

Concord Plan Commission Minutes February 3, 2009

TOWN OF CONCORD PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Secretary Sally Williams with Jim Gilbert, Rhonda Leader, Carol Hoffmeister, and Sally Williams present. Chairman Dave Janquart was not present. Town supervisor Bill Ingersoll and Town Clerk Lloyd Zastrow were also present. Jim Gilbert led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Sally Williams stated that the meeting had been properly posted. Jim Gilbert moved to accept the minutes of the July 22 meeting, seconded by Rhonda Leader and carried.

Daniel Berg presented a preliminary CSM for a 3 acre farm consolidation at his property on N7149 CTH F. The CSM indicated that Mr. Berg would need to provide a T-turn around where the county road meets his driveway. Jim Gilbert made a motion to recommend approval of the farm consolidation to the town board, seconded by Sally Williams and carried.

Laura Martinez requested a variance for a reduced road setback for a 3 season room being built off the front of her house. Building of the room has already begun, but Ms. Martinez was not aware that she needed a variance and a building permit. Sally Williams stated that she had measured from the road centerline to the eave of the building and the measurement was 78 ft. The allowable setback from the road centerline is 85 ft. Drawings provided by Ms. Martinez show a setback from the road right of way to the eave of 47 ft. which infringes by 3 ft. on the allowable setback from the road right of way by 3 ft. These measurements do not include stairs which would extend another 3-4 ft. beyond the eave. The person building the addition was present and said that he could draw up plans to bring the steps off either side of the addition rather than off the front in order to not encroach any further on the setback. Jim Gilbert suggested making accurate drawings of both scenarios – one with the steps coming off the front and one with the steps from the sides- to present to the town board. Jim Gilbert made a motion to recommend approval of the variance to the town board with a preference for the steps coming off the side of the addition rather than off the front, seconded by Sally Williams and carried.

Professor Steve Grabow then addressed the board and the citizens present regarding the Town of Concord Comprehensive Plan which is nearing completion. The Plan Commission had requested his advice on the Implementation Element and on how to proceed from this point. Steve briefly recapped the Town's planning process as it began with the visioning seminars over 2 ½ years ago and commended the ongoing citizen involvement. He said that it is important for the Implementation Element to identify key strategies to implement the plan and then outline how these strategies will be incorporated into the Town government. He felt that our current draft of the Implementation Element accomplished this.

Richard Reindeers questioned the wording in the Implementation Element regarding mailing notices to all households in the town in the event of an amendment to the plan. He felt that if mailings are conducted, they should go to all property owners as well. After some discussion, it was decided to change the wording to read that mailings would go to all town residences and to non-resident property owners.

There was also discussion regarding the writing of an ordinance to limit large scale farming operations. Currently the plan states that the ordinance would be directed at farms whose size is >25% of the minimum defined for factory farms. Because the definition of a factory farm varies dependent on the type of animal, the 25% may be acceptable in some situations and not others. It was decided that the plan would not define the size of the farm which the ordinance would address but would leave that decision up to those writing the ordinance. The plan would stipulate that, until an ordinance is developed, the Town Board would review any proposal for new farming operations which exceed 10% of the minimum size defined for factory farms. Steve said we may want to change the wording from “factory farms” to “intensive farm operations.”

Cindy Arbiture asked if there were any strategies in the plan to encourage farming and agricultural businesses. Steve stated that this type of strategy would belong in the Economic Development Element and that it is difficult to address this in a Comprehensive Plan. He did say that Jefferson County is currently working on a new plan which addresses programs to encourage agriculture.

The question was asked as to whether or not municipalities must put aside funds for conservation easements or purchase of development rights. Steve said that municipalities usually fund the purchase of development rights in part but that grant money may be available as well. He stated that the County Farmland Preservation Commission is working on mapping areas which would be desirable for conservation easements. He said, however, that they have a lot of planning to do before they are ready to work with the Towns.

Lloyd Zastrow asked if the town board can make changes to the recommended plan before they adopt it without sending the plan back to the Plan Commission. Other question included: do we need to have an attorney review the plan? Do we need to send paper copies to all the entities listed in state statutes or would digital copies be OK? At what point do we need to send out these copies – after the plan commission recommends the plan to the town board, or after the town board formally adopts the plan? Steve will check on these issues and Bill will talk to the Town’s Association attorney as well.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Plan Commission will be held on February 24, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Williams, secretary