

MINUTES OF THE SPARTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting of August 10, 2021, 7 PM
Sparta Township Hall, 160 E Division St, Sparta MI
& Virtual Via Zoom Media

Present: Chairperson Terry Hartman; Township Board Member Barb Johnson; Commissioners Linda Anderson, Don Doyle, Tim Driscoll, Ken Humphreys, and Mark VanderWerff

Also Present: Township Supervisor Dale Bergman; Zoning Administrator/Planner Sara Moring-Hilt of Fresh Coast Planning; Attorney Clifford H. Bloom of Bloom Sluggett, P.C.; IT Hosts Ken Shangle and Dan Salas; Recording Secretary Toni Potes; and some Township Board members

I. / II. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Hartman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Additions or Corrections to Agenda: None.

IV. Minutes of July 13, 2021, Regular Meeting: Commissioner Doyle was present via Zoom at the July meeting. Halfway through the meeting, the audio failed, and he was not sure how to send a message. He asked that the system be checked as to why he could not hear the meeting. Motion by Johnson, second by Humphreys, to approve the Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Comment: The public may participate in the meeting through Zoom access by computer using the link <https://zoom.us/j/3220076269?pwd=cDhDY0ppaEE4TkR5MDh2eU5xcW1pUTO9>, Meeting ID: 322 007 6269, Passcode: 46, call in phone number 1 312 626 6799 US Chicago (outside Chicago/Michigan region, number found at <https://zoom.us/u/acqETcmxhE>):

Township Supervisor Bergman confirmed that the Planning Commission is looking at the PUD and not that part of a non-PUD development, where the Planning Commission had no problem with a lot size of 30,000 square feet minimum and 150 feet required frontage. Tonight's review is of Section 12.11.

John Kozal of 9356 Laubach, Sparta, wanted to discuss the vote results on Ordinance 20-03. He noticed 79% of the respondents voted no to 20-03. What will the Planning Commission do with this information? The Planning Commission has been working on less density. The Boards are looking at it, and a moratorium is in effect for four months. Kozal is an engineer and would like to help.

Shelly Taylor of 8983 Laubach, Sparta, asked what part of Sparta would a PUD apply, which is Township-wide.

VI. Business Items

A. New Business: None.

B. Old Business

1. Discussion of Article 11—Planned Unit Development (PUD), and Article 12—Open Space Planned Unit Development (OS-PUD) District—Review Draft
Language: Attorney Bloom distributed a suggested new table dated August 10, 2021, for 12.11 titled Minimum Lot Size (instead of Maximum Average Density and Setbacks Table). The new table eliminates references to public or community water and sewer since there is none at the present time nor is it a future project. Commissioner VanderWerff distributed some suggestions from Township Board Member Goodfellow for the Planning Commissioners to review. Zoning Administration/Planner Moring-Hilt reviewed the proposed new table and concurred with Attorney Bloom that this makes sense. Each Commissioner recommended a minimum lot size: two recommended 22,000; one each 24,000, 27,000, and 27,000 to 28,000; and two recommended 25,000. Zoning Administration/Planner Moring-Hilt was asked to contact Township Engineer Robert Goodheart to see if he is qualified to suggest a lot size that is acceptable to a developer and that he be present at the next Planning Commission meeting with examples.

VII. Public Comment: Township Supervisor Bergman suggested a minimum lot size of 30,000 in Ag-2 and 125 minimum widths in all, R-1 and R-2 at 25,000, Ag-2 down 10,000. Township Board Member Goodfellow suggested the Commissioners look at some of the subdivisions to see what big the lots look like. John Kozal suggested drawing up a typical scenario using the numbers. Topography needs to be looked at, too. Shelly Taylor had concerns with drain fields and septic systems being on such small lots. Her systems failed and it was costly. She wants Sparta to keep a country feeling. Board Member Rob Steffens said .4 is not going to work; it must go up from there. He suggests looking at other developments. He doesn't want Ag-2 to drop. Sparta is more liberal than Alpine in its sliding scale. He discussed transfer of developments rights. Township Clerk Savage asked the Commissioners to keep in mind the vote results, to keep the allowance higher. Look at the future of Sparta and water issues; our township is not in debt with water and sewer. She reported voter turnout: 33% from Precinct 2, 37% from Precinct 3, and 17% from Precinct 1. She received high praise from the County Office. Challengers were at the voting location. Commissioner Driscoll recommended a review of a broad range of the area to see what everyone else is doing and was concerned that no one looked at the merits of the project. Township Clerk Savage stated people did come into the Township Office to see the plans, and she answered questions then and on the phone.

VIII. Adjournment: Motion by VanderWerff, second by Driscoll, to adjourn at 8:16 PM. Motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Sparta Township Planning Commission will be Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
—Toni Potes, Recording Secretary