

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
January 13, 2025

The Springfield Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on January 13, 2025, at the Townhouse, 13300 Ridge Road, West Springfield. The meeting was called to order at 6:55p.m.

Ken Zimmer made a motion, seconded by Elwin Rhoades, passed unanimously to keep the following

Bob Bright as Chairman.
Elwin Rhoades as Vice-Chairman.
Meredith Borstorff as Secretary.

Meetings will be held the **first** Monday of each month, at the Townhouse, 7:00 p.m.. In the event of a holiday, the meeting will be held the next day at 7:00 p.m.. The January meeting will still be held the second Monday.

Paul Eagley was re-appointed (expiration 12/31/28) at the January 6, 2025, organization meeting of the Board of Supervisors. There is still a vacancy (exp. 12/31/28). The regular meeting continued.

ZV2025-001 Variance (39) 007-010.0-009.01 – 2140 Happy Valley Rd. (Dearborn) Tim Sechrist (representative) & Heather Dearborn (applicant's wife) were present. Bob Bright reviewed the variance criteria (per the Municipal Planning Code & Springfield Zoning Ordinance). The structure was started without obtaining a zoning permit. The zoning officer came upon the structure when posting a nearby property. Upon measurements taken by the zoning officer (accompanied by Eric Taylor, Supervisor), it was determined that the northeast corner of the structure was 3'6" too close to the edge of ROW and the southeast corner was 11'2" too close. Discussion was had on the various physical characteristics of the parcel. Tim felt that this was the only/best location to place the structure because it was the most level location on the parcel. They wanted to keep the greenhouse as far away from their well as possible (recommended is 100') to lessen the likelihood of chemicals making it to their well. The greenhouse was placed slightly over 90' (downslope) from the existing well. The backyard contained too much shade and the septic/leach bed is located in the back yard. The yard continues to slope northward as well. The metal posts on the long sides are pounded in the ground. The posts on the ends are cemented in to support overhead doors. Generally speaking, the PC did not have any major concerns about the location of the structure. The concern is that the structure was started without first obtaining a zoning permit. There could have been discussions on options before anything was built. Likewise, this still could have been their preferred location, and a variance would have been necessary from the beginning.

After some discussion, Brian Barrante moved to recommend approval to the ZHB. After no second was made, the motion died. Tim Sechrist asked why the PC was hesitant to recommend approval. The PC indicated that it was a matter of setting a precedent within the township. One of the variance criteria mentions that the hardship cannot be one created by the applicant. Because they started construction without inquiring about a zoning permit and/or knowing the setback requirements, we are where we are now. The PC understands why they placed the structure where they did.

After additional discussion, Elwin Rhoades moved to send a letter presenting the facts as discussed and maintain a neutral position on the matter. Paul Eagley seconded; passed by unanimous vote.

Nuisance Ordinance – The PC reviewed the newest draft presented by Gery Nietupski. There was still considerable concern about how much was geared toward structures. Bob determined that our current enforcement procedure was approximately 3-5 steps. The proposed ordinance contains more than 10! There also was no availability to impose jail time. It was the PC's understanding that the BOS did not want any part of repairing or demolishing structures, nor did they want to clean-up anyone's property. Meredith will mark up the proposed ordinance with the PC's comments and questions and present to the BOS. The PC also wants to know whether properties in violation would be "grandfathered" and permitted to remain. Meredith indicated that we already have requirements for outside storage in place, so they are already, technically, in violation (but will check with Gery).

Minutes – Paul Eagley moved to approve both the November & December 2024, minutes. Brian Barrante seconded; passed unanimously.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Attendance: Brian Barrante, Paul Eagley, Bob Bright, Ken Zimmer, and Elwin Rhoades; Secretary, Meredith Borstorff. Chip Folletti was absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith L. Borstorff, Secretary