

**MINUTES  
PARK TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION**  
Holland, MI 49424

Regular Meeting

July 22, 2021  
6:30 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Ervine called the regular meeting of the Park Township Planning Commission at 6:30 P.M., held in the Park Township Hall conference room.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Present: Dennis Eade, Rosemary Ervine, Diana Garlinghouse, David Kleinjans, David Koppenaar, Jeff Pfof

Absent: Terry DeHaan

Staff: Greg Ransford, Planner, Dan Martin, Attorney

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Kleinjans moved, supported by Eade, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Voice Vote:

Eade, aye; Ervine, aye; Garlinghouse, aye; Kleinjans, aye; Koppenaar, aye; Pfof, aye.

Ayes 6, Nays 0. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Koppenaar moved, supported by Pfof, to approve the minutes of June 24, 2021 Regular Meeting as submitted.

Voice Vote:

Eade, aye; Ervine, aye; Garlinghouse, aye; Kleinjans, aye; Koppenaar, aye; Pfof, aye.

Ayes 6, Nays 0. Motion carried.

**A. NEW BUSINESS:**

July 22, 2021

## **B. Inquiry from Doug Wassink – Planned Unit Development Noncontiguous Open Space**

Ransford gave an update on this request. Wassink approached him two months ago about the properties. Ransford said the Planning Commission would provide feedback whether he can go forward with his plan, but there would be no commitment. He noted this is the first application of this type, seeking noncontiguous open space, for the Township.

Wassink submitted hand drawn sketches illustrating his open space concept for a Planned Unit Development between two properties he owns. One property is located on Riley Street, and the other property is located on Ransom Street. Specifically, Wassink seeks to utilize the Park Township Zoning Ordinance provision regarding noncontiguous dedicated open space pursuant to Section 38-369(9) – Standards for Dedicated Open Space, because he desires to locate all of the open space at the Riley Street location. Given Township concern regarding the proximity of the proposed open space relative to the language of Section 38-369(9) of the Park Township Zoning Ordinance, Staff instructed Wassink to request the opinion of the Planning Commission regarding the intent of the language and whether the Planning Commission would consider such a proposal in a formal application.

Staff submitted the Standards for Dedicated Open Space (Section 38-369(9)) for the Planning Commission's review. Ransford noted that in approving noncontiguous open space the Planning Commission and the Township Board must conclude that *one or more of the criteria apply*.

Wassink spoke to his request. He said he was a second-generation blueberry farmer in Park Township, and that his son does not wish to be a blueberry farmer. He would like to sell some of his farmland. He was told rezoning would be rejected so he came up with this plan. If simple rezoning would be the best consideration he would agree to that. He hopes to designate some of the land for park land. The southern parcel is unprofitable and hazardous. He showed a photo of the property he wants to keep to farm and the NE parcel and the one south of that he wishes to develop. He asked what could be done if he wanted to subdivide the parcel.

Kleinjans asked Wassink why he says it isn't feasible to farm the property anymore.

Wassink said investing blueberries for him is no longer a viable investment. He quoted a Michigan State University expert regarding the average yield per acre for this part of Michigan is \$4000 per pound and in the northern part of the Pacific Northwest of the U.S. it is as much as \$11,000 per pound. Western Michigan has a shorter growing season. It doesn't make sense to plant in this part of Michigan for a small farmer, it is too expensive and the berries do not produce that well. He added that it is not productive to rent out the fields.

Garlinghouse asked about growing different varieties. Would that help productivity? Wassink said that is the case with blueberries - growing berries is becoming obsolete. It is no longer productive in this area unless you are a large producer.

Kleinjans said the Township is interested in the viability of agriculture. He asked Wassink if he has considered selling the property.

Wassink said there is little value for blueberry land today – there is also the factor of the high water table.

Pfost said the Township is concerned about developers taking advantage and using land for development. Protecting the rural characteristic of our northern properties is an important consideration of our Master Plan. This problem is not unique – we have zoning that says it should be agricultural land. Our problem is you have to meet the underlying zoning requirements. And how will you meet access to the property for a public park? We have to consider what's best for the Township with regard to the balance of private interest and Township interest. Your problem is wanting to transition AG to residential. The zoning speaks to that. To transition to a rural feel would be rural residential.

Pfost reminded Wassink that he has an uphill battle – rural residential is not bringing in water, sewer and infrastructure. The Township wants to preserve our agricultural land – it becomes an impossible balance.

Wassink said the way he understood the open space property is it didn't necessarily need to be open to the public, it could be agricultural. Agricultural is not necessarily open to the public for food security reasons.

Pfost asked Martin for explanation.

Martin said in the PUD Ordinance, for the PC to make a recommendation and for the Board determining whether or not non-contiguous dedicated open space will be allowed for the purposes of counting for the open space, one or more of the criteria in the ordinance needs to apply. The first criteria doesn't require access by the general public but just says reasonably accessible and used by the residents of the PUD. It's the next two criteria, B & C of the ordinance, which both refer to the open space being available to the use of general public. So while the ordinance does not require general public access to the open space, it does require at the very least, that the open space be located such that the residents of the PUD can reasonably access it.

Pfost asked about the separate parcel as a common area.

Martin said there would have to be some type of reasonable use. You could preserve a piece of the property if it would work for the benefit of everyone like a transfer of developmental rights.

Wassink said he would preserve the south parcel using it for agricultural uses such as wine or other uses. Allowing the residential development to the north. The area to the south is already zoned, at least in part, for residential development.

Kleinjans recalled another property on South Shore Dr. where someone wanted to develop that parcel.

Garlinghouse said the owner wanted a PUD development, however, the neighborhood thought it would be too disruptive.

Ransford questioned whether that was under the current language that allowed for non-contiguous open space.

Martin said in that case it was a noncontiguous development, not non-contiguous open space. The property wasn't large enough to qualify for a PUD, so the property owner was trying to have non-contiguous property be used to meet the size requirement to be eligible for a PUD.

Garlinghouse said the northeast parcel is dangerous with five roads impacting that area and understands why Wassink wants to explore other possibilities. She is concerned with the lower area parcel however. Garlinghouse was also concerned regarding the parcel changing from AG to residential.

Garlinghouse said she wouldn't want a home there with five roads coming together and the Butternut curve is involved there as well.

Pfost asked if Ransford for his opinion about the feasibility of a different designation.

Ransford said the Master Plan doesn't identify land in that area as residential. He agrees it is a very high traffic property. If there was a path to pursue it would be apparent – this property is unique.

Martin asked about the opinions of the other blueberry farmers in the area, whether there would be interest in farming the property.

Wassink said he hasn't discussed it with them – he doesn't know what they think.

Ransford said the underlying question is – is this property appropriate for non-contiguous open space in relation to the other property or not? Is the Planning Commission comfortable with changing these noncontiguous properties to a PUD designation?

Kleinjans said it is his opinion these two properties are too far apart. It doesn't make sense for further consideration or approval by the Planning Commission.

All concurred with Kleinjans' observation.

Martin advised Wassink can return to the Planning Commission with a request on the feasibility of a PUD. Conditional rezoning could be a later consideration.

## **C. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Home Occupations**

Ransford addressed the agenda item. He explained that following the June 24, 2021 Planning Commission's review of the findings concerning home occupation language

July 22, 2021

permitting customers/clients to be present on-site, Staff has provided a copy of Section 38-506 – Home Occupations of the Park Township Zoning Ordinance at the request of Chair Ervine.

He asked if the Planning Commission wishes to revise the language to accommodate on-site customers/clients, Staff will return that language for review and approval at a later date.

Ransford requested direction to go forward with language changes.

Kleinjans noted there was a contradictory statement in Section 2A regarding “home occupations shall not result in an increase in vehicular traffic.” He suggested clarification such as allowing one vehicle at a time.

He also suggested the language in 2A that reads “The home occupation shall be conducted entirely within the dwelling by occupants of the residence” is too restrictive. What about consideration of another person who is there to provide assistance or work in collaboration with the owner/occupant of the residence?

In 2B – “No customers shall be permitted on the premises to conduct business as part of a home occupation.” is too restrictive. He suggested a change to say “one car at a time.”

Martin said the language could require off street parking for the home occupation, with only one customer vehicle being parked at a time. There may be an enforcement issue, however.

Garlinghouse asked how does the language determine the size of a truck or vehicle allowed to park at a home occupation site.

Ervine said we have to avoid high traffic impact at these sites.

Martin said there is a difference between residential and commercial properties and what is allowed on those sites. Zoning is used to separate incompatible uses of property.

Ransford said he will make the recommended changes in the language.

Ervine asked if the Planning Commission was comfortable with the recommendations for the changes in the home occupation language.

All were in consensus.

Ransford will proceed with the revision in the language and present it for review at a future meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ervine opened Public Comment at 7:22 P.M.

There was no comment.

July 22, 2021

Ervine closed Public Comment at 7:23 P.M.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Howard Fink, Township Manager, read a proclamation in Jeff Pfof's honor thanking him for his ten years of service to Park Township as Chair of the Planning Commission. Family members were invited into the conference room for a presentation of a special plaque to Pfof. Township staff and former staff members offered remarks in thanking Pfof for his many contributions to the Township and for his exemplary leadership.

1. Flood Insurance Rate Maps (October, 2021) - Ransford noted this is an ordinance requirement of the Township and is to be formally adopted by the Township Board.
2. The next Planning Commission meeting is August 26, 2021
3. Ervine reminded the Planning Commission members to pick up meeting packets at the Township if possible.
4. The update on short term rentals will be coming to the Planning Commission for the next step review.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Pfof moved, seconded by Eade, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 P.M.

Voice Vote:

Ayes 6, Nays 0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Hemwall  
Recording Secretary  
July 23, 2021

Approved: August 26, 2021

July 22, 2021