

May 6, 2015

The Portage Township Planning Commission May 6, 2015 meeting was called to order by acting chairperson Ted Soldan at 7:00 PM. Present were Soldan, Dave Rulison, Melanie Kueber Watkins, Jim Stingle, and Peggy Anderson (see attached.) Guests Pat Coleman and Bruce Petersen were also present, in addition to several members of the community (see attached.)

This being a special meeting called to address concerns from property owners and other members of the community regarding the proposed changing of some property in the township to Mixed Use, acting Chair Ted Soldan addressed the group, asking them if they wished to speak to identify themselves and keep their comments as short as possible so everyone that wanted to would have a chance to speak.

The meeting was then turned over to Pat Coleman, who addressed the group and explained the commission's reasoning behind the proposed zoning change, and also addressed several additional highlights from the proposed zoning ordinance that the commission has been working on for the past year. Pat also discussed the expanded definitions section of the proposed ordinance, and explained the addition of sexually oriented businesses addition to the ordinance, and the restrictions for such a business to establish itself. At this point, the meeting was turned over to public comment. The secretary of the planning commission paraphrased the comments of each member to the best of his ability.

John Ollila commented that he was a member of the township board, and that he had read the proposed ordinance several times. He expressed surprise that the proposed M1 (mixed use) plat was as large as it was, and suggested that smaller would be better.

Michael Manderfield asked will the area currently marked B1 stay B1? Pat Coleman answered yes.

Richard McMonagle asked if a better map was available that more clearly showed the B1 districts? How deep is it? How far does it go? Pat said a better map is not currently available, but that the commission and the supervisor are currently working to get the map updated.

Donna Laux said she owned 78 acres in the area, half of which would stay at the existing zoning, and the other half the new M1. She asked why only half of her property is being planned for M1? The zoning would create a landlocked area on her property.

Mike Manderfield asked why not just move the proposed M1 all the way to Green Acres Road? Bruce Peterson said one of the historic problems with zoning ordinances is they don't follow property boundaries.

Jack Laux commented that the road could be extended from near Bill Bingham's house.

Donna Laux asked how splitting the property between zoning districts would affect property taxes. It was answered that zoning does not affect property taxes.

Jack Laux asked why does the wind generator in B2 have to be so far away? Why would someone want to put a wind generator in B2? Pat answered that the wind generators discussed in this section of the ordinance are for personal use.

Donna Laux asked if she had some questions, could she discuss them privately?

John Ollila asked should the existing B1 be merged with M1? Is it even a possibility?

Denise Hudson asked if a property owner can ask for their property to be rezoned. Pat answered yes. Three groups can ask for property to be rezoned, the property owner, the Township Board, and the Planning Commission.

Denise Hudson asked whether mixed use was meant to be urban mixed use? Like businesses on the first floor and apartments on the next floor? Isn't this what mixed use means?

Andy Moyle said that looking at the businesses in the area, that it makes sense to join all the B1 and mixed use. Just get rid of the B1 since in many cases it isn't functioning as B1. Expand the whole area to M1 would clean up several zoning issues in the area.

John Ollila asked could a subdivision go into a M1 zone? Pat said yes.

Andrew Kemper said the commission is making great steps in township planning. He said the site review process is adding cost and time to the building process, and if the proposed process were in place now, that the Somero addition would have been pushed back in time.

John Ollila said the big "G" on the map near Sermon Rd. would be comfortable with M1 that close.

Bill Bingham said he thought the 250' lot length is a sufficient buffer and he would support it.

John Hanner said he couldn't speak for all his neighbors in the Green Acres area, but that he'd like to take a closer look at the proposed ordinance.

Andy Moyle made a comment about the proposed wording on berms and fences.

Denise Hudson asked what the ordinance had to say about demolition of abandoned and/or unsafe buildings? Bruce said that issue was covered in the blight ordinance, not part of the zoning ordinance.

Donna Laux asked about the sewer project for the Green Acres Road area. Wouldn't that be beneficial for the proposed M1 zone? Bruce said in his opinion, projects like this that could

solve several problems at once have a better chance of getting through the rural development office . It would be best to formulate a plan and see what reaction they get from them.

Jack Laux said we'd better get ready for Target to come in.

John Hanner said we should have a meeting with all residents of the Green Acres area.

Andrew Kemper said there is an overabundance of requirements for submitting a site plan in the proposed zoning ordinance. He suggested the planning commission take another look at this section in the interest of toning it down.

Pat Coleman said during the review period the site plan is sent out to adjoining government entities. Then it goes to the board, and they can hold a public hearing or accept the recommendations of the planning commission.

John Ollila said the planning commission has done a good job removing redundancies in the ordinance. He also felt we need a better map, and asked how long would it take and what would the expense be to have the map redone?

Bill Bingham said the current platt book is a good place to start, and then color code the zoning districts.

Andy Moyle agreed with John Ollila that a good map is needed.

Mike Manderfield said the public hearing scheduled for May 28th is too short a time for the board to vote.

John Ollila said the board could consider authorizing funds for a better map at the next township meeting.

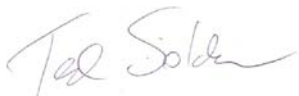
Andy Moyle said the map is the heart of the ordinance.

John Ollila suggested that Bruce research the cost of a new map before the next board meeting.

There was further general discussion about a revised and updated zoning map based on input from the public hearing.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:30 pm by Dave Rulison, seconded by Peggy Anderson, and passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Ted Soldan, Secretary

Planning Commission Roster May 6, 2015

1. TED Soldan
2. Melanie Watkins
3. Dave Pulver
4. Peggy Lee Archer
5. Bruce Peterson
6. Jim Stumpf

Pet Coleman

Portage Twp. 5/6/15
Mixed USE INFO. Meeting

1. Bruce Peterson ^{who} sen
2. Ann Niemi
3. JACK LAUX
4. DENISE HUDSON
5. Donna Laux
6. ~~Shirley~~ Job
7. Nancy King
8. Bill Bingham
9. David Mattila
10. Richard McMonagle for Guido Paoli
11. MICHAEL T MANDERFIELD
12. Andrew Kemper
13. Tom Ollie
14. Tom Pentano
15. Sharon Leike
16. Andy Moyls
17. Tammi Peterson