

JAMESTOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2014  
7:00 PM

**UNAPPROVED  
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER-

Chairperson Larabel called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

ROLL CALL -

Commissioners Dykstra, Keppel, Webster, Larabel, Woltjer, Smith, and Tacoma were present, as well as Planner Ransford.

INVOCATION -

Chairperson Larabel gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 19, 2014 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES -

Commissioner Smith made the motion, supported by Dykstra to approve the August 19, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following two changes: omitting the final phrase "specifically spelled out in the Landscape Waiver Request", under NEW BUSINESS, and omitting the last sentence "Mr. Smith replied that it is Mr. Larabel and himself that serve on that Committee", under EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

**MOTION CARRIED - UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA -

Webster made the motion which was supported by Woltjer to approve the September 16, 2014 Meeting Agenda, with the amendment of a bullet point under OLD BUSINESS for Public Comments Regarding Section 3.5 of the Jamestown Charter Township Zoning Ordinance, "Keeping of Animals".

**MOTION CARRIED - UNANIMOUSLY.**

GENERAL CITIZEN COMMENTS REGARDING NON-AGENDA ITEMS -

None.

NEW BUSINESS -

None.

OLD BUSINESS -

\*Public Comments Regarding Section 3.5 of the Jamestown Charter Township Zoning Ordinance, "Keeping of Animals" -

Chairperson Larabel opened the meeting for public comments, offering concerned residents the opportunity to speak into the microphone, giving their name and address first.

Cindy Brouwer, of 1494 Winifred, also owner of property on Coronation Court, expressed her opinion that the proposed language was too broad, does not specify what type of animal, and should start with a smaller amount of acreage than two acres.

Pat DeYoung, of 0-525 Ransom, remarked that limiting chickens to a minimum of two

acres seemed ridiculous to her, that roosters are a part of country living, and strongly expressed her support for children participating in 4-H, saying that these kids should get a scholarship, not have any undue limitations placed upon them. She also stated she understood that having poultry could be a problem in sub-divisions, emphasizing the necessity of being a good neighbor.

Anne Brouwer, of 378 Riley, said that she had kept chickens for many years, with no complaints, and pointed out that roosters are no noisier than happy hens, dogs, or lawn mowers, and should not be considered a problem.

Ron Koroleski, of 2967 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, agreed with Anne Brouwer, saying that roosters do not make night noises – but dogs do. He also stated his opinion that citizens need to attend Planning Commission meetings. Mr. Koroleski then asserted that people need to understand where they live, and that when you live in the country, roosters do crow in the morning – to get you out of bed.

Beth Buning, of 456 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, reflected that she had lived in Jamestown Township and owned chickens for 20-plus years and never had an issue, observing that the proposed Ordinance was much too restrictive, as most residents did not own a large amount of acreage.

Susan Jeurink, of 3655 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, said that when they bought their house, it came with a number of chickens and one rooster, and that she was very thankful for the rooster, as he had protected the “girls” on numerous occasions. She stated that they also owned geese, and wondered if they would be taken away, too.

Don Berends, of 4175 40<sup>th</sup>, mentioned that he does not own animals, but that he loves everything involved in country living – the sounds and smells – and that is what brought him here.

Lori McPeck, of 2695 Bauer Road, Jenison, commented that there are more and more people concerned these days with the quality of their food, the depleted soil, composting, etc., stating that having one's own chickens are a part of taking responsibility for producing your own food, and that more restrictions will take that away. She pointed out that she had grown up in the city but now her family owns ten acres, and their children are involved in 4-H and have been learning many valuable things. She pleaded that the Planning Commission not take that away from people.

Dan Besteman, of 4584 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, explained that although he works for the City of Hudsonville (which does have several families with chickens and ducks), he has chosen to live here, in Jamestown Township, and that these restrictions should not be happening in Jamestown, which is obviously a rural community.

Tammi VanderMolen, of 434 Riley Street, pointed out that she has lived here on ten acres, which are unenclosed, for many years, and she gladly chases her own, as well as her neighbor's chickens. She expressed her opinion that people who moved here should have to sign a contract, agreeing to country living, and all it entails. Mrs. VanderMolen also stated that she does not like the traffic the extra people bring.

Alton Venema, of 3616 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, explained that he raises roosters to eat, since they are bigger birds. He said that he has a friend that lives in Byron Township whose four girls wanted to raise chickens for the Fair but they got a nasty letter of complaint. Mr. Venema then asked if that is what we have come to in Jamestown. He then challenged the Commissioners not to destroy a whole lifestyle.

Doug Yonker, of 2548 Franklin Street, asserted that he owns animals and felt that if sub-divisions want restrictions, they could put them in, but only in their own sub-divisions. He expressed his opinion that sub-divisions are encroaching continually on country dwellers and there needs to be cohesiveness between sub-divisions and rural areas, but if people want city living, they should stay in the city.

Rose Marie Fuller, of 2524 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue, asserted that she had moved to Jamestown Township for the sights, sounds, and smells of the country – and asked the Commissioners to please not take that away.

Beth Besteman, of 4584 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, remarked that she lives where it is zoned R-1 and



that her children had raised many animals for 4-H. Mrs. Besteman went on to ask if her son, who is building nearby, would not be able to have his children involved in 4-H.

Commissioner Webster asked that the zones involving near neighbors be clarified for everyone's benefit.

Planner Ransford noted that R-2 includes sub-divisions and R-3 includes multi-family dwellings and condos.

Chairperson Larabel took a moment to explain to the residents present, the background of the situation with Section 3.5 of the JCTZO, "Keeping of Animals". He pointed out this was not a new ordinance, but an existing one with poor, confusing wording, and that the Planning Commission had been asked by the Township Board to simply clarify the language and comment on roosters. Mr. Larabel assured the residents that he had moved to Jamestown Township for the quiet, rural scenery and he recognizes the necessity and benefit of preserving it. He also affirmed that the Planning Commission valued their input and thanked them for it.

Ron Koroleski asked about the limit of animals per acre.

Larabel explained the proposed wording.

Lori McPeck pointed out that chickens did not need much space.

Commissioner Dykstra asked how roosters had come to be mentioned as a problem, in the first place.

Commissioner Tacoma reiterated that there had been a complaint and there was still need for language in the JCTZO to protect against nuisance roosters.

Mr. Larabel asked Planner Ransford for insight.

Commissioner Webster suggested looking into Grand Rapids Township's Ordinance.

Mr. Ransford agreed that he could look into the coinciding ordinance for Grand Rapids but stated the Commission could spend many weeks comparing townships, and that you simply cannot please everyone. He then clarified that the State of Michigan sees personal use of property and farms as different entities.

Commissioner Keppel remarked that when this issue had first been presented to the Planning Commission, there had been no outside input, and that hearing resident's comments had been very good – he felt the Commissioners were greatly helped by hearing their concerns.

Chairperson Larabel concluded by saying that the proposed wording for the Keeping of Animals would be put on the agenda for next month.

#### \*Master Plan – Final Review – City of Hudsonville Comment Letter –

Mr. Larabel asserted that this final draft of the Master Plan represented eighteen months of work, and that he had no further input or comments.

Mr. Keppel reflected that the Planning Commission had studied it over well.

Chairperson Larabel opined that the long journey had brought a Master Plan that was solid and clear, and thanked Greg Ransford for his efforts.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to schedule the Master Plan for a Public Hearing.

#### \*Mineral and Soil Removal Ordinance –

Commissioners discussed briefly the recommended wording, along with the changes, including increasing the tipping fee from one cent to five cents. Commissioners were agreed that the changes proposed were beneficial.

Commissioner Dykstra made the motion, which was supported by Mr. Keppel, that the Planning Commission recommend to the Jamestown Charter Township Board the second version of the Mineral and Soil Removal Ordinance, with the recommended minimum of five cents for the tipping fee for review.

## MOTION CARRIED – UNANIMOUSLY.

### EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS ONLY -

Ron Koroleski noted that the residents present were very passionate because of concern about new ordinances taking away their rights, suggesting the necessity of a hearing if citizen's rights were concerned.

Pat Deemter, of 3596 16<sup>th</sup> Street, asked if there had ever been any complaints about chickens, and if so, why it had taken a year to deal with one complaint, as she thought this had.

Commissioners replied that, yes, there had been one complaint.

Cindy Brouwer asked when the issue of keeping poultry would come up to the Planning Commission or the Board again. She pointed out that residents did not feel that they were being properly notified when something of concern came up for discussion to the Township Board or Planning Commission, pointing out that her father did not even own a computer so he could not check the website, for example.

Mike Vis, of 3190 Mason, stated that it was sad to see the numbers of children, participating in 4-H at the Hudsonville Fair's poultry barn, go down.

Commissioner Smith pointed out the importance of concerned residents attending Planning Commission meetings, observing that 99% of the time there was no one there.

Chairperson Larabel expressed his appreciation to all the residents who had come out. He also stated that he believed information about the proposed change in wording for Section 3.5 was posted at the Hudsonville Fair this year.

Cindy Brouwer explained that she had posted the information at the Fair, as she had felt strongly that it was important for all to be informed.

Tammi VanderMolen wondered how a new ordinance limiting the number of chickens would be enforced, suggesting that it would be best to keep it simple – the simpler the better.

Commissioner Webster commented that the Planning Commission had been given the old ordinance and asked to clarify the language.

Tammi VanderMolen then inquired if there were any farmers on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Keppel replied that he had been raised on a farm and Commissioner Smith stated that he owned ten acres.

Chairperson Larabel asked the residents not to be disappointed yet, asserting that the process was not over.

Commissioner Dykstra mentioned that this had all started long before, as the current wording for Section 3.5, had been on the books for some time.

Lori McPeck, of Jenison, explained that she had attended the meeting not as a resident, but as a concerned citizen, understanding the neighboring townships look at each other and compare ordinances. She then encouraged the Commissioners to consider being more open, as she had seen chickens being raised in sub-divisions, and that it was very doable.

### CORRESPONDENCE -

\*Zeeland Charter Township Notice for Comments -

Planner Ransford assured the Commissioners that he would let them if there were any conflicts.

### PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENT -

Commissioner Webster expressed concern that residents of Jamestown Township were not well informed regarding what was happening at meetings and asking what could be done, in a cost conscious way, to correct the matter, mentioning various solutions, such as a blog.

Commissioner Tacoma agreed, remarking that he had certainly heard the frustration of the



residents attending this meeting, stating that the Jamestown Journal went out at seemingly random times. He then noted that the Planning Commission meetings were always the third Tuesday of every month, however, and the agenda was posted on the door of the Township Offices.

Planner Ransford concurred, observing that he always sent the agenda out about ten days before the meeting, and noting that residents could always just call the office, as well.

ADJOURNMENT -

At this time, Commissioner Tacoma made the motion, supported by Commissioner Dykstra that the meeting be adjourned.

**MOTION CARRIED - UNANIMOUSLY.**

Time: 8:15 PM.

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY -

Sandy VanAntwerp