

THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting, Monday, September 23, 2019

6:00 P.M.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Verhey at 6:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.
2. Present: Tim Verhey, Martin Wenger, Curt Campbell, Linda Gasper, Craig Stolsonburg. Also present: Catherine Getty, Diane VanderWerp, Mike VanSprange, Karen VanSprange, and Sherry Ronning
3. **MOTION** by Gasper, support by Stolsonburg to approve the Agenda, **MOTION CARRIED** with 5 yes voice votes.
4. **MOTION** by Campbell, support by Gasper to approve the August 26, 2019 Minutes as written. **MOTION CARRIED** with 5 yes voice votes.
5. Citizen Comments: None.
6. Public Hearings:
 - a. **Variance #112-661 Broadway:** Staff Introduction: Getty stated that Mike and Karen VanSprange of 661 Broadway Middleville, Mi 49333, applied for a variance to replace the lower section of the sign located outside their business.
 - i. Getty noted the owners of Red's Bar & Grill are requesting to remove the old sign and change it to a digital sign. Getty explained that the sign is considered a Non-Conforming Sign which allows the sign to be maintained and the sign face display content changed but that it cannot be structurally altered in any manner as stated in the Zoning Ordinance Section 24.13 non-conforming signs.
 - ii. Verhey opened and closed the public hearing with no public comment.
 - iii. ZBA members offered comments on the criteria for approving a variance Section 27.6: Verhey commented criteria A & B are satisfied because of the retaining wall, criteria C because it is a commercial area and other businesses have the same signs to advertise. Criteria D is satisfied because they should be allowed to have the sign for business. No one came to the meeting or contacted the Township to comment on the replacement of the sign. Criteria E: Stolsonburg commented that a zoning change was not needed and the nature of the location of the business, retaining wall and parking lot makes this a unique situation. Wenger brought up set-back. Is the sign Grandfathered in? Sign can't be moved too far back because of the retaining wall and would lose sight of the sign from the road. Verhey commented about the sign in the right away and future road expansion. Getty commented there are no future plans to expand the road. Gasper asked about the 25' set back. Verhey commented 25' set-back would not allow for a good sign placement.
 - iv. Verhey directed to the VanSprange's

- v. Karen VanSprange commented the sign is in dire condition and falling apart. VanSprange commented they need to grow the business at Reds and hopefully a new sign with daily advertising will help the matter. VanSprange commented the sign size will stay the same just change it to digital. VanSprange commented they have spent a lot of money on the inside of the bar and would like to make positive improvements to sign. Stolsonburg commented about replacing the posts on the sign and VanSprange commented they would be glad to support change to all of the sign. Campbell brought up the timing of the sign did not allow to have a lighted sign from the hours of 11:00 pm to 6:00 am. Getty commented the application before them is just for the sign location and could not include a variance from the electronic sign standards. She also noted the "11:00 pm to 6:00 am" standard would likely require a zoning ordinance amendment and not a variance. Getty read the standards for sign ordinance Section 24.15 Electronic Changeable Message Signs.
- vi. Diane VanderWerp thanked the owners of Red's Bar & Grill for wanting to make improvements to the sign.

Motion by Stolsonburg, support by Wenger to approve the structural modification of the non-conforming sign in its current location citing the Criteria A-E were all met. Motion carried with 5 votes yes.

- 7. **Adjournment: MOTION** by Stolsonburg, support by Campbell to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. **MOTION CARRIED** with 5 yes voice votes.
- 8. Chairperson Verhey adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Curt Campbell, Secretary

Sherry L. Ronning, Recording Secretary

Approved _____