

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
November 18, 2021
In Person and by Electronic Remote Access**

**21-49 CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF
OCTOBER 21, 2021 AND THE / PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA
ITEMS.**

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on November 18, at 7:00 p.m. at the Alpine Township Center, 5255 Alpine Avenue NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321 in person and by Electronic Remote Access via Zoom. Present: Vice Chair Luke Arends, Ron Cordes, Lisa Frizzell, Steve Thome, Dawn Swafford and Gary Potter. Mike O'Malley was absent. Planner Susan Becker and recording secretary Barb Griswold were also present. Vice Chair Arends called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cordes moved, with support from Potter to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Alpine Planning Commission on October 21, 2021.

Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion Carried

Vice Chair Arends opened the meeting up for Public Comment on any non-agenda items. No comments were received.

**21-50 PUBLIC HEARING: ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS TO
ELIMINATING FARM VS NON-FARM DWELLING LANGUAGE IN CHAPTER
1, DEFINITIONS AND CHAPTER 5, AGRICULTURAL ZONE AND CHANGE IT
TO SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING.**

Becker gave the review for the proposed changes to the provisions for dwelling units in the Agricultural zoning district. The Zoning Ordinance currently differentiates between houses for people that earn their living as a farmer and houses for people that earn their living doing other things. It doesn't make sense to classify or restrict property ownership by profession of its occupants. The language is proposed to shift to *Single-Family Dwelling Unit*, which indicates the use of the structure not the occupation of its occupants. The only exception, which exists now, is Farm Labor Housing and that is regulated by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Becker said proposed changes to the Definitions chapter include: changed the definition of *Agriculture* to include animal husbandry; deleted the definition of *Dwelling Unit, Farm*; deleted the non-farm language from the definition of *Dwelling Unit, Nonfarm or Single-Family*; deleted the farm or non-farm language from the definition of *Farm Buildings* and further clarified dwelling units of any kind are not considered to be *Farm Buildings*; added the qualifier of "Agricultural" to the definition of *Labor or Work Camp*.

Becker said proposed changes to the A, Agricultural zoning district include: substitutes single-family dwelling units for all references to non-farm dwelling units and farm dwelling units; moved the restriction of one dwelling unit per lot from the Definitions chapter to Section 5.02; Section 5.04(d)(3) are the provisions that require an Agriculturally-zoned parcel to be deed restricted for FARMING USES ONLY if all Agricultural Sliding Scale land divisions have been used up. This is only substantive proposed change to the ordinance. Currently the ordinance allows the

construction of a FARM dwelling on deed restricted land. The proposed changes would eliminate the option of constructing a dwelling unit.

There are 13 known agricultural properties that have been deed restricted from farm uses only (whether the owners followed through with recording a deed restriction or not). Per the spring 2020 aerial photos, none of the 13 properties have structures of any kind located on them. Six of the 13 properties aren't buildable for a home anyway since they don't have enough road frontage or any road frontage at all.

Thome said he owns one of the 13 properties that have been deed restricted and some have the ability to now build a house; however if this passes he could not put a house on the property. He stated why do property owners have to give something up?

Arends asked how many properties would have the ability to build a house currently and Becker answered 7 properties in total.

Motion made to open for public comments by Thome, supported by Cordes.

Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion Carried

Marty Brechting, 1307 6 Mile Road, said he thinks this is a sham. The property owners weren't notified they may give up the ability to build a home, just because a lawyer suggested it.

Jill Brechting, 1307 6 Mile Road asked for the names of all the property owners this would effect and Thome read the names of the property owners.

Marta Brechting, 1275 6 Mile Road, said this is impacting people and you haven't notified them and that is wrong. The Township should be concerned with looking out for people and should look at the greater good.

Joe Warren, 5063 Baumhoff Avenue, said people representing the Township were elected to do what is best for the community and wants to know how this would benefit the community.

Jason Lovell, 3738 Walker Avenue, said more thought should have gone into this and also contacted the property owners who this will effect.

Jaclyn Alcumbrack, 4480 Walker Avenue, asked how the Township was contacting people because she didn't know about the meeting until a neighbor told her about it. Arends answered the meetings are publicly noticed by Planner Becker. Ms. Alcumbrack said this is a big ticket item and wanted to know why she wasn't notified. Arends asked if she was referring to the discussion item on the agenda for the development of Gracewil Country Club and Ms. Alcumbrack said yes. Becker added all public hearings are published in the Sunday paper 15 days prior to the meeting date and 15 days before the meeting all property owners and occupants living within 300 feet of the property that will be discussed are notified by mail.

Don Armock, 2728 Schindler Drive, said this seems like it could do harm to people and be illegal and is not in anyone's best interest to take out rights from property owners.

Leon Brechting, 4190 Baumhoff Avenue, said what was the purpose of bringing up migrant camps, and was it just so the Township lawyer looks like he is doing something to earn money?