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**SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
May 15, 2013 – REGULAR MEETING**

PRESENT: Dennis Masson, Ron Lindquist, Greg Latsch, Jack Ketchum, Russ Tiles and Amy VanDyke.

ABSENT: David Rumpel

PARTICIPANTS: Gordon Gallagher -Township Manager, Lukas Hill - Community Development Director, Ron Bultje – Township Attorney

**A. Call to Order.**

Masson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**B. Adoption of Minutes.**

Lindquist moved to adopt the minutes of the April 17, 2013 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Ketchum seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**C. Approval of Agenda.**

Latsch moved to approve the agenda. Ketchum seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**D. General Public Comment:** No general public comment.

**E. Accessory Building Discussion:**

The Planning Commission discussed the request from the Township Board to consider amending the Zoning Ordinance in a manner that would give the Zoning Board of Appeals the authority to review applications related to accessory buildings that are of a greater area, in excess of the maximum height standards, or in excess of the maximum number of buildings. Hill stated that he reviewed the criteria for this type of application and provided a revised set of criteria for the Planning Commission to review. Hill stated that the criteria were very similar to the existing criteria and the criteria the ZBA used to use for review prior to 2010 when the ZBA performed these reviews. Hill also stated that a cap on the overall size of accessory buildings might make sense no matter who is doing the review.

VanDyke stated that there is a specialization of thought process between the Planning Commission and ZBA and that it may be beneficial to keep that thought process separate. Latsch stated that the ZBA would sometimes question “what was the Planning Commission thinking when this ordinance was put in place?” Latsch stated that while both bodies are thoughtful and qualified groups, there may be some benefit to keeping all of the Special Land Uses with the Planning Commission

since they help to create the laws within the Township. Tiles was concerned that this was the only item that would be removed from the Special Land Use article and given to the ZBA. Tiles also stated that they Planning Commission is charged upholding the long-term vision of the Township which is important when making decisions on special land uses. Tiles questioned the logic that if the Planning Commission is qualified to help formulate the laws, they should be considered competent on administering them as well. Masson felt that Township Board did not like way the Planning Commission was handling the Reinhart case. Masson suggested recommending the new criteria to the Board but keeping the review process with the Planning Commission. Lindquist stated that the criteria are the key to a good decision.

Bultje stated the differences between an authorization and special land use and why the authorization for accessory buildings was moved from an authorization to a Special Land Use during the zoning ordinance re-write. Bultje also stated that this particular review of accessory buildings is somewhat similar to variance which is why the authorization process was created in the first place as variances used to be granted in these cases when no hardship was present. Hill stated that this type of special land use is unique in that it is a residential in nature while most other special land uses are commercial or industrial in nature. Hill also stated there are no area restrictions on attached accessory buildings.

It was further discussed that the procedural review could be improved by the Planning Commission. Masson stated that the Planning Commission often relied on staff recommendations verses verbally stating and discussing each review criteria openly at each meeting. Latsch stated that was the standard method of the ZBA when he was on the ZBA and it was helpful. Lindquist felt that the criteria should be tweaked and the process of considering each criterion should be formalized. Ketchum stated that review of the allowable sizes in each district should be considered regardless of a Special Land Use or Authorization.

Gallagher stated that he feels the Planning Commission should focus on recommending creating good criteria to the Township and not necessarily focus on which body would be performing the review. Gallagher reiterated that it was the Township Board's wish that this review process be performed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. VanDyke stated that this decision should be made with logic and not emotion.

The Planning Commission decided to review the criteria for another month and asked Hill to tweak the criteria and review the entire section related to accessory buildings.

**F. Reports**

1. Township Board: Lindquist stated that the Board will not be riding a trailer this year at the memorial parade.

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2. Zoning Board of Appeals: No Report.
  3. Gallagher stated that the Township is working towards the concept of a new municipal building at M104 and Fruitport Road.
- G. Motion to adjourn at 8:37PM made by Ketchum with support from Latsch. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dennis Masson, Vice Chairman  
*Planning Commission*