

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2010**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Thompson at 7:30 p.m. Commissioners Present: Johnson, Boynton, Koscielny, McKenna, Budd, Kelley and Thompson. Staff present: Director Swallow and Secretary Queener. McKenna Associates representative present: Sally Hodges. There was one person in the audience.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Motion McKenna, Johnson second to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carried.**

MINUTES:

**Motion Boynton, Budd second to approve the minutes of September 8, 2010 as presented.
Motion carried.**

PUBLIC HEARING:

ITEM #1

TITLE: TO CONSIDER AN AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN PERTAINING TO VACANT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES REGISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE.

**Motion McKenna, Boynton second to open the public hearing.
Motion carried.**

Director Swallow stated the purpose and intent of this Ordinance is to establish a vacant residential building and structure registration program as mechanism to protect residential neighborhoods from becoming blighted through the lack of adequate maintenance and security of vacant buildings and structures, to protect property values and neighborhood integrity, avoid the creation and continuation of nuisances, and to ensure the safe and sanitary maintenance of residential buildings and structures.

The ordinance would require owners of a vacant residential building or structure to register with the Township. There are exceptions in the ordinance for fire damaged buildings and buildings that may be going through probate or other legal proceedings. Failure to file the required registration form or failure to maintain the registration form with current information would be considered a municipal civil infraction and subject a \$250.00 fine. Repeated violations would be considered a misdemeanor.

Commissioner Budd stated she attended a Treasurer's conference and one of the topics was the concerns with vacant residential buildings.

McKenna had concerns regarding boarding windows in houses, identifying an appeals process, and the cost of violating the ordinance.

Commissioner Budd stated she does not like the idea of boarding the house from the inside, if the Township has to board the house they cannot go inside.

Commissioner Johnson stated the way the ordinance is worded makes it sound like this is solely because of the current economic conditions and requested the wording be revised. Johnson inquired what a safety inspection entailed and feels that \$250.00 dollars is too high for a homeowner that is losing their home.

Swallow stated the Township inspectors would be staying outside of the house, so it would be blight, abandoned pools, property maintenance and other items for which the Ordinance Officer has jurisdiction under the Township ordinances.

Sally Hodges stated if the amount of the fine needed to be high enough to get people's attention, so they comply. This is the average amount in other ordinances.

Commissioner Kelley stated the titles on Sections 14 and 15 need clarification so there isn't any confusion, and he concurs with the need for an appeal process with this ordinance.

Commissioner Boynton stated he understands the concerns with the amount of the fine, but the process does not take very much time, you simply come to the Township and register the home if it is going to be vacant.

Motion Kelley, Koscielny second to close the public hearing.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM # 1

TITLE: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2010-2015 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN FOR THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN.

Director Swallow reviewed the projects listed in the Capital Improvements Plan and noted that the Planning Commission is obligated to review this plan under the recently adopted Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The Commissioners had a discussion regarding the Capital Improvements Plan and noted the proposed projects decline over time. Director Swallow replied that new projects would likely be added as you get closer to the current year.

Sally Hodges noted the funding source for the Community Events Reader Board was noted as “TIFA”, and should be noted as a DDA project. She also questioned if the landscaping and streetscape costs were included in the Belleville-Ecorse intersection project.

Motion Boynton, Koscielny second to recommend to the Township board of Trustees approve the 2010- 2015 Capital Improvements Plan, subject to the noted corrections in the funding source for the Community Events Reader Board and confirmation of the landscaping/streetscape costs for the Belleville/Ecorse intersection.

Roll Call:

Yeas: Kelley, McKenna, Johnson, Koscielny, Boynton, Budd and Thompson.

Nays: None.

Absent: None.

Motion carried.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Budd inquired about the house fire in Charter Club Estates.

Director Swallow stated he believes the house is boarded, and would have the Building Official send out a demolition notice.

Commissioner McKenna inquired about the buildings in the Cobblestone Ridge development that have been roughed in, but are without garage doors, and whether these could fall under Property Maintenance Code.

Director Swallow stated he would ask the Ordinance Officer or Building Official to look at these buildings.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion McKenna, Kelley second to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Queener,
Recording Secretary