

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the Georgetown Township Planning Commission, held  
Wednesday, December 16, 2015**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Honderd at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Greg Honderd, Richard VanderKlok, Steve Hall, Don Hebel, Donna Ferguson, Tim Smit, Jeannine Bolhouse

Absent: None

Also present: Mannelle Minier, Zoning Administrator

**#151216-01 – Agenda for December 16, 2015**

Moved by Richard VanderKlok, seconded by Steve Hall, to approve the agenda with moving the public comment to the beginning, then the plat section, then the parking and then the commercial revisions.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#151216-02 – Minutes of the regular December 2, 2015 meeting**

Moved by Richard VanderKlok, seconded by Tim Smit, to approve the minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#151216-03 – Public Comments**

Duane Huyser, 6920 40<sup>th</sup> Ave., asked about the streets associated with Hickory Grove Farm No. 7. Greg Honderd explained the platting process, including the necessity of obtaining approval from the Ottawa County Road Commission and the Water Resources Commission. He further explained that the Road Commission had jurisdiction over the roads within the Township.

**#151216-04 – Sec. 19.6 Plat Requirements**

The Zoning Administrator presented a review and noted that the platting process requirements are detailed in the Land Division Act, formerly the Subdivision Control Act, and the Township General Ordinances (as follows) and not in the Zoning Ordinance. She emphasized that the language in the general ordinance states that the plat is to be reviewed to determine “whether or not the proposed plat violates any of the provisions of this chapter, or any of the provisions of the township zoning ordinance, or any of the provisions of the Subdivision Control Act of 1967, as amended.

(3) Other factors. Opinion of the zoning administrator on any other factors which would be of general concern to the township in respect to the development of the proposed plat, and whether or not it conforms with any master plan then developed, or being developed, by the township.”

The Zoning Administrator further clarified that after researching the Land Division Act, formerly the Subdivision Act, and the Township Code of Ordinances relative to the platting process, there is no mention that site plan approval is required. She also noted that the language in the general ordinance states that the plat must comply with all the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. She said that this would give the Township the authority to require compliance with all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Sec. 50-26. Procedures for approval of preliminary plat.

(a) Application for approval of preliminary plat. The proprietor shall submit nine copies of a preliminary plat, including any extended phases of a preliminary plat of the proposed development to the township clerk for approval by the township board. The preliminary plat and any extended phases of the preliminary plat shall either contain the following information, or additional maps or surveys containing such information, which shall be submitted with the preliminary plat:

- (1) Vicinity map. A vicinity map showing the location of the property to be platted, adjoining roads, physical features, township or section lines to which reference may be made, school districts located, within the plat and the general location of the proposed plat in relation to schools, shopping centers and other major community facilities.
- (2) Topographical survey map. A topographical survey map of the property platted area, including location of property lines, topographical lines at not more than two-foot elevation intervals, streams, lakes, swamps and drainage courses, existing streets and highways within the area to be platted, or in the immediate vicinity of the area to be platted, from which access to the property can be made, and the adjacent property lines. The widths of street rights-of-way, street layout, street names, connections with adjoining platted streets and potential extensions into adjoining unplatted lands, lot lines including typical lot dimensions and the name of plat or subdivision.

(b) **Review by zoning administrator. The township clerk shall then submit one copy of the preliminary plat and any extended phases of the preliminary plat, and one copy of each and every design, drawing, map or other data to the township zoning administrator, who shall check the plat and other data submitted for completeness and, if necessary, investigate the area in the proposed plat. The zoning administrator shall submit a written report, one copy to the planning commission, at or before the scheduled hearing of the preliminary plat, and one copy to the township superintendent for use by the township board, and be present in person at the meeting of the planning commission. The report shall include the following:**

- (1) Suitability of land. Opinion of the zoning administrator as to the suitability of the land for platting.
- (2) **Zoning considerations. Determination of the zoning in the proposed plat area as to whether or not the proposed plat violates any of the provisions of this chapter, or any of the provisions of the township zoning ordinance, or any of the provisions of the Subdivision Control Act of 1967, as amended.**
- (3) **Other factors. Opinion of the zoning administrator on any other factors which would be of general concern to the township in respect to the development of the proposed plat, and whether or not it conforms with any master plan then developed, or being developed, by the township.**

(c) **Review by planning commission. The zoning administrator shall then place the proposed subdivision and include the proposed extended phases on the agenda of the planning commission at a meeting which shall be held within 45 days subsequent to the filing of the preliminary plat, unless a previous hearing has been held on the proposed subdivision as an extended phase of a preliminary plat, and shall notify the adjoining property owners of the proposed hearing at least ten days prior to the hearing.**

(d) **Hearing. The planning commission at the hearing shall review the preliminary plat and any extended phases of the preliminary plat, as submitted, and review the report of the zoning administrator and shall consider such other information it obtains on its own initiative and such information that may be presented to the meeting.**

(e) Adjournment of hearing; request for changes. The planning commission may adjourn any such hearing from time to time, but for not more than 75 days from the date of filing, and may request within such time changes in the preliminary plat and/or changes in the extended phases of the preliminary plat or other data submitted, or require additional information from the proprietor.

(Ord. No. 125, § III, 12-26-72; Ord. No. 2009-03, 4-13-09)

Sec. 50-27. Review; tentative approval or disapproval of preliminary plat.

(a) **The township board shall receive the report on any preliminary plat from the planning commission, and shall review the preliminary plat, together with the report of the planning commission, along with any other data it may feel necessary or advisable, at its next regular scheduled meeting. The review of the preliminary plat by the township board may be adjourned from time to time by the township board; provided, however, that it shall give its tentative approval or rejection within 90 days from the date the preliminary plat was filed with the township clerk. If the preliminary plat is rejected, the board shall set forth its reason in writing for such rejection.**

(b) **In consideration of the preliminary plat, the township board shall consider all matters as set forth for consideration by the planning commission. In granting tentative approval, the township board may make such tentative approval, subject to certain conditions which must be fulfilled by the proprietor prior to final approval of the preliminary plat, provided such conditions are in conformity with the provisions of this article.**

(c) The township board shall review each extended phase of the preliminary plat submitted in the same manner as set forth in subsections (a) and (b) of this section and the report of the planning commission of each extended phase of the preliminary plat, as proposed, and may make recommendations for any changes it deems desirable. It shall not approve or reject any extended phase of the preliminary plat.

Sec. 50-51. For tentative approval of preliminary plat.

Any preliminary plat or extended phase of a preliminary plat filed for approval with the township must conform with the following standards and specifications:

- (1) Street layout. Street layout and arrangement shall provide for the continuation of existing principal streets in surrounding areas, or conform to a plan of the general area or neighborhood, approved and adopted by the planning commission. In any event, the subdivider shall provide for satisfactory future circulation within the neighborhood or general area by extending the street system within the proposed subdivision to the property boundary line of the tract at points not more than 1,300 feet apart. Minor streets shall be so arranged as to discourage their use by through traffic.
  - a. Where a proposed subdivision abuts or contains a railroad right-of-way, the planning commission may require the location of a street approximately parallel to, and on each side of, such right-of-way at a distance suitable for the appropriate use of the abutting land.
  - b. Proposed streets shall be arranged in relation to the existing topography, so as to produce usable lots and streets of reasonable gradient.
  - c. Except where justified and with the approval of the planning commission, alleys will not be approved.
  - d. Other than specified in this section, the location and arrangement of streets shall conform to the work entitled, "Standards and Specifications for Plat Development and Street Construction," as adopted by the county road commission.
- (2) Street design and lighting. All streets and roadways shall conform, as a minimum standard with the standards and specifications adopted by the board of county road commissioners, as amended, with the following additional requirements:
  - a. No street shall be constructed with open ditches for drainage.
  - b. Alleys, if permitted, shall have a width of not less than 20 feet.
  - c. All streets and roadways must meet the requirements of the work entitled, "Georgetown Township Zoning Ordinance Minimum Design Standards for Streets and Highways."
  - d. All streets shall be provided with street lighting, so that such lights have a maximum linear distance of 350 feet from each other, and the proprietor shall petition the township to establish a special assessment district of the subdivision to provide for annual maintenance assessments for such lighting.
  - e. All streets which do not interconnect with a street at each end, and either dead end or terminate in a cul-de-sac, except streets one lot deep, shall be marked by an approved street sign at the last intersecting corner indicating a dead-end or no outlet street.
- (3) Blocks; exceptions. The maximum lengths of blocks shall be 1,500 feet, measured between the intersections of centerlines, with the following exceptions:
  - a. In subdivisions where the proposed minimum street frontage or width of lot at the building line is at least 200 feet, the 1,500-foot maximum length of blocks may be exceeded by not more than 500 feet.
  - b. Under extreme topographic conditions, the planning commission may approve exceeding the 1,500-foot maximum length of blocks.
  - c. The maximum length of a cul-de-sac street shall be 800 feet, measured from the centerline of the closest intersecting street to the furthest point of the right-of-way of the cul-de-sac, which street itself is not a cul-de-sac or dead-end street.
- (4) Crosswalks. Where necessary to obtain satisfactory pedestrian circulation, as determined by the planning commission within a proposed subdivision, and, where blocks exceed 1,000 feet in length, an easement for a crosswalk or pedestrian way of at least eight feet in width shall be dedicated extending entirely through the block.
- (5) Lot planning. In any subdivision proposed for residential use, the minimum lot width, depth and area shall be appropriate for the location and type of land use contemplated, but in no case shall any of the lot dimensions or area requirements be less than that specified in the township zoning ordinance for the zone in which the proposed subdivision is located.
- (6) Alleys. Except where alleys may be permitted for the purpose, a utility easement may be provided along rear or side lot lines, as necessary for the installation of the appropriate utilities, either overhead or underground. The width of this easement shall be a minimum of ten feet, up to a maximum as required by engineering requirements.
- (7) Greenbelts and plantings. When it is desirable for the protection of residential properties to have greenbelts or landscape screen plantings located between a residential development and adjacent express highways and other major arterial streets and railroad rights-of-way, the preliminary plat and each extended phase of the preliminary plat shall show the location of proposed greenbelts.
- (8) Public open spaces. Where a school site, a neighborhood park, or recreation area or public access to water frontage, as indicated on the township master plan for land and land use, is located in whole or in part in the applicant's subdivision, the planning commission may require the reservations of such open space within the subdivision, up to a total of ten percent of the gross area for water frontage of the plat, for school, park and recreation, and for public access for water frontage purposes. It is further provided that unless the township, or any other municipal governmental authority, state government, federal government, school district, or other governmental agency agrees to purchase the reserved area, or starts condemnation proceedings to acquire such reserved area prior to the time that the plat is given final approval by the township, such reserved area shall be released to the proprietor.

(9) Common and open space areas. When a plat includes common and/or open space areas, an association shall be established to provide for the continued maintenance of such areas. In instances of double frontage lots (where a lot abuts a street where no access would be allowed), an association shall be responsible for the maintenance of parkways (the area between the pavement of the road and the right-of-way/property line) adjacent to the street where no access is permitted. (Ord. No. 125, § IV, 12-26-72; Ord. No. 2005-11, 12-12-05; Ord. No. 2014-12, 11-24-14)

Sec. 50-52. Variances.

When the subdivider can show that a literal enforcement of the standards of this chapter would cause unnecessary hardship if strictly enforced or where, because of topographical or other conditions peculiar to the site the standards require adjustments, departure may be made without destroying the intent of such provisions. The planning commission may recommend a variance, or the township board on its own initiative may approve a variance; provided, however, that such variance from the terms of this chapter may not change or amend the requirements of the township zoning ordinance. (Ord. No. 125, § V, 12-26-72)

Sec. 50-53. Report of planning commission.

The planning commission shall report its findings and make a separate recommendation to the township board on the proposed preliminary plat, and on each extended phase of the preliminary plat submitted, a copy of which shall be on file with the township clerk for inspection of an interested person, and a copy of which shall be mailed to the proprietor. Such report must be filed with the township clerk within five days after any decision by the planning commission. (Ord. No. 125, § VI, 12-26-72)

There was discussion about the platting process. The discussion included eliminating the reference to site plan approval in the Zoning Ordinance since there was no requirement for it and the Township has not done it for at least the last the past 30 years, but to replace the language to note that the process was detailed in the general ordinance.

Moved by Richard VanderKlok, seconded by Jeannine Bolhouse, to initiate a Zoning Ordinance amendment as follows:

**Sec. 19.6 PLAT REQUIREMENTS.**

~~In those instances in which Act 288, Public Acts of 1967, as amended, the Subdivision Control Act, is involved, the owner shall, after Site Plan approval, submit the preliminary and final plats to the proper officer in conformance with Act 288, and in accordance with all other applicable codes, acts and ordinances. Such plats shall remain in conformance with the approved Site Plan.~~

**Plats shall comply with all requirements of the Township general ordinances, zoning ordinances and Act 288, Public Acts of 1967, as amended, the Subdivision Control Act.**

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#151216-05 – Sec. 26.9 Parking Provisions**

The Zoning Administrator presented a review and noted that the intention of the revision was to lessen parking requirements as long as certain criteria is met in order to have more flexibility for businesses to locate within the Township.

There was discussion and the determination was made that the ordinance already has two options for reducing parking requirements, one section that allows parking spaces to be deferred and another that allows the number of parking spaces to be reduced by up to 25% as long as demonstration is provided that the use would be adequately served.

Moved by Jeannine Bolhouse, seconded by Tim Smit, to not initiate any ordinance revisions to this section and to leave the language as currently written because options already exist for the number of parking spaces to be reduced or deferred.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#151216-06 – Other Business**

There was discussion about the platting process and the Planning Commission's role.

**#151216-07 – Public Comments**

**#151216-08 – Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.