

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORKSHOP MEETING  
June 26, 2006**

**PRESENT:** Batchelor, Clements, Sanford, Simmonds

**ABSENT:** None

**PLANNER:** Tim Johnson – MainStreet Planning

**CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE:** 2

The workshop meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Simmonds at 7:01 p.m.

**AGENDA:**

Mr. Batchelor moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Sanford. All in favor and the Agenda was approved .

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Public comment began at 7:02 p.m. No member of the public spoke. Public comment ended at 7:02 p.m.

**COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PARKING**

The Planning Commission began by reviewing Draft 1 of the Commercial Vehicle Parking Regulations in the R-2, R-3 and MH zoning districts dated April 10, 2006 and the three alternative versions of proposed ordinance language prepared by MainStreet Planning. After extensive discussions, it was agreed that Tim Johnson would present revised proposed language based on Alternative 1, but increasing the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating from 10,000 pounds to 12,000 pounds. It was also determined that the definition of a commercial vehicle would include lettering, logos or attachments visible on the vehicle indicating it's commercial use. It was further agreed that only one commercial vehicle below the maximum weight allowed would be permitted on a parcel subject to the ordinance.

**TEMPORARY SIGNS (PRELIMINARY TO MEETING WITH CITY OF LOWELL)**

Mr. Sanford and Mr. Batchelor are to act as the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission representatives to planned meetings with City of Lowell Planning Commission representatives for the purpose of exploring possible coordination of temporary sign ordinances between the two governmental units. Mr. Simmonds requested Planning Commission input on the direction those discussions should take.

Mr. Sanford indicated a desire for Lowell Township to keep some control over the temporary signage allowed in the township. Mr. Simmonds and Mr. Sanford noted the differences between the city and the township, including densities, which might preclude common ordinances. Mr. Simmonds also noted that an ordinance change would affect the entire township, not just the M-21 corridor.

Mr. Sanford suggested a permit procedure with a small fee to control temporary signs. Mr. Batchelor distinguished the use of temporary signage during the first 30 days of a new business and ongoing use thereafter. After some discussion, Mr. Clements suggested allowing three permits per year, each good

for up to seven days, and a minimum of 30 days between issuance of permits to the same business. Mr. Batchelor suggested four weekly permits per year, in addition to a permit for up to 30 days after issuance of the occupancy permit for a new business.

Mr. Batchelor suggested defining the types of temporary signage allowed under a permit process. After discussion, it was generally agreed that portable signs, balloons, banners and flags would be allowed, but spotlights, strings of lights, flashing or strobe lights and animated signs would not be allowed. It was generally felt that uplifting would be prevented by the existing Lighting Ordinance, and that all signage (balloons in particular) would be limited to 35 feet above grade. It was agreed that signs would be limited to 32 square feet. Multiple signs would be allowed.

There was some discussion of community special event signage, with some preference towards requiring a permit, but waiving any fees. Casual signage such as a school car wash was not seen as a concern.

It was suggested that the resolution setting permit fees might charge \$25 per permit, with a \$200 bond.

Tim Johnson will prepare a bulleted list of the main discussion points for use in the upcoming discussions.

## **AG-1 ZONING CHANGES**

An increase in the number of requests for additional non-farm homes in the Ag-1 zoning district, and the difficulties of applying the current ordinance language of no more than two non-farm homes in a given quarter-section of land, has prompted a review of the Ag-1 zoning restrictions. Tim Johnson presented a memorandum of June 21, 2006 regarding Considerations for AG-1 Zone Regulations, which was reviewed.

It was generally agreed by members of the Planning Commission that the current ordinance is too restrictive and causes a hardship for landowners, while at the same time it was recognized that many people want to preserve our farmland.

Mr. Simmonds asked the members of the Planning Commission if this was a question to be pursued now, or when the next Master Plan review occurs. Mr. Sanford expressed a desire to pursue this question now, as the Master Plan itself is a great deal of work on it's own. Mr. Batchelor suggested that the Ag-1 land use question might well represent fifty percent of the discussions that would occur during the Master Plan review.

Tim Johnson suggested a survey to determine the desire of township residents. Mr. Batchelor expressed an interest in discussing what we want in the Ag-1 district before looking at changes to the ordinance. Mr. Clements offered his written statement of assumptions and proposals for the Ag-1 zoning district dated June 26, 2006, made a part of the record, which might serve as a starting point for discussions by the Planning Commission. Mr. Simmonds suggested a review of the offered material with further discussion at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Batchelor raised the possibility of a moratorium on allowing new non-farm homes in the Ag-1 zoning district until this review is completed. Mr. Sanford favored an official moratorium until a decision is made by the Planning Commission on this question. Mr. Simmonds noted that a moratorium could not take effect until approved by the Lowell Charter Township Board of Trustees, who would not meet again until after the next Planning Commission meeting. It was agreed to address the moratorium question, survey possibilities and potential planning tools at the next Planning Commission meeting. It was also noted that it would be advisable to notify the local Board of Realtors about any moratorium affecting land in the Ag-1 zoning district.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

There were no commissioner comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Batchelor moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Sanford. All in favor and the regular meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Submitted \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary  
Timothy Clements

Approved \_\_\_\_\_