

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, May 20, 2010**

**10-16 CALL TO ORDER/ APPROVAL OF MINUTES/ PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2010, at 7:30 PM at the Alpine Township Center, 5255 Alpine Ave., NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321, with due notice. Present were Chair Bruce Lee, Vice-Chair Nelda Johnson, Secretary Jerry Byrne, and members Ron Cordes, Greg Madura and Matt Van Heulen. Absent was Max Dunneback. Also in attendance were Township Planning Director Sue Thomas and Recording Secretary Patricia Kolkman.

Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance. He then noted that minutes of the Site Plan Review Committee meeting of May 3, 2010 must also be reviewed and approved.

*Dunneback arrives at 7:35 PM.*

**Van Heulen then moved, with support from Cordes, to accept the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of March 18, 2010 as presented.** Thomas requested a discussion of the minutes before the vote is called. She asked Commissioners to review page 2, the last paragraph, summarizing Cordes' suggestion from MSU that the Planning Commission *not* give staff the authority to approve minor changes to an approved site plan. Thomas wished to confirm that the minutes accurately stated the Planning Commission's intent; i.e., to limit the Planning Director's ability to approve a minor site plan amendment. Cordes recalled that MSU wanted to stop developers from "walking the site plan" or "site plan shopping" by approaching Township staff with a series of "small" alterations to an approved plan. Allowing staff approvals for multiple amendments could alter the approved site plan considerably.

Thomas asked if the Planning Commission did *not* want to grant the Planning Director the authority to approve minor changes, or whether the intent was to bring minor changes back to the Planning Commission. After further discussion, Commissioners agreed that the minutes accurately reflected its earlier discussion and further agreed that the Planning Director should approve minor changes only in consultation with another person, but thought this topic would be discussed in depth during the review of amendments to Chapter 18, Site Plan Review, on the agenda for this meeting.

**Lee then called for a vote on the motion already made.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

Lee then noted for those present that minutes from the Site Plan Review Committee meeting of May 3, 2010 were also in need of the Committee's review and approval.

After requesting a minor text change in the fourth paragraph, committee members shared information on the site plan they reviewed from Lake Michigan Credit Union at 4560 Alpine Ave. Landscaping will be required, and Lee commented that Lake Michigan Credit Union would be installing aluminum siding panels for the façade. Members had visited other sites to view the custom aluminum panels and agreed that the appearance does meet the intent of façade requirements established for businesses with Alpine Ave. frontage. In response to a question from Van Heulen, sidewalks are to be installed and

Lake Michigan Credit Union will address the existing parking lot light pole at that time. **Cordes then moved, with support from Lee, to approve the minutes of the Site Plan Review Committee meeting of May 3, 2010 with the requested corrections.**

**Ayes: 2**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

Lee then noted that a high school student was in the audience. The student said he was from Calvin Christian High School and was attending for a government class. No further public comment was offered.

**10-17 DISCUSSION: DRAFT REVISIONS TO ALPINE TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE** Chapter 13, C-3 Commercial; Chapter 14D, Business PUD; Chapter 14E, Residential Open Space- PUD; Chapter 18, Site Plan Review; Chapter 19, Parking; Chapter 20, Signs.

Thomas introduced her staff report on the proposed draft revisions. She reminded Commissioners that the recently enacted Michigan Zoning Enabling Act required some modifications to local ordinances, and since she was already amending the Alpine Township Zoning Ordinance to meet these requirements, she also made some additional text, formatting, and language changes. These changes correct references to other ordinance sections, eliminate the use of roman numerals, re-number ordinance sections, and use current language in descriptions.

Thomas began with Chapter 18, Site Plan Review, which required the most amendments. As an example, Thomas said that the ordinance today states that site plans of 5-acres or more require full Planning Commission review, while those of smaller size would be reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee. She asked whether the Planning Commission wished to retain this standard. After discussion it was agreed that the size of a site alone should not determine whether the full Planning Commission should review it, but the site's location, i.e. if on M-37, should. Commissioners agreed that some smaller sites, such as the new Sonic restaurant, were in prominent areas but because it was on M-37 was reviewed by the full Planning Commission. Some larger sites may not be as complex or impact the Township in the same way. Commissioners agreed that M-37 frontage would require full Planning Commission review if a developer approached the Township. Special Land Uses and Planned Unit Developments automatically have full Commission review. Additionally, Planning Commissioners affirmed that any site plan which might ordinarily require Site Plan Review Committee review could be referred to the full Planning Commission if it was complex enough that full Planning Commission review was warranted. Madura felt this flexibility was necessary to ensure that the level of expertise of PC members as well as Staff remained high.

- Discussion ensued regarding the makeup of the Site Plan Review Committee. The intent of the Committee's membership is to provide for a balanced representation providing a level of expertise of both staff and PC members.
- There was also discussion about whether the current statement, " All members of the Committee shall be present in order to take any formal action on a site plan submitted for review." Commission members agreed that additional discussion on this topic should take place, but until it is addressed in depth, the reference should be deleted at this time. **Byrne moved, with support from Madura, to delete the aforementioned sentence, " All members of the Committee shall**

**be present in order to take any formal action on a site plan submitted for review.”**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

Review of ordinance amendments continued page by page covering the following: Section 18.06, Site Plan Review Standards, General Standards, Paragraph (b), Access Management Standards (including Access Management Maps which were renumbered) further clarification of service drives ( “drive” vs. “road facility”. ) and references to Alpine Avenue were corrected to reflect M-37.

- Outdoor Lighting Standards were combined with similar references from Chapter 19, Parking, and the least restrictive language regarding pole heights was used. Duplicate references were deleted. One statement regarding a structure’s façade lighting was cross referenced.
- Section 18.08, Performance Guarantee, has been amended to agree with the Special Land Use chapter. Additional text clarifies that an applicant may provide his/her cost estimate of required improvements, but the Township determines the amount and type of surety to be provided to cover them.
- Section 18.09, Amendment of an Approved Site Plan, was rewritten. All references to the Building Inspector’s approval have been removed. Only the Planning Commission may review and approve a major amendment. Definitions of minor site changes were expanded.
  - There was continued discussion on whether the Planning Commission wished to allow the Planning Director alone authority to approve minor changes. After further discussion of Commissioner Cordes’ earlier comments regarding “site plan shopping”, Commissioners agreed that the Planning Director could approve minor site plan changes “in consultation with the Planning Commission Chair or Vice-Chair.”
  - Another statement was added that the Planning Director may consult with the Chair of the Planning Commission to determine whether a requested change is minor.
  - Thomas noted that “Administrative Amendments to an Approved Site Plan” has recently been included in the Township’s fee schedule, which is reviewed annually.
- Section 18.12, (Expansion of Existing Use, Structure, or Building) clarifies that Planning Commission or Site Plan Review Committee review is required when there is expansion in use, an increase in size of a structure or intensity of the use, and specifies the regulations used to review the site. A reference to another Ordinance section was corrected.
- Section 18.13, Validity of Final Site Plans was renumbered.
- Chapter 13, C-3 District, was corrected for chapter references and language.
- Chapter 14D, B-PUD District, was amended to reflect new numbering and to correct references to the proper chapters in the Ordinance.
- Chapter 14E, Residential Open Space PUD, was renumbered in several Sections.
- Chapter 19, Off-street Parking and Loading. Zoning classification of parking areas was clarified, which conflicted with a reference to Section 2.33, Transitional Zoning. Thomas will remove references to transitional zoning, after discussion with the Township Attorney. References to lighting were deleted as this is detailed in Chapter 18.06 (c).
  - The Parking Space and Aisle table was reformatted.

- Section 19.07, Schedule of Off-Street Parking Requirements was amended to add “adult day care” to “child care centers”.
- Section 19.08, Barrier Free Parking and Design Requirements was deleted, as these are covered by the Michigan Building Code and Barrier-Free Rules.

Thomas said she will also review the chapter on PUDs to confirm that ordinance references remain compatible with the rest of the Ordinance regarding amending site plans. After reviewing all chapters for required amendments and updates they will be again presented to the Planning Commission for their recommendation to the Township Board.

Byrne asked if there will be revisions to Chapter 20, Signs, to reflect requirements in the new Health Care Law. He understands that all restaurants will be required to provide all menu items' calorie counts with portion sizes on signs. Thomas said she isn't aware of the specific provisions but will review it again when details become available.

**10- 18 PUBLIC COMMENT/ STAFF UPDATES/ COMMISSIONER COMMENT/  
ADJOURN**

There was no public comment.

Thomas and Commissioners commented on Citizen Planner classes through MSU. Thomas said she is trying to reconcile records between MSU and Commissioners to have certificates issued to Madura and Van Heulen, with Byrne's certificate on its way.

Johnson reported that a variance for a front setback reduction was requested and approved for Alpine Immanuel Baptist Church at 7 Mile Rd. and Alpine Ave. The variance is required to accommodate a large addition planned for a gymnasium and more classrooms.

Thomas said three new topics for future Planning Commission agendas are awaiting complete applications and decisions from applicants: one a rezoning from Industrial to Agricultural, one is a possible retail development at the West Central Storage building; and one proposes a moto-cross (racing motorbikes) training center at the former Discovery Auto site at 5511 Alpine Ave. This last project requires additional details be provided before proceeding.

Madura commented he has seen some “human” signs again on Alpine Ave.

Van Heulen asked if Best Buy has indicated when they would be moving out of Alpine Township. Thomas said she is aware that Best Buy uses “moving teams” but the local manager isn't certain when the team will be at this site.

**Van Heulen moved, with support from Byrne, to adjourn at 8:50 PM.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

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Jerry Byrne, Secretary

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Patricia Kolkman, Recording Secretary