

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes June 16, 2020

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Tom Kaldunski at 8:00 PM at the Empire Township Public Works Building.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Bob Bjerke, Chris Williamson, Jane Kansier, Charles Seipel, and liaison Ed Gerten. Commission Member Jared Sachs was absent.

The property owners at 19416 Caravel Court were present to request clarification regarding the roof type and pitch of the new detached storage shed that was constructed on their property. (This was originally discussed at the June 2nd Planning Commission Meeting). The height of the sidewalls will be lowered to be in compliance with the zoning ordinance. The president of the Providence Master Association stated that there are numerous storage sheds in the neighborhood with a gambrel roof pitch, similar to the storage shed on this property. After some discussion, Trent Larson made a motion that the gambrel roof pitch be interpreted to fall within the guidelines of the zoning ordinance as substantially compatible with the principal structure on the property. Bob Bjerke seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Jane Kansier recommended that to try to avoid instances like this in the future, the Township consider requiring zoning permits to be required for structures that wouldn't necessarily require a building permit but would still need reviewed to make sure they meet requirements of the zoning ordinance.

Jane Kansier presented a memo regarding uses in the Mineral Extraction District. The memo identified parcels that are less than 10 acres, are in the Mineral Extraction Overlay District, are not currently owned by a mining company, and contain existing buildings.

The Planning Commission discussed what types of uses should be permitted on these properties. Also discussed was the strong possibility that much of the land in the Mineral Extraction Overlay will eventually be converted into some type of suburban development, especially in the northwest quadrant of the Township.

With future development in mind, it was recommended that any permitted use be granted in the form of an IUP that has an expiration date. It was discussed that future allowable uses may include contractors' yards and outdoor storage. With the issuance of an IUP, there may be other requirements such as screening. IUP's might also be limited to grading, paving, landscaping and temporary buildings on the property.

The solar electric system section of the zoning ordinance was discussed. Jane Kansier noted that All Energy Solar has applied for an amendment to this section of the zoning ordinance. The public hearing will be scheduled for July 7th. The Planning Commission discussed the possibility of changing the height of retail ground mount systems to 15' with side yard setbacks of 15'.

I was reported that a quick inspection of the property of All American Motors on Highway 3 showed that the property still needs work. There are tall weeds on the lot, cars not parked on hard surfaces and remaining piles of junk.

Jane, Charlie and Trent will try to set up a time to meet with the owners of All American Motors to check into the status of their automobile dealership before the next Planning Commission Meeting.

It was reported that copies of the Comprehensive Plan have been delivered to the Township. Electronic copies will be posted on the Township's website.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.