to whether it was possible to subsidize rides through the Community Development Block Grant. Wisselink said they are open to exploring all options. There is some discussion of having a regular run between Lowell and Grand Rapids also. Could use block grants to purchase tickets to give to residents. The County commissioners have a special committee assigned to transportation issues, Richard Vandermoelen is the chairperson.

Unfinished Business:

Historical Commission – Planning Commission did not talk about it at last meeting. It is tabled to next month.

New Business:

Special Exception Use Permit – John and Sandy Otis. The Otis' worked an agreeable solution out with their neighbors, the White's. The location is the same but the height of the building is much lower. 16' versus 27'. Also, the building's square footage was reduced to 28' x 32' from 32'x 36'. The setback is now 35' due to the smaller building. Hoffman asked the White's how the new plans looked to them. It was fine. Everyone is happy with the changes. Nauta is concerned zoning does not allow commercial building in residential area. John Otis indicated it could also be used for pontoon boat, car, motor home, or tractor storage. Baird motioned for approval of SEUP, Stone seconded. 4 yes, Nauta, no. **Motion carried.**

Jim Sowle – Lowell Airport Manager. Here to give update on what is going on at the airport and why. State of Michigan developed new master plan for Lowell Airport 5 years ago. 9/11 changed everything. Until then, Lowell was flying under radar. It is now being scrutinized since there is a training school for mechanics located here. Also, there are approximately 40,000 – 42,000 takeoffs/landings per year. Most of them are students. Security issues needed to be addressed. 3 years ago the State of Michigan said air easements had to be obtained. Eight properties were identified and six of them have agreed to terms of the easements with monetary payouts ranging from \$9200 - \$15,800. Two are still pending due to additional restrictions placed on those properties. Jim showed map of airport and affected areas around it. Bill Schreur questioned whether property north of airport had issues. He was looking at developing it in future. No problems there since there was no intention of enlarging the runway. It is too short. Wittenbach questioned how much say we have in master plan. We have a lot of say on most of it, but not with approaches. Wittenbach also questioned if a beacon was in the 5-year plan and if Observatory would be notified. Beacon is not an issue until the lights surrounding the airport become so bright the runway lights become difficult to see.

Stone requested Sowle come back for regular updates. He is happy to do it. A yearly update each summer was agreed upon.

Grand Rapids Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plan – Stone has the CD in her office of complete plan if anyone would like to see it. Wittenbach noted that the Township should adopt the Plan to stay current on funding. Stone motioned to adopt Resolution 1-2006, [Greater Grand Rapids Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), Nauta seconded. **Motion carried.**

Bailey Lakes Private Road Approval – Evan Dufendach could not be at meeting. Recommended to approve private road per Williams & Works with following changes. Add rip rap to plan, work is done. Also, re-grade ditch to allow for better water flow. Nauta motioned to approve based on plan being certified and changes being made. Hoffman seconded. **Motion Carried.**

F & G Realty – Nauta, Baird and Wittenbach were at Planning Commission meeting. Ray Zandstra gave short update to rest of board members. They want to rezone a 100' strip of land with frontage on Lincoln Lake west to the railroad tracks from R3 to

Commercial. Nauta made motion to approve rezoning. Roll Call – all approved. **Motion carried.**

Planning commission recommends approval of SEUP due to building size. Baird motioned to approve, Hoffman seconded. **Motion Carried.**

Site Plan Approval – A memo from Williams & Works indicated 2 dry hydrants are ok. Any sign must be in compliance with zoning ordinance. Fence enclosure around pool must be shown on drawing. Need copy of lease tenant agreement when received. Also need engineering approval. Nauta made motion to approve per above and Stone seconded. **Motion Carried.**

Planning Commission Vacancy –

Two applications by Ken Wittenbach and Peggy Covert had been submitted for Kropf's vacated seat. Wittenbach nominated Ken Wittenbach for planning commission vacancy. Al Baird seconded. Roll Call–Wittenbach, Baird –yes; Nauta, Stone and Hoffman – no. **Motion Denied.** It was noted that there has not been a woman on the Planning Commission for quite a while and Covert is a good candidate.

Public Comment

Bill Schreur encouraged the Board to appoint Peggy Covert to Planning Commission vacancy. He noted that she was born and raised in area, has values that match Townships goals, is dedicated and hardworking and would do a good job. Wittenbach has to nominate person and will talk to Peggy about Planning Commission.

Liz Fahnenstiel – Canine Training Facility

Planning Commission recommended rezoning from R2 to Industrial. Site plan is still in the works. Wittenbach indicated there were no negative comments at the public hearing. Nauta made motion based on Planning Commission recommendations to approve rezoning. Hoffman supports. Roll Call – all yes. **Motion carried.**

Impact Church SEUP Modifications

Steve Fritsma and Cy Floyd re-evaluated building and money situation. They shrunk square footage of building, eliminated two driveway cuts, expanded current drive. Approval of parking plans by doctor's office and Crystal Flash. Additional parking in city's area. Dropped height of building from 34' to 28' giving it more of a residential feel. They met with Vandersloot last Wednesday – picked the best of three plans for Board to see. Williams and Works ok with all three plans. A copy of Jay Kilpatrick's recommendations was given to Fritsma/Floyd for their records. There will be no sign on building. Board approved use of materials on front of building. Baird made motion to approve SEUP, Nauta seconded. **Motion Carried.**

Discussion: Boundary Commission meeting, 425 Agreement and Gourdie/Frasier Sewer Study proposal. – The city of Lowell is recommending adoption of mediated

425 outline tonight. We will be informing the Boundary Commission on the 27th of our investigation in developing our own community sewer system. Brett Gourdie had submitted a proposal outlining the steps his company would need to take to accomplish this and the costs for each step. It was noted that we still need to contact the Cook family. Wittenbach made a motion to begin the preliminary work with Gourdie/Frasier, and communicate to the Boundary Commission that we still view the 425 Agreement as an option but believe that the Township first needs to look into the option to provide community sewer service ourselves. Hoffman seconded, and the Motion carried.

Tentative meeting with City of Lowell has been set for 7/31/06 to discuss North Washington property. Hoffman and Nauta are unavailable. Wittenbach will call the city to see about different date. Mondays are not good. Bill Schreur asked that if a date is set that he be notified. Since the meeting is between full boards, it will be noticed in the Ledger. Other dates to avoid are August 14 – Planning Commission Meeting, August 15 – ZBA meeting.

Citizen Comments

David Steinbrecher is pursuing selling his property, currently the site of Murray Lake Marina, to buy more of the Kropf property and move operations there. Wants to know if Board would support him if he went ahead with plans. His plans include tearing down old barn, migrant camps and white shed. He would use existing building on West side for boat and parts sales. Buildings are to come down at existing marina per buy/sell agreement. Plan is to store 150 boats outside on 2-1/2 acres with tree or berm to block view. Wittenbach would lean in favor of proposal. Stone questioned if zoning was an issue. There would be boat and parts sales only; maybe some accessories. Township board indicated a willingness to work with him.

Peggy Covert and Bill Schreur – Have looked into using PDR program to preserve North Washington property. Schreur has contacted two funding agencies. They are willing to support project but need agency to hold property i.e. Township, Lowell City, Kent County Parks, Boy Scout Council or West Michigan Land Conservancy. Would Vergennes Township be able to receive property and hold as preserved parcel of land? No objections from Board. The city has indicated that they are interested in seeing the property developed. There was a lengthy discussion about disposition of property. Pete Gustafson is looking into deeds. Covert and Schreur would like to be present at meeting between City and Township. Tim will contact City regarding new meeting date.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm. Nauta/Stone

Respectfully Submitted,

Mari Stone, Clerk