

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FLUSHING

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PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2011

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

WEB ADDRESS <http://www.flushingtowship.com>

MEMBERS OF PLANNING COMMISSION

Mark J. Newman, Chair

John Cuddeback

Jerome Doyle, Vice Chair

Ronald Flowers

Richard Buell, Secretary

Robert Gensheimer

Mark Purkey, Board of Trustee Representative

Julia A. Morford, Recording Secretary

PRESENT: Mark J. Newman, Jerome Doyle, Richard Buell, John Cuddeback, Ronald Flowers, Robert Gensheimer and Mark Purkey

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Scott Stone, Rollin Springer, Joseph Hart, and Bobby Price

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 7:05 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair **MARK NEWMAN** with Roll Call and the Pledge to the American Flag.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: PURKEY MOVED, seconded by Flowers to adopt the Agenda by changing the order of “Unfinished Business” and “New Business”; “New Business” will be Number IV and “Unfinished Business” will be Number V. **MOTION CARRIED.**

III. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: DOYLE MOVED, seconded by Purkey to approve the Minutes of September 12, 2011 as amended. **MOTION CARRIED.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

1. North Flushing Baptist Church, 7500 W. Mt. Morris Road, Flushing MI 48433

Informal Hearing regarding placing a 36’ to 48’ x 8’ sign in the front of the Church located at 7500 W. Mt. Morris Road, Flushing MI 48433, Parcel No. 08-01-300-011

North Flushing Baptist Church representatives Bobby Price and Joseph Hart were present for an informal hearing to place a sign at the front entrance of North Flushing Baptist Church located at 7500 W. Mt. Morris Road, Flushing MI.

SPECIFIC FACTS:

- a Zoning Permit has been signed by the Zoning Administrator
- a vinyl coated aluminum sign valued at \$1,000.00
- the actual sign will be 3' x 8' and will be placed in the middle of the curb island
- a oval one (1') curb island will be centered in the middle of the driveway and will be 25' x 48' x 8'
- the sign setback will be similar to the current sign in place (front of the Church)
- there will be print on both sides so traffic coming from both directions can see the sign
- the wording on the sign will read "North Flushing Baptist", "www.nfbaptist.org", "810-639-9003", there will be three (3) crosses at the top of the proposed sign
- the sign will be externally lite
- the sign will be approximately 2' off the ground
- there will be plants/landscaping in the island
- there will be enough room for a left turn lane with an arrow so traffic can turn both directions
- there is an exit at the back of the Church that goes onto Morrish Road which would resolve any traffic backups
- a Special Use Permit will be required due to the proposed sign being over twelve (12) square foot
- the Church is zoned RSA
- the church has already paid \$25 for a zoning permit and an additional \$100 for a Special Use Permit. The Church will be reimbursed for the \$100 for a formal hearing, which was only an informal hearing.

BUELL read *Section 13.5-60 - Residential, institutional uses permitted in residential zoning districts* (a) Primary Sign and (b) Turn Lanes (2 square foot)

- a. *"Where institutional uses are permitted in a residential zoning district, there shall be permitted one (1) residential sign which may be directly or indirectly illuminated not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area. In the case of a freestanding sign, such sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height, and shall be set back so that the face or any part of the sign is not less than ten (10) feet back from right-of-way line. A permit is required.*
- b. *Also, there shall be permitted necessary non illuminated incidental signs that do not exceed two (2) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height, except where exceeded by state law such as handicapped parking signs."*

QUESTIONS:

DOYLE stressed the Church should be back sixty (60) feet from the front of the curb to the center of the road. The sign will actually be in the center of the 25' curb. It has been planned for sixty (60') foot.

It should be specified what the driveways are: two (2) lanes have to be in existence so two (2) cars can be side by side for traffic flow.

IT WAS DETERMINED THAT since the Church was an institution in a residential area, they would only have to apply for a building permit, a zoning permit or special use permit would not be required. The Church would not have to come back to the Planning Commission.

2, Scott and Christina Stone, 7447 Johnson Road, Flushing MI 48433

Informal Hearing regarding placing a six (6) foot wood privacy fence beyond the front of his house located at 7447 Johnson Road, Flushing MI 48433, Parcel No. 08-12-100-008

Scott and Christina Stone were present to inquire as to how to place a six (6) foot wood privacy fence beyond the front of their house located at 7447 Johnson Road, Flushing MI.

SPECIFIC DETAILS SUPPLIED BY MR SCOTT:

- the Stones have an easement to get back to their house so there is a lack of road frontage.
- a chain link fence is already in existence at the location for the proposed fence request. (the fence belongs to the Mr. Rollin Springer)
- the fence will go at the side of Stones house and in back of Mr. Springer's house.
- Mr. Springer has no objection to the proposed fence.
- Mr. Stone only wants to extend the fence to the front of Mr. Springer's house along the fence.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS COMMENTS:

1. **PURKEY:** has no problem with a fence being put in the location because there is already an existing fence.

Rollin Springer wanted an explanation of Section 6-6:

2. **DOYLE** explained:
 - Any fence beyond the front of any house could not be any higher than four (4) feet.
 - If there are corner lots, the fence could only be put on the back corner of the property, because there are two (2) fronts.
3. **NEWMAN:** the height of the fence would be six (6) foot. Once past the front of the house, Mr. Stone has to get permission to put a fence in. Traffic and the looks of the neighborhood has to be considered. There is an easement on Mr. Stones deed. **NEWMAN** explained that an easement is not a right of ownership but a right of use. There is another easement to the West of the property. The Sisco property has an undeveloped easement on it.
4. **FLOWERS:** there can only be two (2) dwellings on an easement with thirty-three (33) feet.
5. **NEWMAN:** there is a gate on Mr. Springer's property, where bird houses are located, that will be closed off if Mr. Stone installs a fence.
6. **FLOWERS:** make sure a land survey is done to make sure the property line is correct, including the easement.

7. **NEWMAN:** Mr. Stone's easement is for the benefit of Mr. Springer's daughter, Carol, so she can get to her property.
8. **NEWMAN:** Mr. Stone does not qualify for the fence, but needs to come in and get a permit for the fence (Mr. Stone has paid the \$25 for the Zoning Permit for the fence). Mr. Stone needs to apply for a Discretionary Special Use Permit in order to put up a fence that doesn't comply with the ordinance.
9. **FLOWERS:** recommended to put the fence six (6) inches away from the property line on Stones property.
10. **CUDDEBACK:** recommended it be put away from the property line so that the fence could be painted, etc in the future.
11. **DOYLE:** there can only be a decorative fence in the front of property. In the past the fence has been four (4) foot.
12. **NEWMAN:** the minute you go beyond the front of Mr. Stones house, he has to come in and apply for another permit (Special Use Permit).

IT WAS RECOMMENDED that Mr. Stone apply for a Discretionary Special Use Permit. The next meeting will be Monday, November 14, 2011 for which Mr. Stone can come for a Formal Hearing. There can be three (3) options:

1. As submitted approved
2. As submitted rejected
3. Discretion to place conditions.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Continued Update of Master Plan

At the September Meeting, the Data Base, presented by Doug Piggott of Rowe Inc, was reviewed and different jobs were assigned to the Commissioners:

- **BUELL:** will rewrite the *Soils* Section, in the current Master Plan, updating dates, etc. Information will be referenced in the "*Soils*" Section that additional information may be obtained at Flushing Township instead of having to print a lot of pages.
- **MORFORD:** is getting more information from the Census Bureau.
- **NEWMAN:** Survey Report – the Clerk had obtained a letter from the Genesee County Clerk and also the Bureau of Elections regarding passing out a survey at elections; same rules apply as for campaigning for regular elections.
- **BUELL:** felt the Commissioners should do brainstorming from the residents and also new issues as technology has advanced:
 - a. water issues
 - b. geothermal heating plants in homes
- **PURKEY:** felt not ready to put out a survey by November 8, 2011 because people don't want to fill out a survey at an election; how scientific should the survey be; better to go with a random survey.
- **FLOWERS:** has a lot of opportunities to do a survey at elections in the future; some schools give extra credit for students working the polls.

- **NEWMAN:** not scientific to hand out the surveys at the polls as there are residents from other areas at the polls so would be hard to control; more time should be spent to do a control sample and also control the spending.
- **NEWMAN:** wanted to know the meetings the Commissioners would be in attendance:
 - a. Buell will be absent in November but will be present December, January, and February.
 - b. Purkey will be present in December but may be absent in January.
At the December Meeting, under “Unfinished Business” – (get easal) – modify old survey and add new questions. **BUELL** volunteered to re-write the new survey.
- **DOYLE:** if sent to everyone in the township on a post card, it would not be that expensive.
- **GENSHEIMER:** why not put the survey in with the water bill; the County prints the water bills.
- **DOYLE:** three-quarters (3/4) of the residents have wells.
- **NEWMAN:** felt Mr. Doyle’s idea was great to send to everyone in the township and use the township’s mailing list.
- **PURKEY:** there are close to 5,000 households in the township.
- **NEWMAN:** if we do 4,200 addresses it would be pricy; perhaps send to every so many numbers.
- **DOYLE:** why not put in with the property tax bills.
- **GENSHEIMER:** entice the property owner by giving so much off their property taxes if they complete the survey.
- **PURKEY:** there are all types of laws which dictate what townships can and cannot do.
- **NEWMAN:** for the citizens, the survey would be the best thing to do.
- **GENSHEIMER:** the survey would be like a “Wish List”. Has to be careful of what is asked. What would be the intent of the survey. How much would it accomplish.
- **NEWMAN:** would have to go with multiple choice. Otherwise it would be very subjective such as roads, etc.
- **DOYLE:** fill out the survey and then at the bottom of the survey, put anything else the residents would like to see changed.
- **BUELL:** the survey would be the introgal part of the Master Plan.
- **NEWMAN:** gets a lot of residents involved in the Planning Commissions work.
- **CUDDEBACK:** during hard economic times, still need the government to get involved, what would residents be willing to pay for or sacrifice.
- **NEWMAN:** everyone has different opinions as to what they would give up. For most people the core issues would be police, roads, and those who get water from other municipalities, water and also fire protection.
- **CUDDEBACK:** can’t overplay the issue but it is very important to know what is going on in the township.
- **DOYLE:** the survey is about a lot of different things that don’t deal with taxes. It is about deciding as to the sections such as agriculture, etc. and the Commissioners can for see in the next ten (10) years.

- **FLOWERS:** the issue would be how the residents would rank the roads.
- **PURKEY:** the question should be what sort of roads does the township need in the next twenty (20) years.
- **DOYLE:** it would be gathering information as to whether there even needs to be a road in the area; there are all types of issues to deal with such as water, hills, forests, etc; it is all about Flushing Township. It is a personal issue whether it will cost the resident money. That is not what the survey requests.
- **NEWMAN:** the Master Plan is a guidebook showing the residents where the township is going in 2012 where the residents see the township focusing on land, that the Commissioners represent a consensus of the township while still staying in compliance with the ordinances. All the issues should be kept in mind for the December meeting.
- **BUELL:** the character of the township is considered with pride in being a rural community, not being a city.
- **FLOWERS:** the 2030-2035 Plan has been reviewed with the County. It was reviewed as to how to upgrade the area, due to all the traffic coming on I-69/I-75 and Bishop Airport with all the freight. Some of the issues had to be brought up due to the Federal Funding. Where do the residents need to spend their tax dollars.
- **PURKEY:** the Master Plan is a land use issue and a questionnaire needs to be sent out dealing with the land.
- **DOYLE:** sees a lot of municipalities that want to pre-zone areas which would tell people they “can’t do this but can only do that”. Language in the ordinance that allows the Planning Commission to listen to people that want to bring in a particular type of building, etc and the Planning Commission will make the decision if the issue is a reasonable thing or not. If the Planning Commission takes the Plan and makes it so tight that it tells the residents they can’t do a particular thing, then the Planning Commission is telling the residents which direction they have to make. People have to have the freedom to make things work that everyone likes.
- **FLOWERS:** have looked at ordinance and some issues don’t really fit but Planning Commission has the opportunity to make things work for the residents.
- **DOYLE:** don’t need to pre-zone items. The Master Plan will have to be re-written in another ten (10) years.
- **MORFORD:** working on the Land Plans with other municipalities.
- **PURKEY:** Flood Plan Maps have been obtained. They are in the office for review.
- **BUELL:** flood insurance is available for Flushing Township.
- **PURKEY:** Woodlots: no wood lots in Flushing Township; checked with the Township Assessor and really no difference from the past. Maps can be obtained from the Township Assessor. Photos of Ponds and Wetlands can be obtained from the Township Assessor. SEV figures will be available in April 2012. A copy can be obtained from the Assessor.
- **BUELL:** the 2007 Agriculture Census was presented to the Planning Commission; will contact Rowe Inc. for definition of the character of the community as to whether rural/agriculture; will bring the information back to the Planning Commission.
- **MORFORD:** will get the Parks and Recreation Booklet that was recently approved.

- **NEWMAN:** waiting for an email from the Genesee County Drain Commissioner's Office dealing with Water Quality Resources; will bring back to the Planning Commission when it is available.
- **FLOWERS:** Transportation: Elms Road will be the new Linden Road; Elms Road is five (5) lanes starting at Corunna Road. and will eventually go to Vienna Road; has contacted the County and will get more information.
- **CUDDEBACK:** Community Facilities: water use maps were obtained. More information will be forthcoming.
- **NEWMAN:** Goals, Policies and Problems cannot be completed until the other information has been obtained.
- **NEWMAN:** November Meeting – Unfinished Business – Continued Review of Master Plan. December Meeting will be dealing with the Survey.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

8:42 P.M. – OPENED TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Scott Stone, 7447 Johnson Road, Flushing** – “interested in viewing the flood plan maps”.

8:44 P.M. – CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

VII. BOARD COMMENTS:

1. **BUELL** will be absent at the November Meeting
2. **FLOWERS** reminded everyone about the Seminar sponsored by Rowe regarding “Internet Planning and Zoning” that will be held Wednesday, October 26, 2011 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. downtown Flint at the Rowe Headquarters Building. Please contact the Clerk.

VIII. MEETING SCHEDULE: NEXT REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2011 AT 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING DATES:

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2011 AT 7:00 P.M.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2011 AT 7:00 P.M.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: Due to lack of business matters, **NEWMAN** adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

MARK J. NEWMAN, Chair

JULIA A. MORFORD, Recording Secretary

RICHARD BUELL, Secretary

Date of Approval

Planning minutes 10 03 2011