LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 27, 2006

PRESENT: Batchelor, Den Houter, Clements, Sanford, Simmonds
ABSENT: None
PLANNER: Tim Johnson – MainStreet Planning

PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing to amend the Lowell Township Zoning Ordinance governing the location of billboards was called to order by Chairman Simmonds at 7:02 p.m.

The Notice of Public Hearing was read by the Planning Commission Secretary.

The proposed Ordinance amendment was presented by Township Planner Johnson. The proposed change would limit billboards to within 200 feet of the Right of Way line of the I-96 expressway in areas zoned Industrial. All other billboard regulations would remain unchanged.

The Planning Commission felt that large billboards are more appropriately located along the expressway than on Cascade or Alden Nash roads near residential areas.

The Planning Commission had no further questions or comments at this time.

The hearing was opened to public input at 7:06 p.m. which included the following:

Mike Seiloff was advised by Township Planner Johnson that this was just an addition to the current sign ordinance, affecting the Industrial Zones, and that a billboard was defined as an off-premises sign.

Dick Huver had no comment.

Michael Hucul was advised that the change would only affect the location of billboards, not the number of billboards allowed.

Paula Blumm thought it was a good idea to keep billboards close to the expressway to preserve the rural character of Lowell Township.

John Timpson of Timpson Orchards asked about the effect of the ordinance change on a pending billboard request in the Industrial Zone, and was advised that the Township Board had put a moratorium on billboard permits until the ordinance change was considered by the Planning Commission.

It was noted that, should there be a recommendation to amend the ordinance by the Planning Commission, and should the Township Board make the change recommended, then township staff would process any billboard permit requests, which billboards would be required to be located within 200 feet of the highway. The Planning Commission has no control over removal of the moratorium or specifying when the ordinance takes effect.

Sandy Miles made inquiries into restrictions on signs in residential areas, and was advised that the proposed ordinance change would not affect signs in residential areas.

This concluded public input.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:32 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING

The special meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Simmonds at 7:33 p.m.

AGENDA:

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

AMENDMENT OF ORDINANCE GOVERNING LOCATION OF BILLBOARDS:

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed change to the Ordinance governing the location of billboards.

All Planning Commission members were comfortable with the restriction of billboards to within 200 feet of the I-96 Right of Way line. The Planning Commission understands that billboards are typically V-shaped on a monopole, with a catwalk which can be located up to the highway Right of Way line, and that the minimum space required by a modern billboard is only 52 feet. This leaves flexibility in locating a billboard within the proposed 200 foot distance from theI-96 Right of Way line.

Sanford moved that the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission recommend to the Lowell Charter Township Board of Trustees that the proposed amendment to the billboard section of the Ordinance (Section 4.4.5.D.b) as presented at the Public Hearing on February 27, 2006, which requires that each billboard sign structure shall not be located more than 200 feet from the right of way line of the I-96 expressway, be approved.

Motion seconded by Clements.

A roll call vote yielded the following:

Den Houter – Aye
Batchelor – Aye
Simmonds – Aye
Clements – Aye
Sanford – Aye

All in favor and the motion carried.

OFF STREET PARKING ORDINANCE:

The proposed Off Street Parking Ordinance Draft #1 dated February 27, 2006 was presented by Township Planner Johnson.

In the course of discussions the following changes and issues were addressed:

- The ¾ ton commercial vehicle parking limitation may be too restrictive.
- Reinforced turf paving should be an explicitly allowed option.

The proposed Off Street Parking Ordinance was tabled for further review, with the suggestion that it be addressed again at the March 13, 2006 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE:

The proposed Landscape Ordinance Draft #1 dated February 27, 2006 was presented by Township Planner Johnson.

The proposed Landscape Ordinance was tabled for further review, with the suggestion that it be addressed again at the March 13, 2006 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The meeting was opened to public comment at 8:18 p.m. No member of the public spoke. Public comment ended at 8:18 p.m.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Chairman Simmonds opened the meeting to Commissioner comments at 8:19 p.m.

Simmonds advised the Planning Commission on recently enacted ordinance changes arising from recommendations made by the Planning Commission.

Township Planner Johnson indicated that he would bring a draft Dumpster Ordinance to the March 13, 2006 Planning Commission Regular Meeting, on the request of Simmonds.

ADJOURNMENT:

Batchelor moved to adjourn. Seconded by Sanford. All in favor and the special meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted_____ Secretary
Timothy Clements

Approved _____