

These are the minutes of the joint meeting between the Planning Commission and Township Board of April 13, 2006.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Shields.

Present: Heasley, Shields, Parmelee, Myers, Demaray, Coffey, Davis and Mark Sisson. Also present, Betty Brower, Jim Pitsch, Don Sebright, Brenda Mayes and Bob Jones.

Tonight was a work session meeting.

Mark started off by explaining to the Township Board the problem the PC is having with regard to home occupations in the township. There are more and more businesses that don't fit under the home occupation standards and the PC is working on rewriting the requirements to fit this need; also the PC wants to rewrite the standards to fit existing businesses that cannot be brought into compliance under existing standards.

Mark gave each member a hand out regarding Small Scale Businesses in Rural Areas (copy attached hereto to these minutes) and went over each category.

Mark explained to the Township Board that Demaray SUP was advised to wait by the PC on which step to take inasmuch as his business is out of compliance with the present rules and cannot easily be brought into compliance until we change the rules to fit his and other similar business establishments in Salem Township. It is in his and the township's best interest to wait for the outcome.

Type I home occupation is defined that a business is allowed in the home. This type has limited square footage so the business does not take control of the house.

Type II home occupation allows for business in the garage or detached garage as well.

Both types limit employees to family plus one other person.

The dilemma is how to solve this problem. If existing businesses choose not to comply, will the Township Board enforce the rules?

The PC has the following concerns before going any further in amending the ordinance:

- 1) Will the rules be enforced?
- 2) There is the reality that we need to loosen up requirements.  
(See Mark's memo #III)

The rationale for being less stringent in Salem is that this area is more rural as opposed to Kentwood or Byron. Houses in Salem Township are not closely located; therefore more space/bigger lots out here allow for more flexibility. We need to also limit the number and size of these business sites so we don't create ISB (Isolated Small Business) zones which would be creating ad hoc industrial/commercial zones.

Our question to the Township Board tonight is does this idea merit further study? Does the Township Board support it?

There are many options/rules out there yet to consider.

Jim P questioned if we should identify the type of business out there before setting standards?

Mark answered that this is not a good idea. There is too much room for error.

Mark again pointed out to the Township Board Demaray's situation as an example. He pointed out that Jesse was advised to sit still by the PC until this issue is addressed.

The problem is that if the business does expand, who will tell them to leave? There needs to be enforcement and will the Township Board be willing to do that?

After general discussion, Mark asked the question of the Township Board: Do you feel the current regulations are enforceable?

Jim: No

Earl: They have been enforced as much as can be.

Don: You can't keep track of everything unless someone complains. If you know of a business that is out of compliance for a couple of years, do you have a problem enforcing?

Earl: The zoning with regard to small business is too tight, but we don't want to have too much leniency. WHAT are we willing to enforce?

Davis agreed with Earl. We need to loosen up to some extent but don't broaden too far.

Mays: We need to enforce so not to have to broaden again in 10-15 years.

After more discussion, Mark ended by summarizing that the next step is to come up with a draft by the Planning Commission and input from others in the township. Consider forming a committee to review as well.

Time being gone, Parmelee made a motion to adjourn, Davis seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Submitted by,

Cris Heasley, Secretary  
Salem Township Planning Commission