

ALLENDALE CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
September 19, 2011

Staff Present: Tim Johnson, MainStreet Planning

1. Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll call.

Rozema, Zickus, Smit, Underhill, Knoper, Schut and Sinnott

3. For information:

1. Township Attorney comments and review on the proposed PUD amendment language.

2. Letter from Mr. Scharphorn Jr. (PCI) acting zoning administrator, letter on signage enforcement and possible changes to the ordinance.

3. Letter on signage from Sandy Happeny.

4. Flyer for seminar being held at the Ottawa County Fillmore Complex for Planning Commissioners and Zoning Board of Appeals members.

4. Approval of minutes.

Motion by Smit, supported by Knoper to approve the August 3, 2011 workshop meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Motion by Schut, supported by Zickus to approve the August 15, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

5. Approve the agenda.

Motion by Zickus to approve the agenda with the change of date to September 19<sup>th</sup>. Supported by Rozema. Motion approved.

6. Receive public comments.

Marshall Chase, owner of Get-The-Scoop and Party Store asked what size signs were allowed right now with the current ordinance; Underhill said comments were only being

taken right now. Chase proposed the every business be allowed 150 sq ft to 200 sq ft per property for signage that would include banners/flags, plastic board signs, etc. If the property is rental with tenants, then it's up to them to work together to see who uses the square footage at what time and that would include the road sign. Chase's sign is only 96 sq ft at this time.

Glenn Turek, of Meadows Crossing stated that signs are a difficult issue; students are attracted to banners/flags and other advertising. In other college towns there is excitement when properties are being advertised. Turek proposed that student housing properties would be able to put up banners/flags, signs, etc. during the day that would be temporary and at the end of the day the signs would be taken down.

Allen Hoffman, of Campus West, agreed with Mr. Turek. We need to create excitement to match the student's enthusiasm. Banners, flags, etc. help promote the events we have happening at our complex.

Biggby Coffee would like the township to be more business friendly and help promote the businesses. Franchises such as theirs have special signs and advertising that Biggby would like to use for special promotions.

Hearts Journey Wellness Center stated that they were using a flag/banner and when people came in to their business they mentioned the flag and how it helped them find and know that the business was there.

Tracy Jones, from the Locker Room stated that her business was denied a variance recently to be able to add another sign to the existing amount of signage on the property in which she is located. She would like to have her own sign, and would like the commission to look at multiple signs for businesses on one property.

7. Public Hearings: None.

8. Site Plan review: None

9. Old Business:

A. Township Attorney review of Draft PUD Ordinance.

Johnson read some highlights of the changes from the draft PUD ordinance per the Township Attorney. Johnson suggested he make the changes and discuss them with the commission at the next meeting. The commission agreed and that would give them a chance to review the draft also.

B. Athletic Field Sign Amendment Draft 2.

Discussion took place on the type of material the signs could be made of as far as neatness, durability and safety. The commission felt all the changes had been made in the proposed ordinance that were discussed and asked Johnson to proceed to public hearing to be held on October 17, 2011. (see attached draft)

C. Continued discussion of portable sign regulations.

Mr. Scharphorn, from PCI, acting zoning administrator for Allendale gave a report on portable temporary sign issues. (see attached)

Smit stated that he was on the previous committee for signs and the committee went nowhere with the ordinance, signs are a difficult issue.

Scharphorn stated that the businesses seem to be the biggest issue. Brand name banners/flags etc. are the new hot trend to advertise. Zickus stated that the banners definitely look better than the portable signs; Scharphorn agreed.

Johnson stated that first a decision had to be made as to whether the commission wants to change the ordinance, after that proposed language could be created.

Zickus suggested because of the economy the commission should look at a way to help the businesses. Knoper stated we cannot base all our decisions on the change in the economy; we have to look at all the issues and make a decision on what is best for the whole community and the future. If done right portable signs and banners look fine. Underhill agreed that everything has to be considered but he also believes that M-45 is not like 28th Street. Because of the boulevard landscaping the businesses could possibly be losing 50% of their business just because people can't see them on the other side of the road. He believes the sign ordinance is pretty strict and sees no reason not to loosen it up a bit.

Scharphorn stated that it also needs to be taken into consideration that all the PUD's have different allowances for signs, so that is another twist. Also since we've started enforcing the sign ordinance more it has not cost the Township anything so far. PCI has been doing it for free with our contract with the Township. Knoper asked Scharphorn if it would be better if there were different sign regulations for student housing and for businesses. Scharphorn stated yes. What about the businesses within the student housing, what rules will they fall under? PUD's will be an issue. Sinnot asked Scharphorn about enforcement; taking down temporary signs every night. Is it possible? Scharphorn stated that it is possible but hard to enforce but it can be done.

Johnson stated that type, size and duration of how long the signs can be up can be in the ordinance. Smit asked if there were a lot of public complaints or just business complaints. Scharphorn stated more so with the businesses who is following the rules and others not following the rules. Johnson asked where most of sign violations were located; in the road right of way or behind the sidewalk. Scharphorn stated in the road right of way but they weren't local business signs, they were the small signs suck all over the township, those types of signs could be picked up almost every day.

Underhill suggested finding out what the latest sign types and trends of portable signs; that will make it more helpful when making a decision. Johnson suggested that since the planning commission wants to do something he would put some language and information together and come back at the next meeting to discuss it further.

Rozema stated that getting information together on what other communities are doing would be helpful. Not everyone is going to agree on everything but let's make sure that what is created is enforceable and that it is enforced.

10. New Business:

A. Discuss Liquor License Ordinance Criteria.

Knoper stated that the township board just gave out the last liquor license. The township will be receiving 2 more at the end of the year due to the census count. The board wondered if the rules to get a liquor licenses should be tighter. Items like higher seating requirements of the restaurant that applies, and what type of business should be allowed to apply. They want to know what the planning commission feels about changing it and if so what would the commission like to see changed and also enforced.

Johnson stated he has not had much experience with writing liquor license ordinances; typically the planning commission does not handle them. The zoning could be tightened up in the ordinance and some criteria could be created to add to it to make it tougher. Knoper stated that the board would always like to keep one, is that the right thing? That's what we're trying to find out. Scharphorn stated licenses can be sold. Chase asked if Alaskan Pipeline still had a liquor license. Knoper stated yes, it's been over a year. Chase stated that it should be given up after six months. Rozema stated that something had to change. Underhill stated that you can't make it so difficult that the licenses are held hostage for only big operations. Schut asked the current statistics of the liquor licenses that are already being used in the township. Zickus asked to have information from other communities on what they had for liquor license requirements.

11. Township Board Report. (Ken) None.

12. Commissioner Comments.

Johnson suggested a workshop meeting be held on October 5, 2011.

13. Public Comment.

14. Meeting adjourned.