Minutes of a meeting held on November 21, 2011

A regular meeting of the Charter Township of Caledonia Planning Commission held at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, November 21, 2011, at the Township Office, 8196 Broadmoor Ave. SE, Caledonia, Michigan.

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: Lynee Wells, AICP, Williams & Works, Township Planner

Others Present: Members of the media and representatives from Country Meadows

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 at 7:01, and closed it at the same time, finding no public comment.

4. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

A. Minutes of the October 17, 2011 meeting.

D. Gunnink made a motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2011, as submitted. Motion was supported by R. Parent.

VOICE VOTE: All ayes. Minutes of the October 17, 2011 meeting approved.

5. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.
7. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Site Plan Review:** Requested by Country Meadows Manufactured Home Park, to construct a 14’ by 12’ addition to the existing office/community building.

   Terry Thompson, representing Country Meadows, came forward and gave a brief overview of the project. They would like to construct a small 14’ by 12’ addition onto the existing clubhouse/office. The addition will be used for office purposes.

   D. Gunnink referenced the memo from Fire Chief Bennett, asking for the installation of a Knox box at the entrance to the new office. T. Thompson asked where it should be installed, on the existing or new addition? D. Gunnink replied on the addition, explained it is a steel box with a key, for response teams in emergency situations, such as gas leaks, etc., to gain access without breaking the door. T. Thompson asked if this was a new requirement, D. Koopmans responded no, that it is common; the Fire Chief asks for it when there are upgrades made to a building.

   A. Warner inquired about the height of the building; T. Thompson responded it was 14.5 to 15 feet.

   R. Parent asked if the siding on the addition would match the existing building; T. Thompson indicated it would be as close as possible to existing siding and shingles.

**ARCHIE WARNER ENTERTAINS A MOTION:**

A. Warner motioned to approve the Site Plan of the 14’ by 12’ addition, with Planner Wells to review scaled drawings and lighting plan, and the installation of a Knox Box.

Motion was supported by T. Morris.


B. **Discussion Item:** To consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, to allow landscaping operations as a Special Land Use in the A, Agricultural District.

   A. Warner commented that landscaping operations are an intensive use for the Agricultural District, and feels growth can’t be controlled. These kinds of businesses are similar to Contractor Yards, which are permitted in C-2 and I; these businesses belong in business areas. He also commented that since he has Agricultural property where he grows trees for his business, amending the ordinance would benefit him. But he doesn’t think it is right to amend the ordinance.

   R. Parent agreed; numerous trucks and trailers are used as these businesses grow. While Caledonia is no longer an agricultural community, this is still a heavy use in this district. Businesses with this need for storage and large facilities belong in commercial districts.

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T. Morris stated that these uses go against the ordinance, and there are too many variables.

M. Kelly commented that most of these businesses started out small, and got bigger over time. How can it be corrected now? It is hard for the township to do anything about these businesses now since they have been here, some for a long time. He doesn’t feel they should change the ordinance. He also commented that outdoor storage of equipment and rocks, mulch, etc. becomes too intense a use for the Ag district.

D. Gunnink agreed to keep the ordinance as is. He also expressed concern over storage/disposal of chemicals.

K. Cavanaugh stated that she is in favor of amending the ordinance. She researched Gaines and Byron Townships, and they allow these types of businesses with a Special Use Permit. By allowing these businesses by a Special Use Permit, the township can better regulate them. She felt if there haven’t been complaints, then we shouldn’t prohibit these businesses. She referred to landscape maintenance companies, not agricultural uses.

A. Warner commented that landscaping is construction, not an agricultural use.

R. Parent commented that Home Based Businesses are for small uses; when a business grows, it should relocate to commercial districts. He feels allowing these causes problems. K. Cavanaugh suggested they not say all Home Based Business cause problems; they can, but many don’t.

D. Koopmans commented we would be creating more problems we don’t need, feels the Home Based Business ordinance already regulates this. He also commented that we need to improve enforcement in the township.

A. Warner agreed that businesses could start at home, but then need to be relocated when they expand. He polled the commissioners to see if they wanted to pursue amending the ordinance. By voice vote, 3 were in favor of amending, 4 were not. The discussion ended.

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

A. Warner opened public comment at 7:45 and closed it at the same time, seeing none.

9. COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

R. Parent suggested that township staff write a letter to each of the businesses, to find out if there are chemicals stored/used on site. The Township and Fire Department should be made aware of these. He also stated it should be on the next agenda, to report back findings of staff. He commented that he is not against business, he is pro home occupations, but feels there should be no appearance of business at the residence. He also recommended adding a condition to Home Based Business permits that would require the applicant to carry commercial insurance on their business.

A. Warner thanked everyone for their time and effort. He commented that these businesses are good neighbors, and he doesn’t want them burdened.
D. Koopmans commented that we have zoning ordinances to enforce, and we should do that.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOICE VOTE – all ayes – Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

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Duane Gunnink, Secretary
Approved: 12/19/11

Sincerely,

Angela Burnside
Recorder