

**Meeting of the Village of Beecher  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
Washington Township Center  
November 29, 2012**

At 7:15 p.m., Phil Serviss called the meeting to order. Members present: Kim Koutsky, Althea Machtemes, Lance Saller, Dennis Tatgenhorst, Kevin Bouchard (arrived tardy at 7:26pm), George Schuitema, Phil Serviss and Gayle Ahrendt. Absent: None. Staff present: Robert Barber and Don Thomas. Audience present: Janet Piepho, 281 Orchard Lane.

**AGENDA ITEM III: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 1, 2012 MEETING.** A motion was entered by Machtemes and seconded by Schuitema to approve the minutes as presented. Roll call: 6 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Saller, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 0 Nays. Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM IV. PUBLIC HEARING: CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FOR A FENCE IN THE FRONT YARD AT 281 ORCHARD LANE (PIEPHO).** A motion was entered by Saller and seconded by Machtemes to open the public hearing. Roll call: 6 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Saller, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 0 Nays. Motion carried. Robert Barber provided an overview of the petitioner's request. A brick structure had been constructed without a permit. When Mrs. Piepho came to the Village Hall to ask about installing a fence on the brick structure, Barber advised that she needed to request a variance. Notice was mailed to the surrounding neighbors and none were present at the hearing. There had been concerns expressed about whether or not the structure and fence would be in violation of the covenants of the subdivision, but the Village is unable to enforce covenants. However, they warn that disobedience of the covenants could possibly impact a future sale of the property if they were unable to provide clear title due to a violation.

Serviss asked if the fence would ever be extended into the north lot (lot 60 in Prairie Crossing South) that was purchased and exists in a separate subdivision. Piepho said they didn't have any present plans. They may consider a storage shed on that lot but hadn't been aware that there were covenants that may prohibit such a structure. Serviss had provided a copy of the covenants for this subdivision to the Village. Staff had requested copies in the event the builder defaulted on pond maintenance. The Village needs a means to potentially set up a way to assess the homeowners for pond maintenance.

Machtemes asked how far north the fence will go. Barber responded that if the petitioner ever wished to continue the fence north into lot 60, she would have to request another variance as she would also be required to do if she ever wished to erect a shed on that lot. If the fence was continued north, there would have to be a 25' opening for easement access. The homeowner also has an option to request resubdivision and combine the lots into a single zoning lot. Then an accessory structure would be allowed without a variance. Piepho said they had no objection to conforming to the rules in the future but would like to finish the present project.

Piepho further stated that she would be willing to install a sidewalk on lot 60 to the north when the area develops. Barber responded that an open ended agreement is difficult to enforce and some type of date should be stipulated.

Barber suggested the variance could be approved with two stipulations: 1. The sidewalk along lot 60 in Prairie Crossing South would be installed within 6 months of the date that a public sidewalk is installed on adjacent lot 59. 2. The color of the fence material is black wrought iron-type of fencing material that is indicated on the drawings provided to the Village.

A motion was entered by Koutsky and seconded by Schuitema to close the public hearing. Roll call: 6 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Saller, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 0 Nays. 1 Abstain (Bouchard who arrived late, while public hearing was being conducted). Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM V: CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD ON A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FOR A FENCE IN THE FRONT YARD AT 281 ORCHARD LANE (PIEPHO).**

A motion was entered by Schuitema and seconded by Tatgenhorst to send a positive recommendation to the Village Board for a variance for a fence in the front yard at 281 Orchard Lane (Piepho) with the following conditions: 1. The sidewalk along lot 60 in Prairie Crossing South would be installed within 6 months of the date that a public sidewalk is installed on adjacent lot 59. 2. The color of the fence material is black wrought iron-type of fencing material that is indicated on the drawings provided to the Village.

Roll call: 6 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Saller, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 0 Nays. 1 Abstain (Bouchard who arrived late, while public hearing was being conducted). Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM VI. PUBLIC HEARING: CONSIDER AMENDMENTS TO THE BEECHER ZONING ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO SPECIAL USE PERMITS FOR DIGITAL DISPLAY (LED) SIGNS.** A motion was entered by Schuitema and seconded by Bouchard to open the public hearing. Roll call: 7 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Saller, Bouchard, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 0 Nays. Motion carried.

Barber informed the group that the village attorney had done further research on the wording of the proposed sign ordinance. The revised ordinance would allow businesses with existing pole signs to apply for a special use permit if they wished to convert them to LED signs. They could still be turned down, but it allowed them the option to upgrade since some of them had been forced to construct a pole sign instead of a monument sign by Village Boards in the past, due to safety and visibility concerns along the highway. He reviewed the balance of the rewording in section 11.05, 1, m (attached).

Discussion occurred about the second item 4 (which was renumbered to be item 6) and the five second length of time for static messages. Koutsky noted that 5 seconds is a long time for a message. It was agreed that the wording could instead be changed to prohibit repetitive flashing. It was noted that item 6 (renumbered to be item 7), should state that "public" service announcements are allowed, not "political" service announcements. Ahrendt asked if the revised ordinance would pertain to existing signs as well. Don Thomas answered that it would. Some Commissioners were not in favor of LED signs at all. Barber noted that prohibiting them entirely is perceived as being anti-business, but they needed to be controlled.

A motion was entered by Tatgenhorst and seconded by Schuitema to close the public hearing. Roll call: 7 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Saller, Bouchard, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 0 Nays. Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM VII: CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE BEECHER ZONING ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO SPECIAL USE PERMITS FOR DIGITAL DISPLAY (LED) SIGNS.** A motion was entered by Saller and seconded by Schuitema to send a positive recommendation to the Village Board regarding the revised sign ordinance (attached) with the following changes: Under section 11.05, 1, m, the numbering was corrected. Newly numbered item 6 would change to read "Messages shall not flash repetitively." Newly numbered item 7 shall read "public service" not "political service". Roll call: 5 Ayes (Saller, Bouchard, Tatgenhorst, Schuitema and Serviss). 2 Nays (Koutsky and Machtemes). Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM VIII: ILLIANA EXPRESSWAY/LAND USE PLAN UPDATE.** A decision is expected by the Federal Highway Commission on December 1 regarding the Illiana Expressway. After that time, a 400' corridor can be planned and the planning funds can be released. The Village will wait to see if funds will be allowed to update the Land Use Plan. The Village Board

has considered a new sewer treatment plant in the distant future at Kentucky Road and Ashland Avenue, south of the proposed expressway. One more expansion of the present plant must be done on its present site first. Each time a sewer plant is expanded, it must be doubled and there is only one plant allowed per watershed. A sewer treatment plant near the Illiana is probably 30 or more years in the future. Boundary agreements have been drafted between Grant Park and Peotone. The Village Board will take action on these in March.

**AGENDA ITEM IX: SOUTH SUBURBAN AIRPORT UPDATE.** With the resignation of Jesse Jackson Jr., and the subsequent announcement that Toi Hutchinson will run for his vacated seat, the plans for the South Suburban Airport Authority that had been moving quickly will likely be put on the back burner for a while. The new political landscape has changed the priorities in the area.

**AGENDA ITEM X: NEW BUSINESS.** With no new business, the next PZC meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2013. If there are no agenda items, it will be postponed until February.

With no further new business, Tatgenhorst entered a motion and Schuitema seconded that the meeting stand adjourned. Serviss called the motion to a vote and it carried unanimously. The meeting stood adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcy Meyer  
Secretary