

Minutes of the Sparta Township Planning Commission  
November 13, 2018, 7 PM  
Sparta Township Hall, Sparta MI

Present: Chairperson Terry Hartman; Township Clerk Marcy Savage; Commissioners Linda Anderson, Don Doyle, Tim Driscoll, Ken Humphrey, and Mark VanderWerff  
Also Present: Attorney Cliff Bloom, Township Supervisor Dale Bergman, and Recording Secretary Toni Potes

I. Call to Order: Chairman Hartman called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

II. Additions or Corrections to Agenda: None.

III. Minutes of June 12, 2018: Motion by Doyle, second by Savage, to approve the Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Public Comment: On non-agenda items—none.

V. Business Items

A. Spartan Ridge Site Condominium Request by Chad Momber 9755 Baumhoff Ave. Parcel #41-05-27-100-014: Attorney Bloom explained that notice was not made to residents within 300 feet. For that reason and due to the need for tonight's work session, a public hearing will be noticed for December 11, 2018.

Project Manager/Designer Todd Olin of Bogart, Pederson & Associates, Inc. (13076 First Street, Becker, Minnesota) went over step one of the site condo survey that was conducted and the Preliminary Grading & Erosion Control Plan dated September 24, 2018. An environmentalist determined the wetlands in a Phase 1 environmental investigation; a Phase 2 was recommended by the environmentalist. The wetlands follow the tree line. The ground appears to be a mix of clay, sand and some gravel. The site was a former orchard. The plan calls for single family, owner-occupied homes.

Attorney Bloom highlighted concerns that Lots 10 and 11 may have a cloud on the title due to an old private driveway easement to Rich Hiaeshutter that probably says for ingress and egress purposes. It is suggested to Mr. Olin to consider deeding the property to Mr. Hiaeshutter.

Phase 1 was just a review and reported history found—that the property was used as an orchard. But some preliminary testing was done. Phase 2 will include borings and samples. The road length is about 1,180 feet.

Public comment opened

Shane Huizenga (11789 Staffer Dr.) is the owner of the former Rodeo grounds. He supports the proposal.

Rich Hiaeshutter (9617 Baumhoff) owns property south of the proposed site and has concerns because of the water drain off. He submitted a letter dated Oct. 23, 2018, outlining the easement he has north of his property and infringement the new road would cause, the Maple tree on Ardie Shively's property, and highway permit issues onto the easement. He wants Petitioner Chad Momber to sell some property to him because the new properties butt up to him. A pole barn is on his property, but existing structures need to be on the site plan. Currently the plan shows the pole barn on petitioner's property.

All water will be diverted to the ponds.

Cindy Hiaeshutter (9617 Baumhoff) questioned if a ditch will be between her property and the new neighbor's property: an open swale is planned along the lines for drainage.

Connie Palmeter (on behalf of Ardie Bannink) bought the property because of the beauty. Now things are destroyed, and she questions the need to share a drive with others.

Steve Edwards (9470 Baumhoff) questioned whether it was Ag-1 at one point: yes. The Master Plan has shown it as Ag-2 for about two years. He asked if this Phase 1 is for 40 more houses: no. This is petitioner's plan at this point in time. He asked if the owner is going to be moving away: petitioner said no.

Shawn Patterson (9484 Baumhoff) was told by the Health inspector that because of the clay, septic could not go in.

MaryAnn Wright (of Wrightway Estate Appraisers) stated there is a housing shortage. This is a wonderful opportunity.

Mary Beth Dame (4100 Baumhoff) questioned what if there's future development west of M-37. Ag-1 is restrictive.

Seth Railsback (9051 Pine Island) of Target Realty Group stated there's a huge demand for housing. It would be beneficial.

John Kozal (9356 Laubach) asked if the Planning Commission could lower the number of lots in the development: probably not. Could there be more than 11: not sure if a parallel plan was developed. The Ridge has unique soil. Realtors don't care about the soil; they just want the dollars. Some Sparta land is a gold mine for apple trees. If developed like the realtors want, you can't get it back—they aren't telling the whole story. There's lots of clay and water; where does the next development's water go? Whatever the Planning Commission does here sets precedence for west of M-37.

Chuck Maxim (2105 11 Mile) asked why the road has to come off Baumhoff: it's a dangerous road already. This doesn't make sense.

Barb Maxim (2105 11 Mile) asked why single-family home development is called condominium: Attorney Bloom explained. She's against it. She moved out to be in the country.

Jenna Momber (2124 12 Mile) is going to build her dream home there. She said for years the orchard was a jungle, an eye soar. It was for sale for 15 years. The land is beautiful with the trees gone.

Petitioner Chad Momber (2124 12 Mile) said he's not going anywhere. He wants to excel in this project as he's done in others. He promises to do it right.

Public comment closed

Attorney Bloom stated Sparta Township has some of the strictest ordinances in the State. He invited people to see the Master Plan and zoning maps and to bring their ideas to the Township. This project will not affect the value of the existing homes.

Dan Momber (13 Mile) asked how many are enrolled in farmland preservation: Sparta is leading in that area. He said there's so much around him, and he's next on the list.

Chairman Hartman stated the road length is an issue. It may fall under private road or site condo requirements. Planner Tim Johnson will have comments on the project.

Commissioner Driscoll explained non-runoff is helped by grass, not trees.

#### B. New Ordinances for the Planning Commission to Review

1. Farm Labor Camps: Township Supervisor Bergman stated the current ordinance is about 40 years old. Many things have changed. Other townships' ordinances are quite different, so we need to get in line with them.
2. Solar Energy: Township Supervisor Bergman stated we should have something. Planner Tim Johnson can help with this. There are two types of solar farms: on buildings and small ones on the ground. A simple ordinance can be developed.
3. Industrial Wind Farms: Township Supervisor Bergman stated the current WES ordinance needs to adequately address 400-foot windmills.

Prioritized new ordinance development: (1) wind turbines, (2) solar energy, (3) farm labor camps. Township Supervisor Bergman will contact Planner Tim Johnson.

VI. Adjournment: Motion by Doyle, second by Driscoll, to adjourn at 8:30 PM. Motion carried.  
The next meeting of the Sparta Township Planning Commission will be Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2018, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
—Toni Potes  
Recording Secretary