

**BLAIR TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

September 16, 2020

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The Blair Township Planning Commission meeting of September 16, 2020 was called to order by Chairman Heim at 6:00 pm.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**C. ROLL CALL**

Present at roll call: Wagner, Heim, Fitzpatrick, Lombard and Nickerson. Commissioner Boeve was absent and excused.

Also present: Zoning Administrator Lisa Guererri, Zoning Enforcement Officer Matt Jerome, Recorder Susan Kase, Township Supervisor Nicole Blonshine. There were no attendees from the public.

**D. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was noted that the Junkyard Ordinance review needed to be added to this meeting's agenda under "J. New Business". **Motion by Lombard, seconded by Wagner to approve the agenda with the added item under New Business. All Yeas. Motion carried.**

**F. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Commissioner Nickerson asked if he had a possible conflict of interest in participating in the review of the Junkyard Ordinance. It was determined that he could participate in the discussion. He would have to recuse himself if a vote was taken on any changes to the ordinance.

**G. MINUTES**

Commissioner Fitzpatrick noted that his name was misspelled twice in the July 15, 2020 Draft Minutes. His name read "**Fitzgerald**" on page three. The name was corrected as "**Fitzpatrick**". **Motion by Lombard, seconded by Fitzpatrick to approve the minutes for both the July 15, 2020 meeting and the August 16, 2020 meeting. All Yeas. Motion carried.**

**H. CORRESPONDENCE**

Zoning Administrator, Lisa Guererri stated a letter was received from the East Bay Charter Township notifying recipients of their intention to amend their Master Plan.

**I. PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

## **J. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Public Hearing Zoning Ordinance Amendments #104-05-20-01 to amend sections 16.04 and 16.08 amendments regarding fencing and recreational vehicle storage.**

Chairman Heim opened the Public Hearing at 6:06 p.m.

Chairman Heim stated that the Planning Commission's objective is to recommend to the Blair Township Board of Trustees to AMEND or NOT AMEND the ordinances. He asked the Zoning Enforcement Officer, Matt Jerome, to summarize the proposed changes. The clarification is the height of the fence within the front yard setback must not exceed four (4) feet.

There was no Public Comment.

Chairman Heim closed the Public Hearing at 6:09 p.m. Comments were requested from the Commissioners for discussion.

Commissioner Clous asked why there are height restrictions. After much discussion from the Commissioners, Officer Jerome and Lisa Guerreri, the consensus was that zoning ordinances controlling the height of fences in residential areas provide for an aesthetic, consistent view in neighborhoods. While zoning requirements provide standardization, residents can apply for a variance if desired.

Chairman Heim commented that if fence height restrictions are removed from this ordinance, there are other sections of the ordinance that will be affected. He asked for other comments. There were none.

Moving to the Section 16.08 Recreational Vehicle Storage ordinance, Chairman Heim asked for comments.

Commissioner Clous asked why recreational vehicles cannot be stored within the front or side yard setback area. Lisa Guerreri responded that in previous situations where recreational vehicles were parked in the front or side yard setback, neighbors have called the Township offices to complain.

It was decided to strike the "small campfires are permitted" under paragraph five (5) as this is governed by the DNR, Michigan Department of Natural Resources. In the same paragraph, the "Administrative Review application" was defined as a requirement to make Blair Township EMS and Fire Division aware of occupancy. The property must have a physical address in order for support services to respond to an emergency.

**Motion by Lombard, seconded by Fitzpatrick to recommend** to the Blair Township Board of Trustees to amend the ordinance two changes to Section 16.04, 1., paragraph j and Section 16.08, paragraph 5. **Yes:** Heim, Lombard, Fitzpatrick, Nickerson, Wagner. **No:** Clous. **Motion carried.**

### **2. Election of Officers**

The offices of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary were decided. Commissioner Fitzpatrick nominated Jerry Heim for Chairman. **All Yeas. Motion carried.**

Commissioner Fitzpatrick nominated George Lombard for Vice Chairman. **All Yeas. Motion carried.**

Commissioner Fitzpatrick nominated Adam Wagner for Secretary. **All Yeas. Motion carried.**

### **3.Junkyard Ordinance**

Lisa Guerreri summarized the conflicts of the Junkyard Ordinance with the Blair Township Zoning Ordinance. To standardize them, the Junkyard Ordinance #102, Section 6.01 should read,

**“Setback of said fence shall be ONE HUNDRED (100) feet from the center line of the road.”**

It currently reads “three hundred (300) feet”, which is not in agreement with the zoning ordinance.

**Motion by Nickerson, seconded by Wagner** to move to go to a Public Hearing with the proposed amendment to standardize the setback distance of one hundred (100) feet to the Blair Township Junkyard Ordinance, #102. **Yes:** Heim, Clous, Wagner, Nickerson, Fitzpatrick, Lombard **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

### **K. Unfinished Business**

#### 1. Landscaping Ordinance Amendments – General Site Landscaping

Further discussion was required to amend Section 16.04, #3b which would reduce the number of required trees for general site landscaping. Under the current ordinance, the number of trees required can be overwhelming to install and maintain for a small business owner.

The wording as amended would read, “A mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees shall be planted at a rate of one (1) tree for each **nine thousand (9,000) square feet of site area**. Currently the ordinance requires one (1) tree for each three thousand (3,000) square feet of site area.

Chairman Heim confirmed with Lisa Guerreri that the current ordinance allows the applicant to count existing trees and other natural features of the property are also considered.

**Motion by Nickerson, seconded by Clous** to hold a Public Hearing for the proposed ordinance amendment. **Yes:** Clous, Nickerson, Heim, Lombard, Fitzpatrick, Wagner **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

### **L. Reports**

- 1) Zoning Administrator - Lisa Guerreri stated the October meeting has a busy agenda.
- 2) Town Board Representative – Dennis Fitzpatrick reported that he attended the ceremony for the recent promotion of the Fire Captain; the \$.65 increase for 911 service for Blair Township will be on the November 3 election ballot.
- 3) Zoning Board or Appeals – no meeting
- 4) Trails – on hold until other items are complete

**M. Any Other Business**

The Blair Township Clean Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 19.

**N. Public Input**

None

**O. Adjournment**

**Motion by Fitzpatrick, seconded by Nickerson** to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. All Yeas.

**Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kase, Recorder