

Colfax Township, Weldon Township and Village of Thompsonville  
Community Joint Planning Commission  
14714 Lincoln Avenue, Thompsonville, MI 49683  
Minutes – October 3, 2013 Regular Meeting

Sue Meredith declared the meeting open at 6:31 p.m. following the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at roll call: JPC members Jack Richter, Shelley Greene, Sue Meredith, Don Suchocki, Debra Franke, Eugene Allen and Pat Workman; alternate members Irene Dunham Thayer, Mike Foust and Chris Jones; and Zoning Administrator Craig Meredith. Absent: Peggy Minster (excused) and Bryan Matthews.

Citizen Matters/Public Comment. None.

Agenda Additions/Corrections. Approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes. Debra moved, seconded by Jack to accept the September minutes with a correction to remove “Irene Dunham Thayer arrived at 6:47 p.m.” Ayes: all, motion carried.

Review Joint Zoning Ordinance Initial Draft. Review of Definitions was tabled due to some members needing to leave early. Shelley provided a handout of issues taken from minutes to guide discussion led by Sue.

- Home occupations: handout from Almira Twp. was referenced. Debra felt home occupations should be in the home; Don agreed. The Heller sign business is an example of Class 2; it operates from a garage and appears on the zoning map as C-1 Local Commercial District. It was on the County Equalization list. Pat asked what our choices are. Don said we have many districts; do we set what is allowed by district and then by Class 1 and Class 2? Shelley asked if home occupations are permitted by right, subject to parameters to be established. Don asked what if someone wanted to grow marijuana in their barn. Activities of some occupations were discussed as they related to the two classes. Okay for now; the new table format will be helpful.

- Prohibited vehicles: Don was concerned about Section 18.10, that there are residents doing what we are talking about not letting them do. He felt we need to be sensitive to what is already going on but also recognized we need to change and upgrade. Jack thought we had discussed eliminating the prohibited vehicles since there had been no complaints. Shelley said a decision has not been reached; it could be eliminated. On the other hand, there are some properties that have numerous vehicles, type unknown, crammed onto small lots. She asked what is best for all residents, thinking about the future for those who wish to buy and sell properties. Debra said it is the bread and butter of those who have the vehicles. Craig gave an example of someone who wanted to build a home and operate an excavating business; he asked is that fair to the next-door neighbor. Debra asked about an area to park trailers; residents take the tractors home and use the state land in town for the trailers. Don said tractors are started at 4 a.m. in the winter; is that fair to neighbors. Shelley gave a hypothetical example of her and others parking trailers on the state land and referred to the master plan and its intent. She also doesn't want to deny someone when it affects their livelihood. She suggested taking an inventory, issuing no-fee permits and transition to not allowing additional vehicles in the future because the Village is a high density residential area. Debra asked if there is space that could be designated in the Industrial Park. Pat said it is all private and vandalism could be an issue. Shelley said it could be an opportunity for someone to put in a secure lot for rent. Jack said this was supposed to be zoned commercial; need to look at this area again for the zoning map. Eugene asked about grandfathering; Shelley said once the ordinance is in effect it could be like non-conforming structures and nothing could be added. Irene asked about replacements; Shelley said we need to decide. Eugene referred to Class 2 Home Occupations being restricted to RC-1, RC-2 and RR-1 and felt this answers the question of not allowing prohibited vehicles. Debra asked what if they are used as part of their job

that is not a home occupation. Some said trailers need to be left elsewhere. Irene asked about the districts under Section 18.10. Shelley said it affects any district with the word “residential.” Don added they would be prohibited unless approved as part of a home occupation. Craig said there are more requirements for Class 2 in the three districts. Sue felt prohibited vehicles was pretty well defined by the Home Occupations section. It was felt concerns about explosives and hazardous material were covered and the section was okay until we review it one more time. Shelley said we need to ask about medical marijuana. Irene asked about a tractor-trailer in RR-1; it would be permitted if used for agricultural purposes or home occupation. Craig said a driveway entrance needs sufficient turning radius, culverts need to be strong enough; there are also other factors. Shelley said roads and bridges are a concern. Decision: Sections 18.9 and 18.10 are okay as is for now.

- Nonconformities: the not-to-exceed 10% replacement cost in a calendar year was discussed at the April 4 Orientation Meeting and on July 11 (review of Section 7.4(A)5). Questions arose on how to monitor this and whether there should be a limit. Decision: consider striking the 10% replacement.

- Accessory Buildings/Structures: the issue is whether to allow them prior to building the primary dwelling. Jack suggested allowing a 144 SF structure. Sue asked how an accessory building is taxed. She is aware a pole building in a nearby township is being taxed as such, but it is being used as a dwelling which was the owner’s intent. She doesn’t feel it is fair. Others gave similar examples of living quarters in pole buildings not taxed as dwellings. Craig said anything under 200 SF does not require a county building permit; the assessor is notified by permits. Pat said the only way to stop it is to not allow structures before a primary dwelling. A 12’ by 12’ structure would not require a building permit, but what if one or more were added to it? Sue said an accessory building with a dwelling permit has been effective in Weldon.

New Business item, special meeting with Mark Eidelson, was pulled ahead. Sue offered two dates; meeting was set for Saturday, November 2 at 9:00 a.m. at the Village hall. Eugene and Pat left at 8:00 p.m.

Resume open issues review:

- Setbacks for Outdoor Living Areas (Patios, Decks, Porches, etc.): Section 18.11 seemed too restrictive when it was reviewed in August. After brief discussion, Don felt that the listed conditions relate to a minimum three-foot setback. It was agreed this would most likely be applicable to smaller parcels although setbacks must be met everywhere. Issue resolved.

- Private Roads: Don and several others felt Section 18.20 should be simplified to meet County Road Commission standards. Jack and Don felt item A should refer to the County. The JPC may approve a site plan on conditional approval of other authorities (County Drain, Road, etc.). The JPC is concerned about the level of technical expertise that may be required of it as a body. We need Mark to redo this section as stated above and also discuss the standards and regulations of the section in detail for a full understanding.

### Unfinished Business/Reports

A. Zoning Administrator Update: Craig felt there is a need to protect unnamed creeks with a 50’ greenbelt to help keep the river water cold; the DNR and DEQ do not recognize or manage them. He discussed fences -- residential vs. agriculture – and open space. Don asked about limits on horses and manure management; Craig is working with Kurt Schindler related to the Farm Bill. He said someone tried to get around the permit process and has until January to remove materials. Nine LUPs have been issued for Crystal Mountain; they have opened six more Trailside units. It is getting close to County Line Road. Links on the old Stone property is far down the road. Crystal Mountain is working on a new master plan. Weldon Planning and Township Board conditionally approved the Production Industries project; PI is waiting for aviation approval. Don asked about the Weldon “barn”

property; issue is planned for the next Weldon Planning Commission. Craig is not aware of an occupancy permit for the Casey property.

B. Budget: Sue did not have anything on the budget. She met with Lee Kane, Weldon clerk, who is busy with election learning curve; future JPC reports will be created in QuickBooks.

C. Expense/compensation approval: LANDPLAN's August/September invoice was approved for \$1,284.20; Sue will submit for payment. The compensation form was approved.

#### New Business

- Debra is working with Tim Windram to get the airport master plan.
- Sue reported that Bryan Matthews (Weldon) resigned from the Joint Planning Commission. Chris Jones was appointed as regular member; a person has expressed interest in the alternate position.
- Craig said the Betsie River/Crystal Lake Watershed group will be mailing 1,000 questionnaires covering Manistee, Benzie and Grand Traverse counties.
- Jack asked Shelley to give an update on the Colfax website. She said the township selected Jim Stamm as the new webmaster. A new web address was secured -- colfaxtownship.org. When it's operational, searches to the old site (colfaxtwp.org) will automatically be redirected. It may help eliminate confusion with three other Colfax Townships in the state. Shelley invited suggestions for Frequently Asked Questions. Area amenities will also be listed.
- Jack asked Sue about the medical insurance letter sent by Lee Kane. She believed Lee was required to do so; appointees are not eligible for coverage.

Correspondence. None.

Adjournment. Next meeting is November 2 at 9:00 a.m. with Mark Eidelson to discuss joint zoning ordinance issues. Jack moved to adjourn, second by Don at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Greene  
Secretary

*Minutes are proposed until approved at the next meeting.*