

MINUTES OF THE SPARTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting of July 13, 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 (via Zoom), Tim Driscoll, and Ken Humphreys

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 Host Ken Shangle; Recording Secretary Toni Potes; and some Township Board members

Absent: Commissioner Mark VanderWerff

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: By executive decision, Chairman Hartman added the following two agenda items as New Business: 2. Denny Heffron of Gratton Township—Exchange of Permanent Farmland Preservation for Land Development; and 3. Review of Draft Ordinance Re: Imposing Moratorium.

IV. Minutes of June 8, 2021, Regular Meeting: Motion by Johnson, second by Doyle, 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>): No public comment. Commissioner Johnson stated she received two phone calls from people commenting on the Sparta Township website and Facebook pages. She said we should think about what and how is being put out and the tone it is setting in posts. She encourages everyone, including herself, to think about how we sound and be considerate.

VI. Business Items

A. New Business

- 1. Public Hearing—Lori Linville—Zoning Map Amendment/Rezoning—1100 Sidlauskas Drive: Petitioner was not present.**

Public Hearing opened at 7:09 PM

This is a matter of refinancing on a non-confirming building. Zoning Administrator/-Planner Moring-Hilt stated the future zoning map has the area as residential.

Public Hearing closed at 7:10 PM

The consensus of the Commissioners is to go ahead and do it. Motion by Humphreys, second by Johnson, to rezone the property as petitioned. Roll call vote: Anderson, yea; Driscoll, yea; Doyle, yea; Humphreys, yea; Johnson, yea; Hartman, yea. Motion carried unanimously, 6–0.

2. Denny Heffron of Gratton Township—Exchange of Permanent Farmland Preservation for Land Development: Denny Heffron, of Heffron Farms Meat business and a Gratton Township board member, presented on ag preservation while working with the developer and farmland owners to permanently preserve farmland in exchange for land development. Worked into their PUD is a TDR (Transfer of Development Rights, or purchase of development rights). Open space remains the same as stated in the PUD of the development. A formula would need to be worked out by the Planning Commission. It has been a win-win for developers and farmland preservation.

3. Review of Draft Ordinance Re: Imposing Moratorium: Attorney Bloom explained that the moratorium would freeze matters until new PUD regulations were in effect. Any PUD application would be put on hold. Motion by Anderson, second by Humphreys, to recommend approval of the ordinance to the Township Board. Roll call vote: Driscoll, yea; Doyle, yea; Humphreys, yea; Johnson, yea; Anderson, yea; Hartman, yea. Motion carried unanimously, 6–0.

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: By executive decision, Chairman Hartman tabled this item for now.

VII. Public Comment: A new federal government infrastructure bill will take away a lot of local zoning power in rural and suburb communities. Attorney Bloom recommends letters by the Commissioners, Board and public be written to Federal Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow. Commissioner Johnson stated the large signs were removed by the Kent County Road Commission and destroyed.

VIII. Adjournment: Motion by Driscoll, second by Anderson, to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Sparta Township Planning Commission will be Tuesday, August 10, 2021, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
—Toni Potes, Recording Secretary