

Blendon Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
June 4, 2019

1. **The meeting was called to order** at 7:02 pm by Chairman Terry Huberts.

2. **Invocation** was given by Jeff Van Eck

3. **Roll Call: PRESENT:**

Terry Huberts	Lyn Peters
Jeff Van Eck	Jim Vander Veen
Jason Vander Kodde	Brett Huizenga

**ABSENT:** Jeff DeWind  
(without notice)

4. **Also Attending:**

- a) Andrew Moore – Planning Consultant
- b) Kirk Scharphorn Jr. – Zoning Administrator
- c) Kurt Gernaat - Fire Chief

5. **Motion to approve the agenda** was made by Jeff Van Eck, support by Brett Huizenga with the following changes:

- Switch the order of the agenda by placing item #8 – New Business before item #7 – Opportunity for Public Comment and Communication of Business not on the Agenda.

Motion Carried

6. **Motion to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**, dated May 14, 2019, was made by Jeff Van Eck, support by Jason Vander Kodde with the following amendment:

- 9a: add Commissioner Vander Veen rejoined the meeting, at 7:32 pm

Motion Carried

7. **New Business:**

a) **Eric Payne Rezone Request – AG to R1 – Ordinance 2019-06.01**

- Applicant, Eric Payne, was present
  - Applicant explained the intent of the rezone.
  - Applicant wants to create 2-3 acre lots and keep the remaining land as tillable ground.
- Commissioner Vander Kodde inquired about private road and/or shared driveways.
- Commissioner Vander Veen stated that they needed to consider whether or not the request meets the Township's Master Plan.
- Chairman, Terry Huberts, opened the public hearing at 7:10 pm.
  - Ron Miedema, 7405 Van Buren St, stated the following items:
    - ✓ Questioned if the rezone request was for the entire 28 acres.
    - ✓ Questioned number of houses that could be built.
    - ✓ Concerned about the longstanding water problems on the parcel.

- Scott VanLente, 5314 Barry St, stated the following items:
  - ✓ Water is his major concern.
    - Will developing that parcel cause more flooding on his property.
- Bernie TerLaan, 7100 Van Buren St., stated the following:
  - ✓ Submitted pictures of the flooding to the Planning Commission
  - ✓ Concerned about septic systems and drain fields
    - Flooding causing sewage to flow onto his property.
  - ✓ Should be considered a flood plain
- Tom Lagone, 6926 Van Buren St., stated the following:
  - ✓ He knows very little about this and is just questioning so he can better understand.
  - ✓ Concerned about the number of allowable splits.
  - ✓ Concerned about the effects throughout the neighborhood.
- Dan Graveling, 7065 Barry St., stated the following:
  - ✓ Questioned the difference in allowable splits from AG to R1.
  - ✓ Questioned if approved would the water issues still be a concern or more of an oversight?
  - ✓ Questioned retention ponds.
- Cal Karsten, 7044 Van Buren St., stated he also has major concerns about the flooding.
- Doug Holstege, 5577 – 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave, questioned the location of the tile that runs under 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave.
- The Commissioners, Township Planner and Zoning Administrator addressed the resident's concerns:
  - Commissioner Vander Veen stated the following:
    - ✓ Unfortunately, water drainage issues are not handled at the township level. They are handled by the Ottawa County Road Commission and the Ottawa County Water Resources Commission.
    - ✓ Explained who handles and is responsible for the drains, sewer and drain fields.
      - Ottawa County Health Department has significant say due to their very strict standards for approval.
  - Commissioner Vander Veen also explained the following:
    - ✓ How the Township develops a 'Master Plan'.
    - ✓ Re-evaluated every 5-years due to significant growth.
  - Township Planner, Andrew Moore, stated the following:
    - ✓ Explained the differences between an AG and R1 zoning classification.
    - ✓ Reviewed the Zoning Ordinance Standards from section 17.07.08 and explained how the township arrives at their decision on whether or not a parcel can be rezoned.
    - ✓ Provided some general information on how a flood plain is determined by FEMA.
    - ✓ Provided some general information on how to proceed with petitioning the Ottawa County Water Resources Commission concerning a solution to the obvious drainage issues.

- Zoning Administrator, Kirk Scharphorn Jr, stated the following:
  - ✓ Addressed concerns about allowing building in an area with a 'water drainage' problem by discussing the extensive list of requirements that needed to be met before a building permit is issued.
  - ✓ Provided some general information on how to proceed with petitioning the Ottawa County Water Resources Commission concerning a solution to the obvious drainage issues.
- Chairman Huberts closed the public hearing at 8:00 pm.
- Township Planner, Andrew Moore, presented the facts of the rezone request.
- Commissioner Van Eck thanked the residents and stated that he really appreciated all of the comments that were brought to the Planning Commission, however he does not believe that approving the rezoning of the parcel will affect anything as far as water is concerned.
- Commissioner Vander Kodde agreed with Commissioner Van Eck.
- ***Motion to recommend Zoning Ordinance 2019-06.01 to the Township Board for approval was made by Jason Vander Kodde, support by Jeff Van Eck.***

Roll Call: YEA: Huberts, Vander Veen, Huizenga,  
Vander Kodde, Van Eck, Peters

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jeff DeWind

**b) Mitch Potgeter Rezone – AG to R1 – Ordinance 2019-06.02**

- Applicant, Mitch Potgeter, was present
  - Applicant intends on putting in a private drive and doing a split. The acreage, containing the house and barn, in the front of the parcel will be sold and he is planning on building a house on the back parcel for himself.
- Commissioner Vander Kodde inquired how many splits he was wanting to make.
  - Applicant stated, one for now but he could possibly sell another one later but that is currently not the plan.
- Chairman Huberts opened the public hearing at 8:05 pm
  - No public comment
- Chairman Huberts closed the public hearing at 8:06 pm
- Commissioner Vander Veen wanted the applicant to be aware that some residents across the street in Stanton Woods have had their wells dry up.
- Township Planner, Andrew Moore, presented the facts of the rezone request.
- ***Motion to recommend Zoning Ordinance 2019-06.02 to the Township Board for approval was made by Jason Vander Kodde, support by Brett Huizenga.***

Roll Call: YEA: Huberts, Vander Veen, Huizenga,  
Vander Kodde, Van Eck, Peters

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jeff DeWind

**c) Review of the Planning Commission By-Laws:**

- Discussion was had by the Commissioners and the following revisions were made to the current Planning Commission By-Laws from 2008:
  - Article 4, section 2: Change Thursday to Tuesday.
  - Discussion and revisions regarding the order of public hearings

- Discussion on if it is necessary to read to public notice at the meeting.
  - ✓ Andrew Moore feels that this is an unnecessary formality.
  - ✓ Commissioner Vander Kodde would like Planner Moore to confer with township attorney Jim Scales before omitting.
- Discussion on the attendance policies for the Planning Commission members.
- Township Planner, Andrew Moore, made suggestions on responsibilities, officers, wording changes, etc.
- ***Motion to have Township Planner, Andrew Moore, make the discussed revisions to the Planning Commission By-Laws and present them at the next Planning Commission meeting was made by Jason Vander Kodde, support by Jim Vander Veen.***

Motion Carried

#### **8. Opportunity for public comment and communication of business not on the Agenda:**

- a) Don DeGroot, of Exxel Engineering, and Randy Koetje, of Koetje Developers, addressed the Commission concerning the construction of condos and the current zoning ordinances
  - Commissioner Vander Veen stated that he has a potential conflict of interest with Koetje Developers and if the conversation is going to be around the planning and developing at 5150 Port Sheldon, Commissioner Vander Veen would have to recuse himself from the discussion.
    - If the discussion stayed general on the topic of the township ordinances, Commissioner Vander Veen would like to participate.
  - Commissioner Vander Kodde noted that there was a Commissioner that lives within 300' of the potential project and wondered if this was a conflict of interest.
    - Township planner, Andrew Moore, stated that there was no legal conflict but if the Commissioner in question would be able to be objective should be discussed by the Planning Commission.
  - Mr. DeGroot explained the differences between a 'site condo' and a 'traditional condo'
    - Site Condo – there is ownership of the lot and the house
    - Traditional Condo – ownership is only on the inside of the unit. Everything outside is owned by the association.
  - Mr. DeGroot submitted an aerial photo of existing Blendon Township condo development, Sutherland Springs, as an example of a traditional condo development.
    - Sutherland Springs was developed before the current zoning ordinances went into effect.
    - Mr. DeGroot noted there are some challenges in the current zoning ordinances that 'basically' prohibit the development of traditional condo units.
  - Commissioner Vander Kodde stated he is comfortable with changes in setbacks and dimensional changes but not with increased densities just to allow condos.
  - The Commissioners had a lengthy discussion on the current applicable ordinances.

- The Commissioners generally agreed that they would consider amending the zoning ordinance in question to enable a traditional condo development but stated that Koetje Developers would need to file a Zoning Amendment Application with the township and have the fee-escrow paid before there was any further discussion or changes could be made.

## 9. Old Business:

- a) **None**

## 10. Updates of Ongoing Business:

### a) **Farmhaus Cider:**

- Zoning Administrator, Kirk Scharphorn Jr, updated the Planning Commission on his most recent visit to Farmhaus Cider
  - Owner, John Behrens, has completed everything in accordance with the SLU approval:
    - ✓ Apple trees (saplings) are planted
    - ✓ Pedestrian walkway of stepping stones has been installed
    - ✓ 8-foot fence has been lowered to 6 feet
    - ✓ New woven-wire fence installed at the required location
    - ✓ All signage has been installed
  - Currently all that is needed is the updated site plan reflecting the changes and additions.
- At last month's meeting, neighbor Mike Hill, stated that there is some type of a motor that runs continually.
  - Kirk Scharphorn Jr stated he has been to the property many times and has not heard the 'motor' in question.
  - No other complaints have been made.

### b) **Township Board Meeting Update:**

- Commissioner Vander Veen provided an update to the Planning Commission on items that have come in front of the Township Board:
  - Outdoor Events Ordinance Application for License and fee schedule have been approved and are now available in the township office.
  - Multiple Rezone Applications were approved.

## 11. Planning Commissioner Comments:

### a) **July 2 Meeting:**

- Discussion was had on how many Commissioners would be available for the July 2 meeting or if the meeting should be changed to the 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - Of the 7 commissioners, 5 are able to attend.
  - Meeting date will remain on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### b) **AG – R1 Zoning Changes:**

- Due to the increased number of AG-R1 rezone requests discussion was had on if there was a better way to handle these requests.

## 12. Correspondence:

### a) **Ferwerda Farm**

- Kirk Scharphorn Jr.
- Letter sent and Outdoor Events License Application Sent

- b) **48 West**
  - Kirk Scharphorn Jr.
  - Letter to close
- c) **Rush Creek – Lot 51**
  - Kirk Scharphorn Jr.
  - Letter to close
- d) **Bonds and SLUs**
  - Kirk Scharphorn Jr.
  - No changes

**13. Upcoming Events:**

- a) Township Board Meeting: June 17, 2019
- b) Planning Commission Meeting: July 2, 2019

**14. Adjournment:**

- a) *With no other business to be brought before the Planning Commission, a motion was made by Jim Vander Veen, supported by Brett Huizenga, to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 pm.*

Motion Carried

Recorded by Tina Vander Schuur  
Submitted by Jason Vander Kodde