1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Chairman Warner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a quorum present.


Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Michael Clark, AICP, Williams & Works

Others Present: Members of the media and Billboard Advertising Company Representatives

2. CONSIDERATION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

Agenda accepted as presented.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS (BRIEF – UP TO 2 MINUTES)

A. Warner opened the floor to public comment and found no comment from the audience.

4. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

A. Minutes of the February 7, 2011 meeting.

R. Parent made a motion to approve the minutes of February 7, 2011, as presented. Motion was supported by D. Gunnink.

VOICE VOTE: All ayes. Minutes of the February 7, 2011 meeting approved.

5. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A. None.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS
A. Discussion – Draft Sign Ordinance

A. Warner began the review of the proposed changes and invited Planning Commissioners to comment as pages were reviewed.

D. Gunnink stated for the audience that this is the third review of proposed text changes by Planning Commissioners.

A. Warner stated that Section 19.4 should actually read 1.5 foot candles, Clark to make correction.

A. Warner stated that he had done some research on sign owner insurance requirements, found that insurance coverage can be accomplished two different ways, can be a blanket endorsement and list the Township as an additional insured.

A. Warner stated that digital face sign have a listed transition time of 4 seconds, changed from the current 2 second transition time, he recommended keeping the existing 2 second change time.

Mike Hucal, Hucal Outdoor Advertising, stated that the State of Michigan also has regulations in place that billboard companies must adhere to as well.

Jonci Warner, Harder Warner Nursery, in charge of billboard signage, transition time was changed at their business, feels that the 2 second time is more beneficial to businesses, and allows for more advertising opportunities.

K. Cavanaugh stated that she felt the intent of the change was to eliminate multiple images and to address a safety concern.

A. Warner stated that in order to support business in the area regulations need to be sensitive to advertising, signage is a useful tool for business.

K. Cavanaugh stated her concern is safety, feels faster transition is a safety concern.

Steve Yogur, feels that the Township should be more business friendly, has concerns about businesses not coming to the Township because of restrictive regulations, feels the Townships position is not business friendly.

R. Parent found from Clark that there have not been complaints regarding signage transition.

M. Kelly concurred with the opinion, feels that if there have not been complaints transition time should remain.

D. Koopmans found from Clark that comparisons were made with several other municipalities in the area and the Midwest region, stated he would be supportive of keeping the 2 second transition time.

T. Morris stated that section 19.2 (6) should read computer enabling instead of computer interface.

R. Parent questioned Clark regarding section 19.5(d) is referring to different levels of insurance coverage, feels height should be more of a consideration when considering insurance levels.

Clark will change requirement to read signage over 6 feet as opposed to 12 square feet.

K. Cavanaugh stated that discussion at previous meetings regarding section signage exempt from permits, found that the types of signage listed are prohibited in a commercial event, feels that sections 19.7 and 19.8 conflict, appears that the intent is to limit temporary signs.
Commissioners discussed the definition of temporary signage and if it is regulations clearly define intent.

A. Warner stated that the time limit for banners should be adjusted to 4 - 14 day periods, to allow for one opportunity per season and found support from Planning Commissioners, would be supportive of regulating the use via temporary sign permit application.

D. Koopmans questioned Clark as to what the fee for a temporary sign permit is and found from Clark that the fee is set forth by the Township Board, did not have a fee schedule for permits but will relay the information requested.

A. Warner requested clarification on side comments for signs in C-1, C-2, and HC districts found from Clark that the provision is based on the fact that a larger parcel can garner more signage opportunities.

K. Cavanaugh stated that she recalled previous discussion with the intent on providing a certain number of signs per frontages.

D. Koopmans stated that multiple signs can be a distraction, would like to see clarified.

Discussion followed regarding monument signs as opposed to monopole signs.

T. Morris stated he would like to see the flexibility of monopole signs in HC district.

A. Warner stated that he feels part of the reason new businesses are not coming into commercial areas is partly because of the restrictive position of the Township.

D. Koopmans stated that the requirements need to be reasonable and still consider the aesthetics of the community.

K. Cavanaugh stated that it is also a “way finding” issue, if new to the area should be able to clearly navigate to desired businesses, allowing more signage would make navigation easier for highway traffic.

D. Gunnink found that MDOT signage is something that businesses pay for in order to utilize.

Commissioners were comfortable with the 18 foot monopole requirements along HC district.

Steve Disselkoen, Grand Rapids Outdoor Advertising, have billboards in Caledonia, respectfully disagreed with Commissioner comments regarding awareness, want to pull persons toward business areas, sometimes there is confusion regarding LED requirements on billboards, no flashing/brightness, national companies are expensive, have many local customers that want signage opportunities at a more reasonable price, emit less light than standard billboard signage, M-6 is no longer a rural area.

D. Gunnink stated that current signage along M-6 is a distraction; found from Disselkoen that the images he supports are more of a “matte” image.

R. Parent found from Disselkoen locations of several of the billboards that he could look at for comparison, also found that the digital signs allow for some “free” advertisement of community services/events and public service messages such as Amber Alerts.

A. Warner stated that for disclosure purposes he does lease a sign location to Disselkoen.

Clark reviewed ordinance guidelines for conforming and non-conforming signs; stated current changes being reviewed were largely based on previous discussions and feedback received during a joint meeting with Township Board members.
Steve Disselkoen stated he feels that billboard companies are being unfairly targeted, feels they are a useful advertising tool.

Randy Disselkoen, Grand Rapids Outdoor Advertising, 22 digital signs in Grand Rapids, have new technology that is better than previous technology, Township ordinances are restrictive, and have the ability to “dial down” the impact, currently have a mall that is half empty due to restrictions on advertising, advertising has changed.

D. Gunnink feels that feedback received warrants some further examination of the guidelines for replacing/refurbishing sign faces and possible conversions to digital face signs, sees the merit in the fact that requirements do not allow for replacement of billboard signs.

D. Koopmans stated that the discussion had with Board members previously is still relevant and their position should be considered as well.

A. Warner stated that any proposed changes are going to have to be routed through the Township Board.

R. Parent requested that Commissioners return to section 19.9 signage in residential areas, has concern regarding 12 square foot of signage for home occupations, would be upset with allowing 12 square foot of signage for a home occupation, and would like to see signage in residential areas be more inconspicuous.

Clark stated that he is in agreement; many other municipalities only allow 6 square foot of signage for home occupations.

Discussion followed regarding AG and AR signage as opposed to residential, Commissioners were in agreement that they would be of allowing larger home occupation signage in AG/AR districts.

M. Kelly stated that he would find wall sign would be more desirable for home occupations.

Robert Robertson, Township Treasurer, stated he feels that the home occupations are “escaping” taxation that other similar type businesses with a “storefront” are subjected too.

D. Koopmans does not feel that signage is necessary for home occupations that are located residential district.

K. Cavanaugh stated that use is more of a factor; if primary use is residential would not want to see a blanket requirement for the residential area.

D. Gunnink stated that previous approvals for home occupations with signage may send a conflicting message, feels restricting the size of signage is more appealing in a residential district.

A. Warner stated it may be clearer to limit signage for R-1, R-2, and R-3 residential zoning districts to what is allowed to 6 square feet and Ag/AR districts would be allowed 12 square feet.

K. Cavanaugh stated that restrictions may seem selective.

At 8:43 pm Commissioners took a short recess before continuing to the next topic, Commissioners reconvened at 8:54 pm

Robert Robertson, Township Treasurer, stated that there are 30 billboards between Middleville and Caledonia, feels other communities have handled the billboard issues differently.

B. Discussion – Multi-family/High Density Residential Regulations

A. Warner introduced the item and asked Clark to review the intent of the regulations.
Clark found that the regulations should be revised based on location as opposed to population and displayed the current land use map to pinpoint locations for high density, highlighted the current areas that high density/multi-family residential.

A. Warner stated that the Planning Commission is looking at future areas for apartment housing, would create a new R-4 zoning district, looking at an area along 68th Street to implement an R-4 zoning district.

D. Koopmans questioned if the HDR would be converted to an R-4 zoning distinction, found from Warner that revisions were prompted by previous discussions with Township Board members, would like to contain high density by specifically designating areas for that development, and when full may need to designate additional areas.

K. Cavanaugh was in agreement that “walkability”, amenities, and access to public transit are desirable for high density housing; feels the area being discussed is a good area with highway and Davenport College in the area, feels future use will bring amenities that are desirable for high density/multi-family housing areas.

M. Kelly stated that he feels the farming community should be allowed some input before regulations are put in place.

D. Koopmans found from Clark that HDR zoning is merely a designation, feels the Board would like to restrict high density development to the northern end of town.

K. Cavanaugh stated that there is a need for the younger generation and feels that there should be ample opportunity for high density housing.

A. Warner stated a good beginning place would be to get some feedback from the farming community and elected Township Board Officials.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS (EXTENDED – UP TO 5 MINUTES)

Roger Keating, 7166 Thornapple River Drive, property adjoins a PMR, would like to give a brief history of the area, elevations have dropped, there is also a dump buried in the area, submitted pictures showing his parcel as a “spill zone”, have dug out the existing creek to try to eradicate the mosquito population, showed Commissioners a pictorial history of the existing creek/water table, mining process has lowered the water tables, have less water flowing onto the property, have diverted the runoff and it is running off in another direction, only answer he can get is that the water levels “appear to be ok”, would like to have Township Officials come to the property and observe what he is referring to, has lost trees due to the drop in the water table, if ponds/creek dry up will lower property assessment dramatically, finished level on the mining permit should be 710 feet, mining company is coming in to renew mining permit for an additional 20 years and would like his concerns addressed before any extensions are granted, have gotten no response from DEQ, big concern is adjoining properties, feels that 710 feet is not sufficient, please go back and examine original permit documents.

A. Warner stated that when the request for renewal is presented to the Planning Commission should be investigated for compliance with original permit requirements, should be examined thoroughly and requested that Mr. Keating be notified when application is submitted for an extension for the mining permit extension, compliance issues are the key.

9. COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

D. Gunnink stated that residents should be allowed input into what is desirable in the Township, whenever input has been garnered residents very clearly state that they want to keep Caledonia rural, still a Township-not a city.
M. Kelly agreed with a rural Caledonia, but still need to understand needs of business as well.

10. ADJOURNMENT

D. Koopmans made a motion to adjourn. Motion was supported by M. Kelly.

VOICE VOTE – all ayes – Meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

CADEDONIA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Duane Gunnink, Secretary
Approved: March 21, 2011

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lamb
Recorder