

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the
Sparta Township Board
160 E. Division - Sparta MI 49345
January 10, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Dale Bergman.

Members Present: Dale Bergman, Rachel Shangle, Marcy Savage, Bill Goodfellow, Chad Momber, Rob Steffens and Jason Bradford

Members Absent: None

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE BUSINESS AGENDA:

It was motioned by Shangle to approve the agenda, it was seconded by Goodfellow.

Carried 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Project Manager/Designer Todd Olin of Bogart, Pederson & Associated Inc. briefly discussed the Phase 1 plan and was there to answer questions from the Board and the Public.

Shellie Taylor 8989 Baumhoff and John Kozal 9356 Laubach handed out packet for the Board members and did a presentation on the uniqueness of the Ridge. Taylor and Kozal are very concerned about the Farm land preservation and requested the board to review the packets they received and table their decision. Kozal also reminded the Board about the referendum in 2000 and that the public overturned the zoning change to Ag2 restoring the Ag 1 zoning at the time. He believes now in 2018 the Board has forgotten the cause to preserve the Farmland.

Kristy Caine, 8795 Baumhoff, told the Board she didn't envy them, they are in a tough spot. Caine stated that the land should be used for agriculture because that is the definition of the Ridge and we should be good stewards of the land.

Lori Pant, 8635 Baumhoff, wants the land to remain agricultural and for us to be respectful of the uniqueness of the ridge.

Aloe Guiles, 9575 Peach Ridge Ave NW, is concerned about the land being sprayed with arsenic. She believes farm land should remain farmland.

Wesely Wiersma, 9480 Peach Ridge Ave, NW, stated that families are buying land and turning it back into orchards. He believes this should be turned back into an orchard.

Don Doyle 9185 Baumhoff Ave, told the Board he went on the Farm land Preservation tour and believes this should remain farmland.

Dave Mccracken, 2176 11 Mile Rd. NW, likes living on the ridge with the open spaces to ride his bike. He would like to see it remain an orchard.

Rich Hiaeshutter, 9617 Baumhoff, wanted the Board to be aware that there is still an easement issue although he has made an offer and is waiting for a response.

Supervisor Bergman let the public know that this is a step 1 approval to approve, deny or grant tentative preliminary approval and it has been recommended by the Planning Commission. step 2 is when it is required to have approvals from the Health Dept., Road Commission, Drain Commission, DNR, and other authorities. They still have many steps before this is finalized.

Closed Public Comment at 7:42

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT:

Moved by Goodfellow, 2nd by Shangle to approve minutes of December 13, 2018

Carried 7-0

Moved by Goodfellow, 2nd by Steffens to approve Treasurer's report.

Carried 7-0

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. Approval of the Bills

Motion to approve payment of the bills by Momber, 2nd by Shangle.

Carried 7-0

2. Spartan Ridge Site Condominium Step 1 Preliminary Plan Approval

Bergman asked each Board member their opinion on the Proposed step 1 approval.

Steffens stated that when the Ag1 zoning was removed and change to Ag 2 it was to square off the Ag 2 area to the West of M-37. He also let the public know he is for farm land preservation and has recently tried to preserve one of his farms. Unfortunately, the State or the County doesn't have the funding to do that. He informed the public that they should attend some of the meetings and let the County know how important it is to fund the Farm Land Preservation Program. What Momber was asking meets the Ag2 zoning requirements.

Shangle stated she is also seeking to preserve farm land on the Ridge. This land along M37 is zoned Ag2 consistent with that area. Shangle also believes that what Momber is proposing is appropriate for the way the land is currently zoned and pointed out that Momber still needs to agree to the standards that the Attorney and Planner have outlined in the Resolution.

Savage agreed with Steffens and Shangle and is also very much in favor of preserving farm land. She also informed the public that recently she looked to purchase a home like what Momber is presenting and there are not any in the Sparta Area for sale. This community needs this type of housing, although it would be nice if it was East of M-37, where we would like to see the growth. She also stated that because what Momber is requesting meets the zoning requirements, there is really no choice but to approve his request.

Goodfellow would also like to see the Agricultural land preserved. He also stated that 80% of you would not be living in Sparta Township had there not been some land zoned Ag 2. He informed the public that the Township is doing the best it can to control the growth and contain it to certain areas. He said that he preferred the land to remain agricultural but doesn't think he can vote that way.

Bradford stated that he has taken advantage of the Farm Land Preservation Program and is very much in favor of preserving farmland. He also realizes that we are losing many good well-established families because of the lack of higher end homes in Sparta Township.

Bergman stated that the proposed project was developed in a way that if it met all zoning requirements the Planning Commission as well as the Township Board could not turn down the project. Bergman stated the planner (Tim Johnson) and attorney (Cliff Bloom) agreed with that statement. Bergman also stated that the Township is always in support of preserving prime farmland and that the Planning Commission at its February 12th meeting will be having a public hearing on adopting a new PUD ordinance allowing more township flexibility in planning future projects in the Ag 2 zoning district.

Goodfellow made a motion to approve the Resolution 19-1 allowing Momber to move forward with Step 2 of his Plan review following the conditions in the resolution, it was seconded by Shangle.

Carried 6-0

Momber Abstaining

3. Recreational Marihuana Ordinance

Goodfellow made a motion to adopt the new ordinance entitled the "Sparta Township Marihuana Establishments and Facilities Ordinance", it was seconded by Savage.

Carried 7-0

4. Membership in the Right Place

Bergman presented information from The Right Place, no action was taken.

5. Date for Budget Workshop Meeting

It was the consensus of the Board to meet on Thursday February 28th at 3:00pm.

OTHER INFORMATION

Steffens gave an update on SRA. The pump station was installed in the concession building. They are still working on the finalization of the grants. They are gearing up for spring.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Kozal would like to see the Township save all older files electronically, so things are easier to find.

Kelly Erhart would like to know how trailer parks are taxed? Shangle responded.

Clark Olson 9827 Laubach, wanted to know when the road commission was going to fix Peach Ridge from 12-13 Mile? Bergman will be in contact with KCRC.

Steve Edward 4407 Baumhoff- wanted to know why the Board didn't have a choice to vote against the proposed project. Shangle responded that it was because the project met all the zoning requirements.

Shellie Taylor wanted RA explained. Bergman explain what Rural Agricultural met.

Chuck Nelson- Discussed other zoning concerns in the area.

Brent Anderson, 11 Mile wanted to know where the money comes from for Preservation Development Rights. Steffens responded.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Savage and 2nd by Shangle

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Savage, Sparta Township Clerk