

Minutes of the Sparta Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of September 10, 2019, 7 PM
Sparta Township Hall, Sparta MI

Present: Chairperson Terry Hartman; Township Clerk Marcy Savage;
Commissioners Linda Anderson (7:10 PM arrival), Don Doyle, Tim Driscoll,
Ken Humphreys, and Mark VanderWerff
Also Present: Fresh Coast Planning Associate Emma Posillico, AICP;
Township Supervisor Dale Bergman; and Recording Secretary Toni Potes

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

III. Additions or Corrections to Agenda: None. Chairman Hartman called for a vote to approve the agenda; the agenda was approved 6 to 0.

IV. Minutes of August 13, 2019: Motion by Doyle, second by VanderWerff, to approve the Minutes. Motion carried 6 to 0.

V. Public Comment: None.

VI. Business Items

A. Special Use—Mineral and natural resources mining and removal permit and a retention or detention pond or basin, related to the “Hidden Prairie” PUD residential development proposal. Tabled from last month: A revised Mineral Extraction Site Plan dated September 6, 2019, was presented to the Commissioners at the meeting.

B. Step 1 Preliminary Site Plan Review of the applicant, South Sparta’s LLC’s proposed “Hidden Prairie” development at 9029 Alpine Ave., NW, Sparta MI.

Parcel #41-05-35-201-002. Tabled from last month: A revised Conceptual Site Plan dated September 6, 2019, was presented to the Commissioners at the meeting.

Commissioner Marcy Savage excused herself from the panel for Business Items A. and B. Township Supervisor Bergman discussed his findings of the lawfulness of a letter distributed to the Planning Commission without the Township Office’s knowledge of distribution, as well as an unmarked, unsigned letter received by the Township. He will introduce policy to the Township Board on this conduct.

Motion by Doyle, second by VanderWerff, to disregard the contents of a letter dated July 19, 2019, supplied to the Planning Commission. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Applicant John Bitely reviewed the revisions on the plan incorporated from a meeting with Commissioners VanderWerff and Driscoll in which lot size changes were made to 100 feet, thus reducing the number of homes from initial plans.

Barbara Johnson of 9210 Alpine asked why not have all property lots be one acre. She thinks the wetlands and wells will be jeopardized. She doesn't want above ground septic.

Lawrence Bergman of 9324 Sparta Ave. asked if the public will have time to review the plan too. He has an objection if not allowed to view and comment on the plan.

Marcy Savage thought the new plan was supposed to be more than one house omitted. How does this qualify since it does not meet our standards? The homes are too close together. Setbacks haven't changed. She's unhappy with the new plan.

Sharon Traxler of 8860 W. Sunset Pines stated the lots are too small. She wants to keep it rural, quiet, nice. She has upkeep and well concerns. Glenwood (mobile home park) has a pond/sewage problem. It's a low ground; the road isn't wide enough. She has septic, utility location, and aquifer concerns. She doesn't agree the claims of price point and size are desirable. She thinks better built homes are needed.

Bill Traxler of 8860 W. Sunset Pines is concerned about the width of the lots. The drain field needs two locations. He's concerned about water runoff, drinking water, and polluting the crick. The new plans address many of his concerns.

MaryBeth Dame of 4100 12 Mile stated the frontage and houses being close together were going to be addressed by the committee. Mining in a residential area for two to five years is a concern. She doesn't understand the recreational area, mining, and farming requirements not being met.

Final site details are expected yet from Applicant Bitely. Planner Posillico has a list of concerns to be addressed in the preliminary plans as well. She and Attorney Bloom will review the plans and ordinance for clarifications, including the flag lots. The side yard setback will be 20 feet total, with 8 feet minimum on one side. Motion by VanderWerff, second by Doyle, to approve the preliminary site plans dated September 6, 2019, but include the additional items contained in the list held by Planner Posillico, and the final plans are to incorporate details discussed by the Planning Commission; conditional passing of the plans with the changes discussed, and after the Planning Commission's review and Township Supervisor Bergman's input. Roll call vote taken: Humphreys, yea; VanderWerff, yea; Doyle, yea; Driscoll, yea; Anderson, nay; Hartman, yea. Motion carried 5 to 1.

C. Solar Ordinance: Planner Posillico reviewed with the Commissioners her memo of September 3, 2019, for clarity and suggestions to Draft 5 dated June 28, 2019. Planner Posillico will confer with Attorney Bloom on removal costs guarantee; this may need to be looked at in the wind ordinance as well. It was suggested the elevation of the ground on which the panels sit remain the existing grade as presented in the site plan. The proposed ordinance containing changes discussed will be presented at the next meeting.

D. Public Comment: None.

VII. Adjournment: Motion by Doyle, second by Humphreys, to adjourn at 8:45 PM. Motion carried 7 to 0. The next regular meeting of the Sparta Township Planning Commission will be Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
—Toni Potes, Recording Secretary