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Terry Lilley, Clerk  
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Trustees  
Carol J. Burkard  
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Todd T. Birkle  
David Lewsley

## WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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### WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting  
7525 Highland Road  
White Lake, MI 48383  
**November 3, 2011 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called: Mr. Martinko and Ms. Spoor were excused.

ROLL CALL: Steve Anderson, Chairperson  
Todd Birkle, Board Liaison  
Steve Martinko, Vice Chairperson - **Excused**  
Sarah McNulty  
Peter Meagher, Secretary  
William Pierson  
Gail Novak-Phelps  
Beverly Spoor - **Excused**  
Stan Woodhouse

Also Present: David Birchler, Township Consultant  
Kristen Goetze, Township Engineer  
Lynn Lindon, Recording Secretary

Visitors: 0

#### Approval of Agenda

**Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Birkle supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (7 yes votes)**

#### Approval of Minutes

a. October 20, 2011

**Mr. Birkle moved to approve the minutes of October 20, 2011 as presented. Mr. Woodhouse supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (7 yes votes)**

#### Call to the Public (for items not on the agenda)

Mr. Anderson opened the discussion for public comment on items not listed on the agenda, but none was offered.

#### Continuing Business

a. Continuing work on Clearzoning

Mr. Birchler gave an update on the changes to Portable Business Signs as a result from the commissioner's recommendations at the last meeting. He simplified the days/holidays of when portable signs could be displayed and added a provision to allow signage for a continuous 14 days for

new business or going out of business. Municipal civil infractions will be enforced if the signs are out on unapproved days and failure to pay any fines will result in the business losing their permit. He noted there are also provisions to encourage advertising.

Mr. Birkle questioned whether the neighboring communities were surveyed as to what their standards are. Mr. Birchler responded that they did not compare the standards to other communities, but the commission did specify the appearance of the sign at the last meeting.

Mr. O'Neil felt that giving a new business a 30-day continuous sign would be more acceptable as opposed to 14 days and wouldn't mind allowing more flexibility with regard to the types of signs allowed.

Ms. Novak-Phelps noted that the township is still having problems with existing signs. She personally is not opposed to allow new buildings a timeframe of 60 days, but would like to eliminate all the other signs that are currently up. Mr. O'Neil agreed that there needs to be enforcement and once a more manageable ordinance is in place, it will be easier to enforce.

Mr. Birchler explained that the process will start with a notice written by the township attorney to all businesses. When the new ordinance is enacted to allow certain signs, it would be up to the Township Board to decide the time frame in which the existing signs have to come down.

Mr. Meagher questioned permits versus non-permits. Mr. Birchler responded that the intention was to allow one sign within 20 ft. of the business without a permit and one permitted sign that would be more visible.

Mr. Birchler continued the discussion by addressing the 3 new zoning districts: Town Center, Neighborhood Mixed Use, and the Pontiac Lake Gateway District.

Originally the Town Center was intended to be the stand-alone district at M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road, but the more they looked at the characteristics, they found they could use the same concept for the 4 Towns area and the Gateway district. There are minor variations in differentiating the building height and the percentage that has to come, but this would set up a form-based district.

The Town Center is intended as the downtown area of the township and the 4 Towns area would grow to encompass the 3 neighboring communities. The form district doesn't worry about the uses or reviewing a site plan for how things are arranged because the ordinance would prescribe how they are to be arranged.

Mr. Birchler explained the concept of smaller lots with adjoining buildings. There are requirements with a primary road in the Town Center where 90% of the building has to come all the way to the sidewalk. At the next meeting he will present how to establish allowable variations. Secondary roads within the Town Center requirements could be relaxed to a 75% build-to line.

Mr. Birchler also discussed heights of buildings and limitations of those heights in sensitive neighborhood areas.

He feels one district can cover the Town Center and 4 Towns areas. The Elizabeth Lake and Union Lake area would propose the Neighborhood Mixed Use district and be treated like an ordinary zoning district, but would allow a mix of uses to construct new buildings with retail on first floor and apartments above. The build-to line requirement would be relaxed to 60%. This is similar to a form district, but more like a traditional zoning district that allows a mix of uses within the same building.

Ms. Novak-Phelps stated she is not opposed to this concept, but the lack of stop lights on a secondary road could be a safety issue. Mr. Birchler indicated there would still be corner clearance requirements, but he would research this to make sure the issue is addressed.

Mr. Birchler noted there are now 9 zoning districts oriented to retail and office uses, sometimes mixed with residential. In most cases where this occurs, it was established years ago because businesses backed up to residential. The restricted business district seems more appropriate for businesses

along M-59 and would give the owner more opportunity since they would get a higher commercial classification.

With regard to the Pontiac Lake Gateway District, this sub-district is intended to create a unique gateway into White Lake Township, enhancing the views of Pontiac Lake and White Lake Oaks Golf Course and reinforcing the appeal of the township as a four seasons playground. If the township is going to encourage a hotel/conference center, it is better to have a separate district that would allow a wide variety of uses but open the door for potential redevelopment of that area. This takes the approach of giving the land owner the broad ability to use the majority of their property for building development. The area is 8 acres, and associated properties at the 4 corners of the intersection would also be eligible.

Mr. Woodhouse questioned whether supporting sections of the ordinance would be cross-referenced, i.e., parking. Mr. Birchler confirmed that it would and he is in the process of developing new sections numbers for that purpose.

#### **Liaison's Report**

Mr. Birkle reported that the Township Board will have a special meeting next week and he will report on that at the next Planning Commission meeting.

#### **Consultant's Report**

Mr. Birchler had nothing further to add.

#### **Director's Report**

Mr. O'Neil announced that Ms. Spoor has resigned from the Planning Commission.

He reported that the medical marijuana issue is being discussed again. Rather than extend the moratorium, the ordinance is being amended to prohibit dispensaries in the township. This will move to the Township Board for a second hearing. This was the recommendation from the Planning Commission from the July 15, 2010 meeting.

With regard to the digital text sign at the Fisk Road development, Mr. Haddash has offered to provide a demonstration on time intervals between changes. He noted that the standard requires 30 second intervals between changes. Mr. Birchler expressed concern that if the price of these signs were to come down and the township allows more rapid change of the message, drivers will experience constant flashing on all sides of the road. There is discussion taking place to limit that the majority of the sign area must be 60% permanent that doesn't change.

Mr. Birchler will refine the proposed districts and present at the meeting on November 17. He asked the commissioners to email any comments to him directly prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> and also copy Mr. O'Neil

#### **Communications:**

##### **Next meeting dates:**

- Regular Meeting – November 17, 2011 – O'Neil gone
- Regular Meeting – December 1, 2011

#### **Adjournment**

**Ms. Novak Phelps moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Mr. Birkle supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (8 yes votes)**