

WRIGHTSTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2008
DRAFT – Posted 02/19/08

The Wrightstown Planning Commission met on February 14, 2008. In attendance and voting were: Frank Davis, Chairman, John Halderman, Vice Chairman, Joseph Conroy, Ann Mark, William Perry, Norman Sommer and Lary Whalen, members. Also in attendance were Judith Stern Goldstein, Township Planner and Mario Canales, Township Engineer.

Call to Order: Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00PM

Approval of Minutes: *Dr. Mark moved to accept the Minutes of January 10, 2008. Mr. Halderman seconded and the motion passed 6-0-1 with Mr. Davis abstaining.*

JMZO 2007-03 Video Signage: Ms. Goldstein discussed the need for an ordinance specifically addressing video signs. She said that the consensus had been that sign ordinances would govern video signs and there was not a need to regulate them separately, however the threat of lawsuits from sign companies appears greater than it did last year. For this reason, Township Solicitor Terry Clemons is in favor of passing an ordinance regulating the use of these signs within the Jointure. Under the current draft, Wrightstown is least affected by video signage.

Dr. Mark asked about the timing of the signs. Ms. Goldstein discussed the provision that the signs could change every 15 minutes, and no scrolling of messages is permitted. The hours for lighting would be the same as for lighting of any other types of signs.

Mr. Whalen said that he did not want to completely restrict the use of video signage, as it could be very advantageous for some businesses, for example gas stations that have to regularly change the price of gas. The public wants to be able to know the price of gas when driving to gas station and it would save work if the sign could be controlled remotely.

Ms. Goldstein said that such a use would be permitted, as gas stations already have lighted signs. The signs are turned off during the night. In response to Mr. Whalen's questions about the Township's liability if drivers are distracted by changing images, Ms. Goldstein said that any signage can be distracting to a driver. The Ordinance limits the number of characters, the distance from the road, and the frequency of changing of image, to limit the distractions.

The Commission briefly discussed issues such as lighting at night. Ms. Goldstein said that signage agreements are part of land development for businesses. Hours when lights are shined on signs are part of the approval process.

Mr. Halderman moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve JMZO 2007-03 subject to any additional safeguards that the Township Solicitor might deem necessary with respect to number of characters permitted, hours of illumination and size of signs. Dr. Conroy seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

JMZO 2008-01 Uses for QA and QA-A: Ms. Goldstein explained that a correction of the tables for QA and QA-A is needed. She said that the tables do not match; it is similar to a typo.

In response to Mr. Whalen's question, Ms. Goldstein said that quarry use is permitted in the QA district by conditional use. A conditional use is a permitted use; however a hearing is required to ascertain that the use meets all of the requirements in order to be permitted.

Mr. Whalen moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve 2008-01. Dr. Mark seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Jointure Amendment #8: Ms. Goldstein explained that this amendment to the JMZO addresses participation in the Joint Zoning Council. It permits all of the supervisors in each municipality to participate in the Joint Zoning Council, provided that each municipality has only one vote. It now requires that the Joint Zoning Council prepare and adopt a budget. It also requires the preparation of a standard fee schedule, in order to more equitably allocate costs.

Mr. Perry moved to pass this amendment to the Board of Supervisors without comment, for the Board to act as it sees fit. Mr. Halderman seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Other Business: Mr. Davis said that there has been some discussion among residents and among members of other Township committees about possible uses for Chippewa Farm. There have been suggestions to use the property as preserved open space, as active recreation and to make some use of the buildings on the site.

Mr. Canales said that his firm has presented a review of the property to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Halderman and Mr. Perry discussed the possible need for some additional legal controls on the open space, such as conservation easements with a third party conservancy. Mr. Perry said that without involvement of a third party to check that the easements are being maintained, encroachments can occur gradually. He said that he has witnessed such instances close to his own property.

Ms. Goldstein suggested that the Commission relay to the Board of Supervisors its willingness to review and provide input on any plans that the Supervisors are interested in pursuing.

The Members agreed that they would be willing to tour the property and participate in joint meetings with the Supervisors at such time as the Supervisors are ready to consider options.

Mr. Perry moved to convey to the Board of Supervisors the Planning Commission's willingness to look at any proposals that the Board would like to consider for future uses of the Chippewa Farm property, and to review areas that have conservation easements. Mr. Whalen seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Whalen moved to adjourn at 9:00 PM. Dr. Mark seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary Donaldson
Recording Secretary