

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
TOWN HALL – APRIL 5, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chairperson Lee Busse, Planning Commissioners Lois Cutler, Doug Galler, Lynne Murphy, Rick Robbins, Bob Ranalla, Troy Schifsky and Carole Yoho, Supervisor David Johnson, Town Board Liaison Jim Hiniker and Planner Sherri Buss.

PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – VARIANCES

Pursuant to notice in the Stillwater Gazette, a public hearing was held to consider amendments to Chapter 1, Section 6 of the Township's Zoning Ordinance related to Variances. The amendments will make the Township ordinance consistent with new state requirements that variances be permitted based on "practical difficulties" standards rather than "hardship" standards. No members of the public were present.

Chairperson Lee Busse opened the public hearing. Planner Sherri Buss reviewed the proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance. She advised that our attorney recommends we adopt the language into our code to be consistent with the state rule.

There was discussion as follows:

- Bob Ranalla – Does the proportionality depend on the situation? Sherri Buss – Yes.
- Carole Yoho – Will this still be somewhat arbitrary? Buss – We should try to have a good rationale for granting a variance. If too many variances are granted, then maybe the code should be changed.
- Lynne Murphy – The language does not seem as important as the particular situation.

There was discussion of how this would work in practice.

The public hearing was closed at 7:20 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING – 7:20 P.M.

1. AGENDA – M/S/P Yoho/Murphy moved to adopt the agenda as written. (8 ayes)
2. MINUTES – M/S/P Murphy/Robbins moved to approve the January 5, 2012 Stillwater Township Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes as written. (8 ayes)
3. ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – The main issues are proportionality and conditions. A public hearing will need to be held for any variance.

M/S/P Yoho/Schifsky moved to recommend to the Town Board approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment as proposed. (8 ayes)

4. LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN – Planner Sherri Buss had prepared a power point presentation on the Water Governance System. The Carnelian Marine Watershed District recently updated their plan and by state statute, we then need to update our water plan which had already been

recently updated with our Comprehensive Plan. There was discussion on ways to simplify all of the overlapping agencies and how to make our updating as “painless” as possible.

A draft of the update will be discussed at a future planning commission meeting.

5. WASHINGTON COUNTY WIND ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEMS – The County is updating their Wind Energy Conversion System ordinance. Planner Sherri Buss reviewed their proposed changes.

6. WEBSITE/NEWSLETTER – The presentation from tonight’s meeting will be placed on the website. An article on this subject could be in a future newsletter along with seeking residents’ input for possible projects.

A member of the Planning Commission is needed to attend Communication Committee meetings.

(Bob Ranalla left.)

7. TOWN BOARD LIAISON REPORT – Jim Hiniker and David Johnson reported on recent Town Board and Joint Board activities.

8. ADJOURNMENT – M/S/P Schifsky/Galler moved to adjourn the meeting. (7 ayes)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Kathy Schmoeckel
Stillwater Town Clerk