

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
August 8, 2016**

PRESENT: Blough, Batchelor, Simmonds, Clements, Edwards
TOWNSHIP PLANNER: Tim Johnson
CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE: 0

The regular meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Simmonds at 7:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of July 11, 2016 were presented for approval. Mr. Edwards moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the Minutes of July 11, 2016 are approved.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

There were no changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The meeting was opened to public comment at 7:03 pm. No one spoke. Public comment was closed at 7:03 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

Sign Ordinance Amendments

Review of the proposed Sign Ordinance of July 11, 2016 was continued.

Section 1:

Billboards are allowed along and within 200 feet of the I-96 Right of Way, but are not restricted on content (can now advertise on-premise products, for example).

Section 2:

No changes offered.

Section 3:

Paragraph (b)(2) is changed to also allow government agency flags.

Section 4:

Paragraph (a) is corrected to change the phrase “right order” in the third line to read “right to order”.

Paragraph (b)(2) is changed by dropping the opening phrase “Where lighting is provided,”. The reference to signs “shall” be internally lighted is changed to “may” be internally lighted.

The second paragraph (b)(3) is corrected to be (b)(4).

In paragraph (c)(3) it was decided to limit the height of a ground sign to six feet.

In paragraph (c)(5) the language was clarified to indicate a wall sign may not extend beyond the window sills of the upper floor, or the top of the wall to which it is attached. The previous limitation of 20 feet above finished grade has been dropped.

Paragraph (d) is dropped in its entirety and the following paragraphs re-lettered accordingly.

The former paragraph (e) shall have the last sentence, concerning the registering of contractors in Lowell Township, removed. Contractor registration practices will be checked with Cascade Township.

The former paragraph (f) shall end after the phrase “...on private property”.

Section 5:

Paragraph (c) will limit each permanent sign area to 12 square feet.

Paragraph (d) will remove the term “approved”, referring to boulevard median strips in the second sentence.

Paragraph (e) has the reference to Section 18.10 corrected to Section 18.11.

Section 6:

No changes offered.

Section 7:

Paragraph (e)(2) will not contain a limit on total temporary sign area for a given parcel.

Paragraph (e)(3) will require a permit for a temporary sign of 24 square feet in area up to the maximum allowed square footage.

Section 8:

No changes offered.

Section 9:

Paragraph (b) is changed to require removal of temporary signs within fourteen days after conclusion of the event.

Tim Johnson will prepare a revised draft of the Ordinance based on the above input, for further review.

Discussion Regarding Home Based Businesses

Discussion of possible changes to allow some home based businesses was continued. Mr. Clements suggested that the Planning Commission consider treating those activities where equipment is stored on residential property, but the actual work is performed off the premises (lawn care service and snow plowing for example) as NOT being a Home Based Business, but rather a question of parking work-based equipment on residential property. Section 4.20 of the Ordinance already addresses commercial vehicle parking on residential property, and could be amended to include commercial trailers containing equipment such as lawn mowers.

There was extensive discussion of work being performed in accessory buildings, number of employees allowed in a home based business, and parking and traffic issues which may arise from a home based business. Mr. Blough suggested that the size of the business might be limited based on parcel size. Mr. Edwards spoke on enforcement issues.

An Ordinance for “Home Occupations” from Otisco Township, Ionia County, was discussed. It was decided that this Ordinance might be a good starting point for the Lowell Township Ordinance.

Tim Johnson will prepare a draft Ordinance based on the Otisco Township Ordinance but also encompassing the factors and approaches previously discussed by members of the Planning Commission.

The Home Based Business discussion will be continued in future meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

There is no New Business before the Planning Commission.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

There will be no workshop meeting on August 22nd.

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ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Batchelor moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Edwards. All in favor and the Regular Meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Submitted _____ Secretary
Timothy Clements

Approved _____