

**SHERMAN TOWNSHIP ZONING/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**June 11, 2019**

Chairman Ford called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Alan Ford, Roger Krantz, Vince Mifsud, Bill Puschel, Frank Kalasky (As a result of Mr. Thornton's resignation and Ms. Sahli's pending retirement in August, the Township Board at their April meeting decided to reduce the size of the Planning Commission to five members.) Ms. Sahli will attend the Planning Commission meetings as a non-voting member until her retirement.

Members Absent: Kathy Sahli

Visitors: Jamey Rouch, Ben Rouch, Rod Borgert, Steve Wolf

Minutes: Motion by Puschel, support by Mifsud, to approve the May 14, 2019 minutes as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Agenda: Approved by consensus

Public Comment: There were no public comments

Old Business:

Chairman Ford distributed correspondence from Patricia Kulikowski, Secretary for the County Planning Commission, regarding their review of the draft shooting range ordinance and Eash rezoning request. Included in the information was the opinion of Lee Adams, Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, (who is the consultant for the County Planning Commission), stating that "The (shooting range) ordinance is well constructed and fair. The ordinance does not conflict with the St. Joseph County Master Plan." The information from Ms. Kulikowski also included the minutes from the County May 29, 2019 meeting at which certain residents voiced their opposition to the draft shooting range ordinance.

Chairman Ford also distributed copies of a letter from Roxanne Seeber (Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman PC) Re: Effect of Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments for Shooting Ranges on Conservation Club. Her opinion was that the St. Joseph County Conservation Club falls under a "supergrandfathering" situation in which "pre-existing uses are not only allowed to be retained, but they may be expanded and there is no intent to eliminate them, as there would be for a normal zoning nonconforming use."

A discussion was then held regarding item 3, Section 2, CC "The range shall not interfere with other property owner's rights to safety and enjoyment of their own property." It was determined that the issue of one property owner's enjoyment verses the enjoyment of another property owner would be settled in court if the situation would arise.

A motion was made by Ford, support by Puschel, to recommend to the Township Board to accept the draft shooting range ordinance approved by the Planning Commission at their May 14, 2019 meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

The correspondence from Ms. Kulikowski stated that the Eash rezoning request was a minor issue and did not require a comment from the County Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Mifsud, support by Pueschel, to recommend to the Township Board to approve the request to rezone parcel 075-014-001-006-00 from RP Rural Preservation to NC Neighborhood Commercial. Motion passed 5-0.

Chairman Ford and Supervisor Wolf presented information they obtained at a solar installation seminar presented by Southcentral Michigan Planning Council. Items that should be addressed in any solar ordinance included cleanup costs (an escalating escrow account required) and preferred location (near an existing substation). In our case, preservation of quality farmland would also be addressed. Supervisor Wolf explained various options for solar projects on PA 116 (Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act) designated farmland.

Chairman Ford distributed copies of an e-mail from Catherine Kaufman, Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman PC) regarding her review of certain sections of the Sherman Township Zoning Ordinances, listing numerous items that should be removed/revised/updated. Chairman Ford recommended that the Planning Commission include a solar ordinance as part of the overall zoning ordinance review. The initial step in this process would be to complete the Master Land Use Plan update and then decide on a consultant to assist the PC with the zoning ordinance update. The PC is to review the draft Master Land Use Plan update at the July 2019 meeting.

**New Business:**

Supervisor Wolf informed the group of a Non-motorized Connectivity Summit to be held at the County Intermediate School District office on June 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM to discuss bicycle paths and other infrastructure options in the County.

With the retirement of Mr. Thornton, Chairman Ford asked for volunteers for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission. Mr. Pueschel agreed to take over these responsibilities.

**Master Plan Update:**

Planning Commission members are to review the draft revised Master Land Use Plan for the July PC meeting.

Adjourn: Motion by Pueschel, support by Mifsud, to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 8:05 PM.

Next scheduled meeting: Tuesday, July 9, 2019, 7:00 PM at the Township Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank J. Kalasky, P.E.  
Secretary