

**MORTON TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING – June 16, 2021**



Call to Order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman- Dennis Morawa

Pledge of Allegiance by all

Members Present: Dennis Morawa, Jeff Ratledge, Lisa Thompson, Steve Brandt, Larry Lenon

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Rich Davis- Zoning Administrator, Vicky Esch- Recording Secretary

List of Public present: Wanda Ratledge

Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2021, Regular Meeting

**Motion** by: Jeff Ratledge

To approve the May 19, 2021, Regular Meeting minutes as amended under Reports – Board of Trustees.

2nd by: Steve Brandt

Vote: 5 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Absent Motion Carried

**New Business**

**A. Zoning Ordinance Discussion - Variances**

Chairman, Dennis Morawa shared with the commission members that there have been Zoning Board of Appeals cases where the applicants have asked for a variance request for a reduction of the minimum side setback that is allowed on a non-conforming lot. He questioned if additional language might be needed in the zoning ordinance to discourage appeals where a reduction would not be approved.

**Suggested added text in red:**

Section 5:15 Height & Placement Minimum

4. A (2) Each side yard setback may be reduced to 10% of lot width, to a minimum of 6'. **A side yard setback of less than 6 feet will not be allowed on any non-conforming lot.**

Comments by commission members:

- Would be setting a parameter, setback cannot go lower.
- A person would still have the right to appeal to the ZBA.

**Old Business**

**A. Zoning Ordinance Discussion (follow-up on trailers with signage)**

As a follow-up to the discussion at the May 19, 2021, meeting regarding trailers that advertise a business and concern that the current ordinance text is confusing as to what is allowed and what is not, the commission members were asked to bring back to this meeting suggested text changes/additions.

Current ordinance text: **Section 7.3 #4 Sign Prohibitions**

H. Any vehicle (including trailers) which has the primary function of acting as a sign, shall not be permitted.

Suggested ordinance text changes/additions:

*“However, if that vehicle (including trailers) are parked at a business whose primary function is storage, it **may** be permitted.”* (text to be added to “H”)

*“Any vehicle (including trailers) which has the primary function for use for business purposes, and is parked on a commercial storage lot, shall be permitted.”* (replace current text for “H”)

*“This sign ordinance does not apply to any vehicle, trailer or other similar items, that are parked or stored within a designated (DBA) commercial storage facility.”* (text to be added to “H”)

Discussion points on suggested text changes/additions:

- The word “*may*” leaves room for interpretation. May need to change word.
- Logically it is a sign. Need to ask: What is the primary function? What is the intent? A sign is not a primary function.
- What if a contractor has a trailer parked in his yard? That would be ok, it is his business. The primary function of the trailer is to haul his equipment/supplies.
- If it is an “off-premises” sign, then it should have to go through the process of a sign application.

The commission members will continue to review at the July meeting. Secretary will compile a list of possible ordinance changes/additions suggested.

**Comments by citizens in attendance:** None

**Reports – Building Department (Rich Davis)**

- No Reports

**Reports – Board of Trustees (Jeff Ratledge)**

- Gypsy Moth problem:
  - Tri Lakes continues to collect signatures hoping to have the required needed by July 1.
  - No spraying will be done this year. If there is spraying it would be done in the spring of next year.
  - Supervisor Mark Klumpp attended the School Section Lake Association meeting on Saturday, June 12. They discussed a special assessment for spraying.
  - Township has been receiving a lot of phone calls about the gypsy moths from residents, including the Canadian Lakes area.
- Recycling barn project update: Rolling doors will not be here until July. Electrical to be done this week or next. Received bids from Reith Riley and Morningstar for the driveway.
- Township Board would like the Planning Commission to look at the following:
  - Recreational marijuana facilities - Village of Mecosta discussed at their last meeting the possibility of allowing. Township has opted out.
  - Food trucks – where can they legally park, do business. Do we have anything in the ordinance?
  - Fireworks ordinance – should we have one?
  - STR’s (short term rentals) – do we need to look at?

**Correspondence:** None

Adjourn Regular Meeting

**Motion** by: Lisa Thompson

To Adjourn regular meeting

2nd by: Steve Brandt

Vote: 5 Ayes            0 Nays            0 Absent            Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

*Vicky Esch*

Vicky Esch, Recording Secretary