

Mason County Planning & Zoning Department

102 E. FIFTH STREET
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February 7, 2017

Minutes of the Mason County Planning Commission meeting held at 102 E. Fifth St.,
Scottville, on February 7, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Shaw, Tom Hooper, Cary Shineldecker, Doug
Robidoux, Janet Andersen, Jim Wincek, Frank Redmond,
Fabian Knizacky (ex-officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Mary Reilly, Adam Young

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Tom Hooper. Mr. Hooper
welcomed Frank Redmond back to the Planning Commission.

The meeting minutes from January 17, 2017 were approved as amended with a motion
by Cary Shineldecker and second by Michael Shaw. Motion carried, 7 yes, 0 no.

Conflict of Interest: Janet Andersen declared a conflict of interest with the discussion
on amending the "farm market" language within the zoning ordinance. She cited that
she had business relationships with many people in this line of work.

Doug Robidoux agreed that there may not be a direct conflict but the perception of
conflict could be an issue.

Cary Shineldecker made a motion that Janet Andersen has a conflict with discussing
farm markets related to the zoning ordinance update. Second by Doug Robidoux.
Motion carried, 7 yes, 0 no.

Addition or deletions to the agenda: Doug Robidoux requested that the farm market
discussion be moved to the end of the agenda. The board concurred.

No public present for public comment.

Correspondence: Mary Reilly showed that board a photo copy of the site plan for the
Lake Winds Energy Park substation. She stated that a 6' X 6' well pump house is going
to be installed near the NW corner of the substation fence. Consumers Energy is
planning on installing a well to irrigate the required landscaping. She considers this a
minor amendment.

Mary Reilly went through the changes to the Parking and Loading amendment related to
the boards most recent discussion. In summary— 1) parking spaces would remain 10'
wide, 2) change of use on US-10 would trigger hard surfacing, 3) in other areas, a
change of use requiring a 25% increase in parking or a 25% increase to gross floor area
would require hard surfacing, and 4) an approved business has 6 months to install hard

1 surfacing (similar to current language).

2
3 Michael Shaw made a motion to approve the amended parking language as presented
4 and recommended it to the Board of Commissioners for final approval. Second by
5 Frank Redmond. Motion carried, 7 yes, 0 no.

6
7 Adam Young began discussion on Draft #6 of proposed amendments to the Zoning
8 Ordinance. He summarized the change to sign definitions in Section 20.04 for flags,
9 permanent signs, and a clarification to temporary signs.

10
11 After a discussion on Section 20.05 (2) the board agreed that residential signs for Class
12 III home occupation can have a maximum height of 5' (increased from 4').

13
14 There was a discussion on political signs.

15
16 Jim Wincek suggested that political signs should be removed within 1 week of the
17 election; he did not have any issues with a date not being set for when signs can be
18 installed.

19
20 Janet Anderson and Frank Redmond agreed.

21
22 Doug Robidoux added that the signs are somewhat controlled by the winter—they
23 cannot stand up to the weather.

24
25 The board concurred that the signs should be removed within seven days after the
26 election and no limit on when signs can be installed prior to the election.

27
28 There was a discussion regarding the length and width of election signs.

29
30 Doug Robidoux stated that in a recent election, 2' X 8' or 2' X 6' signs were very
31 popular.

32
33 The board agreed that 16 sf should be the maximum size of a political sign in a
34 residential area (increased from 6 sf). 32 sf would be the max size for a political sign on
35 highways and county primary roads.

36
37 There was a discussion on consolidating Sections A and C of Section 20.08 (2)
38 regarding temporary signs in non-residential areas. There were areas of overlap in the
39 sections that should be reviewed. Adam Young will come back with changes to those
40 sections.

41
42 The board reviewed proposed language regarding changeable copy signs (electronic
43 message). Adam Young had provided reference materials for the board to review
44 regarding changeable signs. He indicated that the Courts have upheld the ability of
45 communities to ban the signs in some or all zoning districts.

46
47 Frank Redmond stated that the studies referenced driver distraction and lowered

1 response times caused by the signs. He stated that changing the message every 8
2 seconds decreases driver distraction, but it does not eliminate it. He questioned if there
3 was interest in getting into the business of testing these signs and regulating their
4 operation. He does not support electronic signs at this time.

5
6 Janet Andersen is not in favor of the signs due to driver distraction and aesthetics.

7
8 Michael Shaw noted that he likes the provisions suggested and changing the message
9 every 12 seconds with 1 second dissolve fade. He liked how some communities
10 required that 5 billboards be removed if a new digital billboard is installed. Mr. Shaw is
11 in favor of the signs with the suggested provisions.

12
13 Cary Shineldecker called a sign company and obtained information that he will forward
14 to the board. He began a discussion on which signs are regulated by MDOT and which
15 are not. Mr. Shineldecker does not believe that current digital billboards on I-96 are
16 more distracting than other billboards. He stated that electronic signs could have a
17 place if they were well regulated but he does not see a place for them if they look like
18 the signs in Pere Marquette (PM) Township.

19
20 Doug Robidoux is in favor of the signs with regulation in the C-1 and C-2 districts only.

21
22 Jim Wincek stated that the signs are “garish” and they may have a place in Reno or Las
23 Vegas. He chose not to live in those places. He is not in favor of the signs but
24 appreciated the reference material to understand how they can be regulated.

25
26 Fabian Knizacky does not support electronic signs because they distract from the
27 appearance of a rural setting and are distracting to motorists.

28
29 Tom Hooper stated that he does not like the signs in Ludington or PM Township. “The
30 signs need to be more static with the brightness controlled”. He supports electronic
31 signs with controls.

32
33 Fabian Knizacky made a motion to not change the current zoning language regarding
34 electronic signs. Second by Janet Andersen.

35
36 Fabian Knizacky, yes Cary Shineldecker, no
37 Frank Redmond, yes Tom Hooper, no
38 Janet Andersen, yes Doug Robidoux, no
39 Michael Shaw, no Jim Wincek, yes

40
41 4 yes, 4 no. Motion fails.

42
43 Cary Shineldecker made a motion to allow discussion on electronic signs, static signs,
44 illumination regulations during night and day, and regulations that may allow the signs to
45 fit in and minimize driver distraction. Second by Doug Robidoux. Motion carried, 5 yes
46 (Shaw, Shineldecker, Hooper, Robidoux, Wincek), 3 no (Knizacky, Redmond,
47 Andersen). Motion passes.

1
2 Adam Young discussed the language proposed in Section 20.14 "Changeable Copy
3 Signs". One would retain 20% of a sign for business identification. Up to 80% of
4 allowable sign size could be changeable copy. He discussed the 1 second fade.

5
6 Mary Reilly asked what would be considered a fade—the rain drops or fireworks? The
7 board asked that a 1-second fade be clarified because they did not want to allow a fade
8 to be animated like the rain drops.

9
10 Cary Shineldecker questioned the use if the International Sign Association as a
11 standard in the Zoning Ordinance (item 2014. 2.c). He also asked about the .3 foot
12 candles—are footcandles regulated anywhere else in the ordinance?

13
14 Mary Reilly stated that they were in the night time sky provisions.

15
16 Adam Young stated that signs come with a photo cell that adjusts for ambient
17 conditions. Signs are programmed to .3 over ambient using the photocell.

18
19 The board agreed to delete 20.14 2.h because it is not content neutral.

20
21 Michael Shaw asked for clarification that there are no new billboards allowed.

22
23 Mary Reilly stated that the current ordinance does not allow new billboards.

24
25 Jim Wincek stated that he appreciated the discussion but he had not heard anything
26 that would change his mind in opposing these types of signs.

27
28 Fabian Knizacky stated that he would like to view a sign that follows the regulations that
29 have been proposed. He stated the signs, as proposed, may not be as offensive as
30 some existing signs in the community.

31
32 Cary Shineldecker asked about electronic signs showing the price of gas and hotel
33 signs- are they the same?

34
35 There was discussion on past ordinance language that allowed a message to change
36 not more than 8 times a day.

37
38 Tom Hooper agreed that gas signs are okay because there are no changing lights.

39
40 Adam Young summarized that more static signs appear to be the only option.

41
42 Fabian Knizacky questioned if the proposed language (such as the image changing
43 every 12 seconds) would satisfy business owner's desires for electronic signs. "Would
44 they want the signs if they had to meet these regulations?"

45
46 The board discussed contacting local businesses to ask if they would want an electronic
47 sign with these proposed regulations.

1 Adam Young will try to find a video or a sign to video to show the board what they look
2 like of programmed to meet these proposed regulations.

3
4 Mary Reilly went through the “housekeeping items” related to the zoning ordinance
5 update:

- 6 1) Clarifying that a shed is not allowed on a parcel with no dwelling even though a
7 zoning permit is not required.
- 8 2) Sand mining review standards language amended to reflect state law.
- 9 3) Repair of damaged buildings to Building Code Standards
- 10 4) *Minimum* dwelling size for migrant housing—720 sf.
- 11 5) Truck Terminal and Truck trailer drop yard in C-2 as SLU.
- 12 6) 25.02- Permits Required—changes to reflect current practice and take out
13 language referring to the building code and certificate of occupancy for zoning.

14
15 The next meeting with Adam Young will be on April 4.

16
17 Zoning Directors Report: There will likely be a meeting on February 21 with Dr.
18 Squires/Dr. Simone and the condominium project on S. Lakeshore Drive. Will confirm
19 because neither party has updated information for the packet.

20
21 Frank Redmond will be absent on 2-17-17 due to a planned vacation.

22
23 Tom Hooper adjourned the meeting at 9:55 pm.

24

Frank Redmond, Jr. Secretary
Mason County Planning Commission