
MINUTES
CASCO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2014

Present Members: Wayne Baumgarten, Eric Reeve, Stan Pankiewicz, Denise Page, Joe Stevens, Sue Macker, Cynthia Goulston.

Also Present: Supervisor Ruemenapp, Planner Rod Arroyo, Debbie Lipps-Carbone.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Reeve.

THE PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge to the flag was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Member Page, supported by Member Goulston to approve the May 20, 2014 minutes.

Ayes: Members Baumgarten, Pankiewicz, Reeve, Stevens, Page, Macker, Goulston.

Nays: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Member Stevens, supported by Member Goulston to approve the agenda as submitted.

Ayes: Members Baumgarten, Pankiewicz, Reeve, Stevens, Page, Macker, Goulston.

Nays: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) DISCUSSION OF KENNELS

Planner Arroyo researched ordinances from other municipalities and presented them in the packet distributed. Planner Arroyo indicated the acreage is an important thing to focus on, that Casco Twp. has unusual size requirements. Planner Arroyo said there are two options, bringing the ordinance up to date and/or expanding the current ordinance, but that there are things that can be addressed to bring the ordinance up to date.

Member Macker asked about enforcement of any ordinance and who would be responsible. Supervisor Ruemenapp said that townships with their own police force can do a lot of things that Casco Township without a police force cannot do.

Chairman Reeve, Member Macker and Member Goulston spoke about the Allendale ordinance. Planner Arroyo indicated that ordinance regulates everyone keeping a dog, and that currently Casco Twp. has zoning ordinances that would deal with some of what Allendale addresses.

Supervisor Ruemenapp indicated there is a county ordinance and that he would like to see the Planning Commission look at setbacks as opposed to acreage for the kennels and regulation on sound-resistant buildings for a set period of time at night. Currently Casco Township requires 20 acres for a kennel. Supervisor Ruemenapp has been advised that 20 acres is unenforceable.

Supervisor Ruemenapp indicated there is a resident in Casco Township that has 20+ dogs that is on seven acres who is willing to cooperate with the township's efforts, even if it requires a

variance. That home isn't far from the property line, but one side of the house has a ravine and the other side is a 90' commercial strip and currently her dogs aren't disturbing anyone. Animal Control went to her home and she has a kennel in her home, and reports were it was clean, animals were healthy and fresh water provided. Supervisor Ruemenapp called Animal Control to find out if there are any other kennels similar to the one in Casco Twp. and found there is a county-licensed kennel in Brockway Twp. Supervisor Ruemenapp felt if an ordinance addressed setbacks from other residents, noise and dog runs that the township would be in good shape.

Supervisor Ruemenapp spoke to Undersheriff Buckley who felt the current county noise ordinance isn't enforceable, but if a disturbing the peace complaint is made a ticket may be issued. Supervisor Ruemenapp said the Sheriff's Department won't enforce a township ordinance unless they are hired to do so.

Planner Arroyo suggested focusing on the zoning, commercial kennels and not to worry about private ownership of dogs.

Chairman Reeve and Member Goulston suggested the ordinance indicate a minimum of five acres. Member Stevens inquired of Planner Arroyo whether or not there were industry standard for kennels regarding noise and Planner Arroyo said he didn't know of any.

Planner Arroyo referred to the ordinance requiring 150' from the property line abutting a residential dwelling, which seems to be similar to other similar ordinances reviewed. Discussion was held regarding minimum setback requirements. Planner Arroyo suggested that a commercial kennel in Ag wouldn't necessarily require a minimum acreage requirement. Discussion was held regarding kennels in commercial zoning, R1, R2 and Ag. Planner Arroyo suggested a minimum setback should be 100'.

Members Stevens and Page felt that the noise is the biggest issue and barking carrying a distance. Discussion held regarding soundproof buildings and indoor runs, with Chairman Reeve discussing the need for air conditioning in a soundproof building, or an environment reasonable for animals. Supervisor Ruemenapp would like noise containment during certain hours of the day addressed, and screened dog runs. Member Stevens would like to see if there is any minimal accepted standard on how to run a kennel. Member Pankiewicz would like the ordinance to indicate a soundproof building habitable for animals and the owner can take it from there.

Member Stevens asked if Animal Control would regulate a kennel and Supervisor Ruemenapp said the county issues kennel licenses and would suggest a requirement that a kennel get a kennel license from the county Animal Control which then requires an annual inspection conducted by Animal Control. Supervisor Ruemenapp indicated that Animal Control wouldn't issue a kennel license unless the township had approved it.

Planner Arroyo suggested a setback of 100' if adjacent to Ag, but if adjacent to R1 or R2 keep the 150' setback. Members of the Planning Commission agreed. Planner Arroyo will also include a requirement regarding a soundproof building at night, and feels he has enough information to get started on a draft.

Chairman Reeve discussed parking requirements for a kennel and the necessity for paved parking. Supervisor Ruemenapp indicated that Columbus Township has some language regarding vet clinics and boarding animals which would be difficult to maintain setback requirements, that many vet clinics are in shopping centers. Supervisor Ruemenapp would like the Planning Commission to consider that, and consider that five acres may not apply in a commercial zone.

Debbie Lipps-Carbone discussed county residents enjoying dog parks and Supervisor Ruemenapp said the township has property, but no money to develop a dog park. Member Stevens indicated the township would love to run into a wealthy donor of funds to develop a dog park.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

PLANNER'S REPORT

None.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEES

Supervisor Ruemenapp reported that the Jeremy's Automotive site plan is complete, that his wife came in with a bill from landscaping, but the application wasn't filled out. He plans to plant 40 fire bushes, which rabbits love to eat. Supervisor Ruemenapp suggested he may not want to plant 40 of the same variety of bush, since they could all die from disease. Supervisor Ruemenapp said as soon as they bring back the application they will be good to go, that they've met the criteria.

Supervisor Ruemenapp reported that St. Clair County held an informational meeting regarding passing an ordinance allowing ORV's on every county road. There would be a one mile restriction on paved roads. Supervisor Ruemenapp indicated if that county ordinance was passed the township would have the option of opting out. There will be a countywide public hearing on that in August. If the township opts out Supervisor Ruemenapp was informed the Sheriff would enforce it.

Supervisor Ruemenapp indicated currently the township has several projects ongoing, which include ditching, ditch mowing, a total rebuild of Palms Road at Big Hand Road, chip coating Gratiot and lime stoning the township roads.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Member Baumgarten, supported by Member Pankiewicz to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

Ayes: Members Baumgarten, Pankiewicz, Reeve, Stevens, Page, Goulston, Macker.

Nays: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried.

The next regular meeting of the Casco Township Planning Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 15, 2014 at the Casco Township Hall, 4512 Meldrum Road.

Wayne

Baumgarten,

Secretary

Christine

Ruemenapp,

Recording

Secretary

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