

## SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

April 18, 2005

The Saugatuck Township Planning Commission held a workshop on April 18, 2005, at the township hall on Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck, Michigan 49453.

Present: Darpel, Hanson, Jarzembowski, Marczuk, Milauckas, Olendorf, and Rausch

Absent: None

Also present: Tree Committee members Denner, Harrison and Meckley

Chairman Milauckas called the workshop to order at 6:15 P.M. Jarzembowski made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2005, workshop, supported by Marczuk. The motion carried.

Milauckas reported that private roads and sign ordinances have gone to the Sisson, and Olendorf reported that Sisson is working on the draft of a lighting ordinance he gave the P.C. a while back, including lumens, etc.

There was no public comment. A letter from Dick Waskin dated April 14, 2005, was presented to the Commissioners. Waskin resigned from the Tree Committee, explaining that he did not think a tree cutting moratorium or ordinance was necessary and suggesting the P.C. focus on the 40' landscape buffer already in the commercial ordinance and encourage property developers to preserve existing vegetation rather than clearing and landscaping it. The Commissioners discussed his ideas.

Jarzembowski asked about possible conflict of interest if a Commissioner votes on an issue, such as a tree cutting ordinance, which might someday affect property he owns. Milauckas said the P.C. did not like to have an appearance of a conflict, that the individual Commissioner who feels uncomfortable should ask for reaction from the rest of the P.C.

Jarzembowski showed contrasting photos of Saugatuck from 1874 with no trees and 1930 when trees had grown back. Milauckas read from the Local Observer about this P.C.'s possible tree ordinance, pointing out the seeming misunderstanding. Denner presented the Commissioners with copies of an article on what's happening across the country which includes resources available, and Harrison said he would share copies of an article in the Holland Sentinel about fines for cutting trees. Meckley recommended reading "Rural By Design."

Milauckas directed the Commissioners to his April 14 draft of the proposed Tree Protection Ordinance. He explained he wanted to make it clear from the beginning of the ordinance that it was primarily Blue Star Highway and I-196 which the Ordinance would protect. Section 1.03 requires the property owner to have an approved site plan, a building permit, or a tree removal permit before doing any tree removal in the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ), which is described for commercial, industrial, agricultural, and critical dune zones in Sec. 1.04. Exceptions are listed in Sec. 1.05 and penalties in Sec. 1.06. Darpel suggested adding "Exceptions are described in Sec. 1.05" to the end of 1.03B. The fact that the proposed ordinance would cover Blue Star Highway all the way to Exit #34, which includes agricultural areas where only administrative decisions would be needed, was discussed. Olendorf said he hoped the ordinance would not create an atmosphere where property owners would cut down trees and come to Ellingsen later and apologize. Harrison said he thought Ellingsen was not the one to do this because he would not have time and he is not a tree expert. Milauckas mentioned that the final draft of the Tri-Community Plan will probably have a paragraph instigated by Ron

Hirsh which encourages landscaping of “pimple houses” in the agricultural areas. Denner said she thinks there is a need for committees to cultivate support among the public to preserve trees, the ordinance being the first step.

Harrison said because the P.C. did not know what parcels of land are involved, he is willing to do a tree survey from Exits # 41 to #34. Darpel urged the restriction on cutting any vegetation in the TPZ until there is a site plan approval or a forest management plan for Ellingsen, because there would be no way to prove that trees cut and stumps ground were from those of 6” dbh. Olendorf asked if the P.C. was getting any parameters from the township board, and Milauckas reviewed the two memos from Wright. Denner suggested including the Allegan County Conservation District in Sec. 1.03E as a forest management resource for the purpose of obtaining a tree removal permit. Darpel said he thought “D. Construction Area” of Sec. 1.03 was confusing, so it was removed. Harrison thought vegetation in side yard and rear yard buffers should be maintained, so that was included in Sec. 1.04A,B,C, that is, the commercial, industrial and agricultural zones on Blue Star and I-196. Sec. 1.04A and B were revised to remove reference to lots as vacant or nonvacant. Sec. 1.04C was revised to eliminate provision for nonvacant lots, to include the restriction for PUD, subdivisions or site condominiums on cutting more than 10% of the protected trees within the TPZ without a tree removal permit, and to reduce the TPZ band from 40 to 30 feet from the ROW for parcels created by land division. Sec. 1.04D was revised to include High Risk Erosion Areas with the Critical Dune Areas. Sec. 1.05B was revised to remove the licensing and longevity requirements for tree farm and nursery businesses.

Darpel maintained there is still nothing in the ordinance which prohibits someone from cutting trees within the 30 feet ~~inside~~ *beyond* the 40’ ~~setback~~ *buffer yard* after he has obtained site plan approval.

Milauckas informed the Commissioners that according to the Tri-Community Plan, Blue Star Highway may become an overlay district and not completely commercial. He said he would send this revised 4/14 draft of the Tree Protection Ordinance to Sisson for clean up.

Milauckas set Tuesday, May 10, at 6:30 P.M. as the next workshop meeting. In the meantime he suggested the Commissioners read Denner’s material and e-mail him if they want any of it included in the ordinance. He thanked the Tree Committee for their help.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M. The next regular meeting is April 25 at 7:00 P.M.

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Betty A. White, Recording Secretary

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Sandy Rausch, Secretary