

Vergennes Township
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2003

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on December 1, 2003 at the Township Offices. Chairman Jernberg called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Also present were Commissioners Gillett, Kropf, Medendorp, Nauta, Zoning Administrator Jeanne Vandersloot and Township Planner Jay Kilpatrick. Commissioners Richmond and Mastrovito were absent.

Approval of November 3, 2003 minutes: Motion to approve by Nauta, seconded by Gillett. All approved.

Approval of/changes to agenda: Motion to approve by Gillett, seconded by Medendorp. All approved.

1. Discuss dwelling minimum square footage amounts.

The Planning Commission received a memo from Jay responding to their request to research the requirements of minimum dwelling unit floor area standards in other townships. The current zoning is 900 total square feet for the first floor. Kilpatrick also included a table showing the townships researched and their standards. It is a good idea to make a correction in the ordinance now while experiencing growth.

Medendorp mentioned there are two other issues to address--single family dwellings and apartments. Medendorp and Gillett like the standards listed for Cannon Township. Medendorp questioned if they need to make a distinction between medium density and high density. Kilpatrick said no. Jay suggested the Planning Commission consider a minimum ground floor sq. ft. for single story dwelling; a smaller amount for a multi floor dwelling; and total square footage.

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed the standards should be the following:
Single Level, Single family & Duplex: Minimum gross area of 1150 sq. ft.; minimum ground floor area of 750 sq. ft.; multi level total 1350 sq. ft.
Multi family: 1 bedroom 750 sq. ft.; 2 bedroom 870 sq. ft.; 3 bedroom: 990 sq. ft., 120 sq. ft. for each additional bedroom.

Efficiency: Same as a 1 bedroom.

There will need to be a change to the wording in the ordinance for R2 to include the number of units allowed in a building. R3 limits the number of units per building vs. density. Should consider six units per building and not state a density, which fits in with the master plan.

Kilpatrick and Vandersloot will prepare a draft for the next meeting in January.

2. Discuss private road ordinance width.

Vandersloot said the Open Space Committee looked into the private road ordinance when they did the research for the open space ordinance. They recommended to not have 22ft roads and building 18ft roads would give more open space, more woods, more landscaping, and reduce traffic. Chairman Jernberg asked if the Planning Commission would need to hold a public hearing for a change like this. Kilpatrick recommended holding a hearing. There is language for the Township Board to waive any of the ordinance requirements. Right now the roads are built to meet the Road Commission standards to reduce cost to residents if they decide to change to public roads. Jernberg suggested at the intersection of a private road the first 100 ft and cul de sac remain at 22ft and large enough for trucks and busses to turn around. Kilpatrick said the

Township can take the county standards and edit to what ever they want and make it a township standard, but then will need someone to enforce. Gillett recommended to go with 18 ft width private roads. Jernberg recommended the intersections and turnarounds meet County standards. Vandersloot recommended the ordinance include corner lots must have their driveways entering from the private road, which is what the Road Commission prefers, unless not able due to topographical reasons, grandfathered or existing.

3. Set 2004 meeting schedule.

Approval of the 2004 meeting schedule, with dates of April 12th, July 26th and September 13th. Motion to approve by Gillett, seconded by Nauta. All approved.

General Public Comment Time

Mr. Roelofs, 11665 Lally NE: Stated he is hearing a lot of conversation tonight about changing ordinances for the developers, but should make the rules more restricting rather than trying to please the developers. The Planning Commission should tell them “no.” Chairman Jernberg said they cannot turn away the developers. As more people retire and sell off their land, the developers are coming to the Planning Commission. He also said they are trying to save green space at every opportunity. This is a serious issue and as developers come in, the Planning Commission looks at every application seriously. Roelofs said he has heard that no one is ever turned down by the Planning Commission. Chairman Jernberg said there are a lot of applications turned down. Roelofs said he would like to see the land protected for our future generations. Nauta said there is a lot being done right now, but some things are put on hold due to lack of funding. Gillett said there is a meeting tonight being held for developing farms. Vandersloot said there also is an open space ordinance. Chairman Jernberg said these are the things we're working on.

Motion to adjourn by Nauta, seconded by Medendorp. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm. The next meeting will be January 5, 2004.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cindy Sullivan

Cindy Sullivan, Recorder