

**TALLMADGE CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
DECEMBER 17, 2013**

**7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order by Marvin Bennink.**

Members Present; Matthew Fenske, Marvin Bennink, James Szejda, Donald Smith, Dewey Bultsma and Joel Terpstra.

Also Present; Greg Ransford and 14 members of the public.

Matthew Fenske provided a motion to approve the agenda. Jim Szejda seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

Donald Smith provided a motion to approve the Minutes from the November 11, 2013 Planning Commission meeting. Matthew Fenske seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

**7:02 p.m. Public Comment:**

There were no non-agenda public comments.

**7:03 p.m. New Business: Proposed Text Amendments:**

- **Definition of Building Inspector, Lot, Lot Area, Section 3.16(b)3 and Chapter 14: Scheppers Concrete and Construction- O-10578 Linden**

Greg Ransford explained the need to redefine Building Inspector to include the Planning Director for reference throughout the ordinance; the need to define Lot and Lot Area to exclude water and the proposed changes to Chapter 14 – Planned Unit Developments.

Marvin Bennink – In the proposed Section 3.16 are the RP and AG districts the same?

Ransford – It is not the intent of the language to regulate a genuine farm with the same animal limitation. This section is intended to be for an accessory use the dwelling.

General discussion was held. The Planning Commission decided to hear each text amendment separately.

The public hearing was opened by Chairperson Bennink.

- **Definition of Lot, Lot Area and Building Official**

Jim Kragt – Am I the reason for the amendment?

Greg Ransford indicated that no, there have been several situations.

Jim Kragt – Why do we need the change?

Greg Ransford explained that there is a relationship between the lot area and the structures, animals and other accessory uses and the like within the lot. As a result, when a portion of the lot is under water, that relationship is compromised. In addition, the Planning Commission concluded that a lot should exclude water so the physical parcel meets the minimum acreage with land area.

Jim Kragt – I think it goes too far in R-1.

General discussion was held.

Joel Terpstra provided a motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the Definition section of the Zoning Ordinance, as written. Dewey Bultsma seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

- **Section 3.16(b)3 – Keeping of Animals**

Matt Overway – Thank you for your review again. I believe raising my own animals is the best way to provide food and nutrition for my family. I made mistakes in the process and learned from my experience. Manure from a cow is more than I can manage but goats are the perfect size to carry and are low manure. Pigs stink when confined. I would like to present an alternative to what is proposed (Matt provided copy of his proposal). I would like the Planning Commission to consider animal unit equivalency since sheep or goats will not have the same environmental impact as one cow or horse.

Joel Terpstra – Is the proposed language from the township a fix?

Greg Ransford – Yes, it is proposed as a fix to close the gap in animal language. Our interpretation is that applies to the animals listed but to eliminate any question, it is proposed to add the animal references in the text.

Joel Terpstra – Could the number of animals be zero now is literally interpreted?

Greg Ransford – Yes, but I do not think that is the intent.

Jim Szejda – I think there is merit to Mr. Overway's proposal but I would need an expert opinion to review the matter further.

Ron Brunsting, 1037 Luce Street – One cow equaling one goat is a problem. We need to review the ordinance.

Matthew Fenske – I commend Mr. Overway for this proposal and it makes sense to take a closer look.

Matt Overway – I am compliant with only four animals on the property right now.

Renee Fish, 13537 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Keep in mind number eleven of his proposal and the birth rate that can happen for smaller animals.

Jim Szejda – There will always be an offender, so going with the maximum could cause greater issues for a poor manager of animals so I am concerned with the proposal in that regard.

Matt Overway – I tried to be conservative with the numbers.

Joel Terpstra – 20 goats on five acres is excessive and I try to protect the farmer but we need to balance all property uses.

Matt Overway – I want five animals, they baby up to 15 after winter and then we butcher by fall and are back down to five.

Jeannie Harvey, 1029 Luce Street – Rural Preserve neighbors know animals are possible to be located next door.

Joel Terpstra – I agree and we need to design language to protect each other.

Brian Brewer, 10393 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Is the setback language for barns new?

Greg Ransford – No, it is existing language.

General discussion was held.

Alex Kelsbeek, 144 Begole – Should you not repair the language now and wait?

Greg Ransford – It is important to repair the potential argumentative loophole now to prevent challenges.

Matt Overway – I have a goat off site, what do I do with it? I am at four animals now.

Chairperson Bennink – If it would exceed the maximum number it should stay off site.

Greg Ransford read public comment submitted by Lisa Kramer and Peterson

Dewey Butlma provided a motion to recommend approval of the proposed text to Section 3.16(b)3 of the Zoning Ordinance. Joel Terpstra seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

- **Chapter 14 – Planned Unit Developments**

Greg Ransford discussed the proposed changes to Chapter 14 with particular attention to sidewalks and street lights in residential developments, as previously directed by the Planning Commission.

General discussion was held.

Chairperson Bennink closed the public hearing.

Matthew Fenske provided a motion to recommend approval of the proposed text to Chapter 14 of the Zoning Ordinance. Donald Smith seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

**8:40 p.m. 2014 Meeting Schedule**

The proposed 2014 meeting schedule was reviewed.

Matthew Fenske provided a motion to approve the 2014 meeting schedule. Donald Smith seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

**8:42 p.m. Chairperson Bennink noted there was no Old Business**

**8:43 p.m. Planning Commission Comment:**

Discussion was held regarding various planning and zoning matters.

**8:46 p.m. Joel Terpstra provided a motion to adjourn. Jim Szejda seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Gregory Ransford  
Planner

