

**BIRMINGHAM TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 11, 2009**

The regular August meeting of the Birmingham Township Planning Commission was called to order with a quorum at 7:30 p.m. in the Township Building. Present were Chairman Nick DiMarino, Janet DeCaestecker, Mary Pat McCarthy, Scott Boorse, Doug Marshall, Eric Hawkins, Solicitor Frone Crawford and his Associate Andrew McReynolds. Minutes of the July 2009 meeting were approved (Marshall, Boorse).

Billboard Ordinance: Mr. DiMarino, citing challenges in other townships, provided a background suggesting strengthening our township's ordinance. Summarizing Mr. Crawford's memo of June 9, Mr. DiMarino enumerated three issues of concern: more permitted locations, billboard size, and lot size. He emphasized that Birmingham Township should not be seen as exclusionary, but that a better ordinance could manage the impact of billboards installed in the township. Mr. Crawford said that a billboard is not an accessory use, it is a principal use and could require a separate lot. Following this was a discussion of the 4-page ordinance prepared by Mr. Crawford, mostly focusing on questions of lot succession, billboard size, lot size, overall height, and physical billboard supports.

A discussion of monument supports versus pole supports brought up the issue of sight-distance safety covered in (10)(f) and (g). Mr. Boorse cautioned that monument supports (filled-in base) sometimes interrupt sight distance. Mr. DiMarino replied that setbacks should cover that. Mr. Hawkins noted that there is historically a 6-foot clearance below pole-supported signs so a (maintenance) person can walk under it; above the 6-foot pole could be a sign of one vertical and one horizontal plywood sheet (total 12 feet), resulting in a 20-foot height. Mr. Boorse recommended that the lot area be big enough for construction and maintenance vehicles. After questions from all present, there was consensus on the following (numbers refer to the proposed ordinance items):

- Billboards must be a principal use of a commercial lot (10)
- Billboard lots should be permitted in all of the Route 202 commercial districts (but not in the Historic Commercial district) (10)
- Minimum lot area should be 8,000 square feet (10)(b)
- Minimum lot width should be 85 feet (add this to (10)(b))
- Overall height should be a maximum of either 15 or 20 feet from the *pre-existing or road grade* (10)(c). [Messrs. Boorse and Hawkins favor 20 ft.; Mr. Marshall, Mrs. DeCaestecker and Mrs. McCarthy favor 15 ft.]
- Maximum billboard area should be 128 square feet per side (10)(d)
[Mr. Boorse pointed out that this is the size of 4 sheets of plywood.]
[Mr. Crawford pointed out that the speed limit on Route 202 allows for billboard sizes smaller than those on high speed highways.]
- Setback should be 40 feet from the side or rear boundaries (10)(e) and 30 feet from the edge of the Route 202 right-of-way (10)(f)
- Change (10)(n) to read "... upon a lot which *is subdivided to meet* the requirements"

- (10)(n)(i) Should permit billboards in all commercial districts except Historic Commercial.

Mr. DiMarino will have the Township Engineer review the proposed ordinance (with the agreed-upon figures) for comments, after which it will be returned to the Planning Commission for further discussion.

In a Public Comment, Lloyd Roach, 1025 Meetinghouse Rd., advised the PC of several billboard terms (wraps, inside and outside readers, rotators, permanent paints, shutters and video). He hoped that (10)(d) and (j) should remove the option of having a constantly changing face, and suggested that lighting types be examined. He recommended that the PC dictate what they want without being concerned about the efficacy of the billboard. Mr. Boorse then asked if there had been challenges to new technologies, such as flat-screen or LED signs.

Chairman DiMarino reminded members that the **September meeting is scheduled for the 15th, not the 8th**. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 (Hawkins, Marshall).

Respectfully submitted,

Jacquie Roach

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