

Vergennes Township Planning Commission

Monday, May 3, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Scott Jernberg, Chairperson.

Roll Call – Baird, Mastrovito, Jernberg, Rasch, Makuski and Medendorp were present. Post absent.

Motion to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2010 meeting by Mastrovito, Baird seconded. Motion carried.

Approval or changes to agenda - Motion to approve agenda as written by Baird, seconded by Makuski. Motion carried.

1. Discuss Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments:

Jeanne Vandersloot – changes made to current ordinance by zoning district for Childcare. Also made changes to farming ordinance definitions and uses. We don't have any clarification currently. Medendorp feels it would get too lengthy if we added definitions from the Right to Farm Act and is not very clear to begin with. We can leave as is with various uses listed and are probably fine without the extra definitions. If something comes up, we can go to generally referred to area such as dictionary or Acts to clarify. Baird – cross bridge when we get there. JV expanded on definition of agriculture from what we already have. Medendorp – we don't refer to definitions of farming in our ordinance. No need to refer back to them. General consensus is to leave as is without adding more definitions. Does this need a public hearing? Yes when ready to finalize. Also probably want Williams & Works planner to review before approving.

In the residential uses section in the Commercial District, the minimum square footage for houses was changed a few years ago and 1150 sq ft with 750 sq ft on first level if two story. Medendorp – feels it is too restrictive. Vandersloot said they changed two-story numbers because residents didn't want 900 on one level. So they change to 750. Medendorp feels we should lower numbers. Also questions 24' width on modular homes. Smallest made is 22' wide. Changed to allow that but regular homes have to be 24'. Vandersloot is not sure why 1150 square feet came about. Tom thinks it is a restriction that is too restrictive. Vandersloot says it goes back to quality of homes. Makuski said to leave as is. If we were in city then there is place to make house smaller. Out in the country, size is not so much an issue. Vandersloot was just changing commercial district, residential restrictions to match the other zoning districts. Correction ok as indicated.

Licensed day care facility in RA or R1. Child care in home for up to six kids is a permitted use. 7-12 must be special use permit. Child care center is 13 and above. Current ordinance has group home in child care center section and a home would not meet the standards set for a center so they are being put into two categories.

Mork interjected that Mark Fleet, building official for the township, indicated the use of a private home changes from R3 to R4 and commercial codes need to be followed when there are

more than 6 children in a setting. Jernberg indicated that would fall under state jurisdiction and they have to comply with state before they get license. That takes away from us to enforce. Follow up with Mark before finalizing changes. Vandersloot will check with state requirements also.

Clarified wording between home/facility/and centers. Center will be used for more than 13 children. Group is more than 6 and home is up to six children. Make changes in all districts. Went thru each district and discussed changes. Replaced pointer referring back to R2 for floor area with actual requirements in each district. This saves time and is easier to understand. Went over each district and discussed changes. No concerns with changes by Commission. Public recreation area – take out as we have written an ordinance about recreation areas previously. Makes it consistent.

R1 allows all farming uses as written in RA.

Churches and parish houses are allowed uses in RA and R1. In R2 and R3 they would be a special use. Would it be in conflict with religious act? Don't think so as they are provided for, just cannot prohibit them. Jernberg said they would need to have sufficient property to allow for parking, lighting, etc...

R2 – schools libraries, etc...special uses or have as permitted use? Schools and libraries won't follow it anyway. State governed. Leave as special use.

Medendorp- take out earth-bermed houses. No one builds them anymore. Need to leave in because other definitions refer to it with regard to floor level and height. Would have to make many more changes if removed. Ok, leave in.

Commercial residential uses had nothing for child care - added as permitted use. Even permitted use in commercial gets site plan review, just not hearing. Residential use is in commercial district because there were already homes there. If wanted to put home in commercial use, would have to get special exception use permit. Residential could be allowed in upper level of business like many downtown areas are allowing.

Chapter 4 – signs. Child care sign in residential area is restricted to 4 sq feet. Felt it was similar enough to home occupation, keep sign size small. All agreed.

Off street parking language was changed for child care to allow enough room for parents to pick up and drop off plus parking for employee(s). Suggested taking out 20' width for normal residential driveway area. Don't want the entire front lawn paved over for parking. Also makes it easier to limit the number of junk vehicles since they need to be parked on a driveway.

Consensus was to leave the 20 foot driveway width in there.

Al Baird motioned to have the proposed changes go to public hearing at the June 7th Planning Commission meeting, Makuski seconded. Motion carried.

General Public Comment Time

Bill Makuski – sold house and may move out of township. He is still resident till July 1 at this point. As long as he resides in township he can remain on Commission. Baird brought up the change in the new Planning Act that one member could reside out of township and remain on Commission. Board could appoint as non-resident. We have a couple months to see how things end up. Just wanted to give a heads up on his situation.

There is a joint Planning Commission meeting at Lowell Township on May 18th. Medendorp plans to be there. Others are unsure.

Mastrovito motioned to adjourn meeting, Medendorp seconds. Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Next meeting is June 7, 2010 at 7pm at Vergennes Township Hall.