

# Vergennes Township

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 10, 2007

*Approved October 8, 2007*

A meeting of the Vergennes Township Planning Commission was held on September 10, 2007 at the Township Offices. At 7:00 PM the meeting was called to order by Chairman Jernberg. Also present were Commissioners Gillett, Makuski, Mastrovito, Nauta, and Post. Absent was Medendorp. Assisting the commissioners were Jeanne Vandersloot (Township Zoning Administrator) and Ryan Kilpatrick (Township Planner).

**APPROVAL OF JULY 20, 2007 MINUTES:** Motion to approve by Nauta, seconded by Makuski. All approved.

**APPROVAL OF/CHANGES TO AGENDA:** Motion to approve as presented by Gillett, seconded by Nauta. All approved.

**1. ALDEN NASH WEST – PHASE 2 SITE PLAN REVIEW.** Presentation by Steve Hansen, developer. Planning to start in November, just four lots, everything is engineered and approved. Remainder (Phase 3, lots to the north – is talking to neighbors about possibly extending the street a little bit) to be done summer or fall of 2008. Need to move a fire hydrant (where road stops), planning to pave.

Comments from Jeanne: memo from township engineer, engineering review for this segment. Entire project was approved before, this is for phase 2. He said everything is fine in terms of engineering.

Procedural clarification as how to proceed re: approval of phases.

**Motion** by Gillett to recommend to the Township Board to approve Phase 2. Seconded by Nauta. All approved.

**2. CITATION CORP – OUTSIDE TEMPORARY STORAGE SITE PLAN REVIEW.** Ernesto Martinez, employee of Citation (one of 2 in GR, one of 30 nationwide). Shrinking capacity; GR is favored over other states, bringing tooling dies that they used to store in a nearby warehouse. Cost of storage rental is \$12,000/month. Tools are large, and they have many tools – don't own the dies, but are custodians of the dies through the life of the products (owned by auto companies); although they aren't buying the dies, they aren't ready to dispose of them. Instead of renewing the lease, they want to save on the overhead on the warehouse and store dies on their property. Jeanne and Tim saw the unused parking lot in back where they want to store some of the dies. Addressed the 30-foot setback and other compliance issues. Their plan complies with setbacks and solid fence requirements. Wants clearance to move the dies, but the lease is up end of September – would like to move forward ASAP. Applicant owns the property, neighbors are Bieri Industrial Park and Bieri excavating headquarters. Bieri's said they had no problem with the outside storage.

Gillett: define "temporary" / Depends on when the auto companies are ready to dispose of the dies. Probably 30% less within the year, after that, unsure.

Makuski: will this be an ongoing process, with dies coming in to replace those they dispose of? / not sizeable, because it's the history of two facilities, and to go comparable would mean shutting down.

Idea: reapply in two years? (Gillett) If more permanent, may want to build. Dies will be tarp'd in groups of about eight or so, to protect them, on plywood, all cleaned, maximum of two-high and covered in groups of eight. Height: not more than 3-1/2 - 4 feet in height maximum.

Jeanne to bring the decisions to review to the commission's attention in two years.

**Motion** by Nauta to recommend approval to the Township Board based on a two-year review, so we don't see this continuous. Seconded by Gillett. All approved.

**3. ORDINANCE AMENDMENT DISCUSSIONS.** Presentation by Ryan Kilpatrick, who referred the commissioners to his packet dated August 31, 2007, sent to commissioners. Item #1 refers to twp attorney's opinion says the PODS are very hard to regulate - a zoning ordinance would be a waste of time, best to make it a stand alone ordinance. Discussed "Key Street Segments" concept, and Local Business concept to allow uses to blend with neighboring residential uses with similar requirements of commercial places in the township but to enable allowing them in specific places such as the Murray Lake area. Small change to RA district to add marinas and neighborhood local businesses to the itemized list of allowed uses. Other comments from the memo (see memo). Want to avoid overlay zoning changes, so Kilpatrick added special land use for the marina and neighborhood local business. Lake residential district had similar item changes to list of special land uses in the lake residential district, and Key Street Segment language as well. Regarding marinas, a paragraph addresses last month's discussion. DEQ does still issue permits for inland lakes, so it's still relevant to include standards. Non-compete clauses would terminate with sale of property, so there's good reason to leave certain standards in. Regarding wind energy conversion systems, responded to commissioner comments from last month to make height 35' without special exception applications. Abandonment: proposes 6-month non-use would mean dismantling, but not important to remove footing. Definition of "tower" doesn't include footing for that reason. Regarding neighborhood local businesses (page 6), identified this as permitted only in RA or RL districts as allowed and covered by key street segments process. There will be commission discretion through special exception use permitting system (some uses identified as examples in the language). Potential amendments in this report:

1. *Wind Energy Conversion Systems*
2. *Portable Temporary Storage Units*
3. *Marina Business SUP*
4. *Neighborhood Local Business SUP*

Commission comments: "Key Street Segments" a good idea (Nauta). Goal: one public hearing for three of these ordinance amendments.

**Motion** by Nauta to schedule a public hearing for Wind Energy Conversion system, Marina Business SUP, and Neighborhood Local Business SUP ordinance revisions for the November planning commission meeting. Seconded by Gillett. All approved. Further discussion on public hearing dates and attendance availability of the members – it was decided to move the October 1 date to October 8 and to hold the public hearing at that time.

Presentation on Portable Temporary Storage Units: very hard to regulate under current zoning regulations. If the township wanted to regulate these units, could require a permit that

would cost a fee and there would be a fine for noncompliance. The worry is unsightly to leave them out front of a house, but they cost money every month. Tom Medendorp not here to speak to the issue. Ryan has language written and ready to use if it becomes a problem. General sentiment to hold off passing an ordinance for now. In transient areas, this could become a problem, but right now that's not a major issue in this township.

**General Public Comment Time:** Mastrovito gave a quick report on the Lowell City Master Plan, discussing growth being flat and not much room to expand. Vacant land is in the flood plain. Discuss waste water treatment plan (running at 40% capacity). 600,000 gallons per day. Talk about goals/objectives – want to make downtown unique and more attractive for pedestrians (wider sidewalks – 12 feet – and landscaping, looks of buildings, aesthetics, historic, etc.). Spoke to the trail system. Another goal is to increase housing for younger people. Median households and other surveys of what people would support or not (trees). Question was asked if there was any language in the Master Plan for North Washington Street? (no).

Motion to adjourn by Makuski. Seconded by Nauta.  
The next meeting **was rescheduled to** October 8, 2007  
The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kate Dernocoeur, Recorder