

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, February 1, 2021

Minutes

On February 1, 6:30 p.m., Planning Commission Chair Cyndi MacDonald called the regular monthly meeting to order. The meeting was conducted remotely via GoToMeeting.

Commission members present: Cyndi MacDonald, David Persing, Cheryl Schimming, Kathy Stoeckel, Carol Whitcomb, Tari Zortman

Also attending: Township Board Liaison Dan Hiller, Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Township Clerk Doug Dahl

All participants recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Agenda

Kathy Stoeckel moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Dave Persing. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. Zortman—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Jason Wolfsteller and Thomas Jackson, employees of Federated Coops Country Store, spoke in favor of allowing electronic signs, noting that businesses along U.S. Highway 169 in Princeton City and Bogus Brook Township are using electronic signs.

Approve Minutes of January 4, 2021 Meeting

Dave Persing noted that he had voted yes to approve the agenda, but his vote was not recorded in the minutes. Cyndi MacDonald noted a typographical error on the last line of page 2: “form” should read “from”.

Tari Zortman moved to approve the minutes of the January 4 meeting as amended. Seconded by Cheryl Schimming. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—No; Ms. Zortman—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Minutes approved with the corrections.

Subcommittee to Research History of Residential Development to Aid in Decision Making for Future Development

Subcommittee members reported on two research sessions they had conducted at Town Hall. They searched for documentation on how subdivisions such as Balsam Ridge, the Preserve at Princeton, Rolling Meadows, and others had been developed with lots smaller than the 1.25-acre requirement specified in the zoning ordinance. They found that in April 2001 the Town Board adopted a Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance that provided for density bonuses. Developers were granted density bonuses based on certain criteria they agreed to meet in their developments. The exemptions were granted via conditional use permits.

The provision for density bonuses and Planned Unit Development exemptions was put under various moratoria in the following years, then repealed in May 2005.

Commission members noted that they had not searched all historical files that might reveal additional information about other developments. They agreed that they should continue the subcommittee to the March meeting to allow time for one more research session into older records.

Cyndi MacDonald moved to continue the Subcommittee to the March meeting to allow additional research into the question via other files stored at the township. Seconded by Kathy Stoeckel. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. Zortman—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

Review of Home Occupation/Interim-Use Permits

The Planning Commission, at its January 4, 2021 meeting, reviewed the Home Occupation section of the Township Zoning Ordinance and considered an example of a two-level approval process. They asked the Zoning Administrator to provide an example of how such regulations could be incorporated into the Township code.

Mr. Richards presented a draft ordinance providing for two types of home occupations: Permitted Home Occupation and Special Home Occupation. Under the proposed ordinance the Zoning Administrator would have authority to approve Permitted Home Occupations as defined in the ordinance. Special Home Occupations would be treated in the same manner as interim use permits, requiring Planning Commission review, public hearings, and Town Board final approval.

Cyndi MacDonald moved to authorize Mr. Richards to schedule a public hearing on the proposed ordinance amendment for the March Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Dave Persing. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. Zortman—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance Items: Electronic Signs and Animal Regulations

At its January 4, 2021 meeting, the Planning Commission discussed whether changes should be made to the Zoning Ordinance to allow electronic signs in the Commercial and Industrial zoning district. The Planning Commission asked the Zoning Administrator to provide a draft of the potential regulations within Section 600:225 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Richards noted that the current ordinance does not specifically mention electronic signs. He presented a draft amendment to Section 600:225 governing on-site signs in the Commercial/Industrial district, adding language to allow and regulate electronic signs.

Kathy Stoeckel moved to continue the question to the March meeting with the stipulation that Mr. Richards will refine the language in preparation for a public hearing at a future Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Cyndi MacDonald. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. Zortman—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Tari Zortman moved to adjourn. Seconded by Cyndi MacDonald. Chair MacDonald called the roll: Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. Zortman—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl
Clerk/Treasurer

Attendees: Kylie Gerth, Thomas Jackson, Nancy Moan, Jason Wolfsteller