

MINUTES OF THE CLAY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 22, 2003 AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE CLAY TOWNSHIP BOARD ROOM 4710 PTE. TREMBLE ROAD, CLAY TOWNSHIP.

1. Meeting called to order by Chairperson Mark Getman at 7:30 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Present: Chairperson Mark Getman, Vice-Chair Dorothy DeBoyer, Secretary John Makuch, Pat Sharrow, Tony Antkowiak, Chuck Michel, Louise Cooper, Edward Keller.  
Absent: None.
3. **COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

Chairman Getman requested an amendment to the Agenda - #3-A: Consideration of the Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance 123 re: nonconforming signs.

Moved by Michel, supported by Antkowiak, **MOTION CARRIED**, to amend the agenda to include Item #3-A.: Consideration of the Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

3-A. **Consideration of Amendment of Clay Township Zoning Ordinance**

Chairman Getman: Signs were conforming in the last Zoning Ordinance are now non-conforming, current language prevents improvements i.e. repair, maintenance, name change w/o a permit, Township Board has asked it to be amended; only change is in the last sentence in Section 1.1 “.....by the Building Inspector,.....” changed to **Zoning Administrator.**

Pat Sharrow: Questioned shouldn't the Bldg. Inspector review the changes.

Chairman Getman: Structural changes would need a building permit, Zoning Adm. would assure it is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

Moved by Antkowiak, supported by Michel, **MOTION CARRIED**, to consider the Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance No. 123 to provide amended provisions regarding nonconforming signs following a public hearing. AYES: All. NAYS: None. ABSENT: None.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 8, 2003 MINUTES:**

Moved by Cooper, supported by Antkowiak, **MOTION CARRIED**, to approve the October 8, 2003 Planning Commission meeting minutes as submitted. AYES: All. NAYS: None. ABSENT: None.

Chairman Getman: WELCOME to other Planning Commission Members from the community of the City of Algonac: Mark Thompson, Chairperson, Mike Musto, Brian Tideswell and Ira Township Planning Commission Chairperson Mario Tozzi, Cottrellville Township Planning Commission had another commitment.

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Informal discussion among the Planning Commission members were as follows:

Chairman Getman: What are some of the things the communities are involved in?

Ira Township - Mario Tozzi: Briefed the Board just passed a flood ordinance, good group of people and working hard, hired a full time fire chief, two new fire engines.

City of Algonac – Mark Thompson: DDA update, Timber Ridge Phase III started.

Louise Cooper: Empty building in the Mall.

Mark Thompson: It was cleaned up, major struggle.

Sandra O’Conner: What plan does Algonac have for that area.

Mark Thompson: Tentative plan TurnKey to manage the old Mall.

Pat Sharrow: Expressed a vision: high rise condo, concentration of residential on main street, commercial district begins at Rite-Aid, continue towards Clay combining Algonac and Township businesses into one area.

Mark Thompson: Algonac made changes to zoning to integrate a businesses district w/living quarters.

Discussion re: tourism today compared to years ago.

Pat Sharrow: People use to rent cottage, small boats, shop, frequented restaurants on Sundays, don’t have that anymore.

All agreed there has been a tremendous change, building larger homes, bedroom community, shop on the way home.

Sandra O’Conner: Mentioned 60% store customers on Harsens Island are out of town.

Unique area and the small shops bring the one-day visitors.

A great potential all along the Bay area for visitors to keep visiting.

Dorothy DeBoyer: Discussion of anything occurring in the Downtown Fair Haven.

Mario Tozzi: Same problem as Algonac and Clay, residential development limited in the waterfront, changes are happening, it will take time, lot of growth coming this way.

Chuck Michel: What is happening with Henry’s?

Mark Thompson: Update on the status: possible purchase, talk re: investor tearing it down, changing the zoning to residential, nothing definite yet.

John Makuch: Appreciate visitors joining us tonight. Enforcement issues, do you experience the same problems?

Mario Tozzi: Problem is builders not knowledgeable what they can do, zoning is there for a reason, need to check with the Township what the rules and regulations are first.

Chairman Getman: Parking is a problem re: parking on site plans.

Sandra O’Conner: Opinion re: highway safety, walkways, bike paths, citizen safety.

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Mario Tozzi: Very important to us, safety factor, considering a bike path.

Dorothy DeBoyer: Very much in favor of bike paths where possible, a great asset to a community. Info brought back from the Citizen Planner Program: “people want to live in a community where there are places where they can get the necessities of life without getting into the car and driving 45 minutes to a shopping center”, goal to pursue.

Chairman Getman: Bridge to Bay project, am requiring sidewalks along a business.

Chuck Michel: Township Office should put in a sidewalk.

Mark Thompson: Clay Township DDA is working very hard on a bike path, right of way survey done for the purpose of installing a bike path.

Importance of a bike path, could run it a section at a time.

Ira Twp. Mario Tozzi: St. Clair County does not apparently recognize us down here. Consensus everyone agrees.

Status of the Colony Tower: Clay Township owns it, Dorothy DeBoyer waiting to hear re: Grant submitted.

Pat Sharrow: DDA contributed \$250,000 towards the Township new building, free-up money the General Fund can use on the Tower.

Tony Antkowiak: Cited example of a good zoning ordinance can benefit an area, i.e. Bedford Township, citizens observe the affect of what zoning can do, less community backlash as citizens become aware of good zoning if zoned and built appropriately.

Mark Thompson: Zoning ordinance in existence for 50 years, problem is no one has done anything about it, now enforcement happens uniformly applied across the community, eventually citizens come to understand this is the way it is.

Ira Township Mario Tozzi: Lack of communication as we progress and enforce our Township Ordinance, people need to understand the zoning.

Dorothy DeBoyer: Should be meetings with all the realtors to inform them what the zoning ordinance is all about.

Sandra O’Conner: Dictate the building code, design, i.e. Traverse City.

Chairman Getman: DDA perfect vehicle, create a theme; Planning Commission can incorporate it into the Zoning Ordinance.

Pat Sharrow: Explained the affects of too much commercial property, new zoning map is more centered near the new shopping center and Pearl Beach, stay with the Master Plan and don’t change the zoning, business area district is not easy to develop in this area.

Edward Keller: Questioned the Algonac Mall problems, comments regarding businesses growing in this area, things need to change, grow with your community in line with what the people in the area want, have to reflect what your constituents want to see of the area they are living in.

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Mark Thompson: In the 1960's & 70's people did not want to shop in small towns anymore, didn't patronize, changing demographics of society for awhile was shop at the malls, now starting to hear people don't want to drive far to shop. Good summary of how the businesses have changed through the year and what Planning Commissioners need to do to stay on top of it, where do we want to be in 5-10 years.

Ira Township, Mario Tozzi: Idea for the old Farmer Jack is a nice Senior citizen complex.

Pat Sharrow: Described a senior complex in a large city that was a nice combination.

Sandra O'Conner: Seniors have a decent income and would support small shops.

Lengthy discussion regarding businesses surviving in a small town.

Water makes this area unique, if a business cannot make a profit it cannot survive.

Promote to buy at home, don't have the loyalty there was years ago.

Mark Thompson: Farmer Jack vacant building, absentee landlord does not care, new Farmer Jack is paying the lease on the old building, lease runs to 2019, what happened to the condemnation process?

Discussed activities that can draw people here, why some will not work in this area, people have to want to come here as a destination, a reason to come here, need things to attract the tourists, places to eat and stay, need events to attract the people all year round, etc. Ideas talked about were ice carving carnival, holiday Xmas lighting, etc.

Michael Musto: Clay has the land, Algonac does not, there is an advantage here.

Too far off the major highway artery.

Perhaps an industry should follow is the senior citizen health care i.e. housing, nursing care, assisted living, etc.

Ira Township Mario Tozzi: Thank you for inviting us, discussion very informative and the knowledge shared, will submit these ideas to my Commission.

Chairman Getman: Behalf of the Township and the Planning Commission want to thank you all for coming.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mary Jane Hardy, Pte. Tremble Road: Traverse City has a full time paid position to keep the buildings within the business district full; Plymouth Ice Show having financial problems, can't get the corporate sponsors; entertainment is very costly when hiring to appear at an activity, advertise statewide, cannot depend on the local people.

Tim Wiggle: Citizens do not appreciate their Planning Commission and the work you people do, 2<sup>nd</sup> most important body a Township has, planning can direct what happens 20 years down the road.

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6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Michel, supported by DeBoyer, **MOTION CARRIED**, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:22 p.m. AYES: All. NAYS: None. ABSENT: None.

Valerie J. Kulba  
Recording Secretary