

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, August 20, 2009**

09-35 CALL TO ORDER/ APPROVAL OF MINUTES/ PUBLIC COMMENT

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, August 20, 2009 at 7:30 PM at the Alpine Township Center, 5255 Alpine Ave., NW, Comstock Park, MI, 49321 with due notice. Present were Chair Greg Madura, Vice-Chair Nelda Johnson, Secretary Jerry Byrne, and members Ron Cordes, Max Dunneback, Bruce Lee and Matt Van Heulen. Also in attendance were Township Planning Director Sue Thomas and Recording Secretary Patricia Kolkman.

Madura called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Madura asked for a minor correction to paragraph 4 on page 3, and **Van Heulen moved, with support from Cordes, to accept the minutes of the July 16, 2009 Regular Planning Commission meeting with the change noted.**

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Madura noted no audience was present for public comment, and then confirmed with Thomas that the Township Board had had two readings for the Neymeiyer rezoning requests presented at the June Planning Commission meeting. Thomas said the two readings had been held and noted that the Board had voted unanimously to deny the requested rezonings. Cordes commented that he saw a sign advertising 80 acres of Ag land for sale on the Neymeiyer land.

Commissioners commented about several commercial sites on Alpine Avenue.

09-36 DISCUSSION: ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Draft #1 of proposed revisions for Accessory Buildings

Planner Thomas directed Commissioners to both the draft of the accessory building provisions as well as to the footnotes following the chart entitled "Accessory Building Schedule of Regulations for the Agricultural and Residential Zoning Districts". The chart and footnotes are integral to summarizing the draft language. She asked that Commissioners make comments and suggestions as she points out the proposed amendments.

Thomas commented that she has added several new definitions to the ordinance: playhouse, carport, and principal building. Commissioners discussed the various features which define a playhouse, and then agreed unanimously that they have no interest in regulating them.

The definition for "Building, Height of" was amended to mirror Building Code definitions and the definitions for "Accessory Building", "Accessory Use" and "Garage, Private" were amended to be more consistent with each other. Commissioners also discussed the section covering General Regulations and agreed they do not wish to have separate regulations for detached accessory buildings on waterfront lots, especially since principal buildings on waterfront lots do not have separate regulations.

Thomas introduced a discussion on increasing the maximum size of an accessory building in the RA district for farms and for lots between 1 and 2 acres in size. Lee commented that when he was living in another community, the maximum size of accessory buildings was limited to the square footage of the principal structure, and that seemed to be adequate. After some discussion, it was agreed to raise the maximum square footage of detached accessory buildings from 480 square feet to 720 square feet for residential lots between 1 and 2 acres in size. Commissioners also noted that increasing the size limit could also prevent unnecessary requests for variances.

Thomas said that the garage and non-garage accessory building regulations would be retained in multi-family zoning districts. She also said that the chart summarizing regulations by district now included Residential PUD districts.

Madura commented that some farmers use flat wagons as roadside stands, which are moved from one site to another for sale of produce. He asked how the ordinance applies to these. Thomas said that Alpine Township has not identified any problem with mobile roadside stands.

Madura complimented Thomas on the work done on Accessory Building regulations and asked whether the proposed amendments must first be publicly noticed and presented at a public hearing. Thomas said they would and she will set a public hearing at an appropriate Planning Commission meeting as required.

Byrne asked how the Township determines if a farm market or roadside stand meets the "50% rule" of produce grown on site for produce sales. Thomas said that the 50% rule would be difficult to prove but the ordinance was also written to prevent roadside stands from expanding into a retail operation selling more than just local produce.

09-37 PUBLIC COMMENT/COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ STAFF UPDATE/ COMMITTEE UPDATES

There was no public comment.

Commissioners discussed the monitoring and administration of temporary sign permits in the Township. Thomas reminded the Commission that significant discussion and review had taken place and both business members and other members of the public had participated before the Planning Commission drafted the current regulations. There have been some staff discussions about whether these regulations are too costly or onerous for local businesses. Thomas commented that while the Planning Commission determined the specific regulations for temporary signs the Township Board established the fees.

After lively debate and further discussion among Commissioners, it was unanimously agreed that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the Township Board to change the Temporary Sign provisions to: **3 (Three) 10-day permits in a calendar year, with fees reduced to a minimal level.**

Cordes agreed to present this fee recommendation to the Township Board.

Johnson explained that two variance requests were heard at the July ZBA meeting and both were denied. The first was for a new front porch with a reduced front yard setback for a *future* handicap ramp (the ramp was not included in the variance request presented.) and the second one was for an addition to a pre-existing accessory building with reduced setbacks.

09-38 ADJOURNMENT

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

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Jerry Byrne, Secretary

Patricia Kolkman, Recording Secretary