

## Solon Township Planning Commission

Solon Township Hall  
9191 S. Kasson St.,  
Cedar, MI 49621

### AGENDA

Regular Meeting Agenda  
Tuesday, July 2, 2024,  
6:00 P.M

### MEMBERS

Steve Morgan – Chairman – Term expires 12/31/24  
Todd Yeomans – Vice Chair / ZBA Rep 12/31/24  
Steve Yoder – Member / Twp Board Rep 11/17/24  
Meg Paxton – Member 12/31/25  
Samantha Vandervlucht – Member 12/31/25

1. Call Meeting to Order by Chairman Morgan at 6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call– Morgan, Yoder, Paxton and Vandervlucht.  
**Absent: Yeomans**
4. Approval of Agenda: **Moved by Paxton to add County PC Comments on Zoning Ordinance Amendment under Old Business and approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Vandervlucht.**  
**Pass 4-0**
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes; June 4, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes: **Moved by Yoder to approve the June 4, 2024, minutes as presented, seconded by Paxton.**  
**Pass 4-0**
6. Conflicts of Interest: **None**
7. Public Comment: (Limited to three minutes per person unless extended by Chairman). -  
**None**
8. Correspondence: **None**
9. Reports
  1. **Township Board Representative**: Yoder updated the PC on the quotes for the wall repairs/replacement for the township hall. The restrooms renovation will not be part of this quote as it is too expensive at this time. Bleachers have been installed but were sent with no end caps or clips, which had to be purchased separately. The drainage district is at a halt as one of the neighbors has not signed the consent forms. The Drain Commissioner is sending a notary to the person in hopes that they can get approval and signed consent to continue this project. The Township Board was told that the local unit of government is the only one permitted to take care of the dock at Perrins Landing. Permit fees were approved for the increases at the last board meeting on June 13, 2024. There were two changes to the fees which included the fee for an agricultural pole building and signs. The board requested that these two fee amounts be changed. There was a special township board

meeting regarding the Polka Festival, there were approximately 70 to 80 people present for this meeting. There was a motion to revisit the Polka Festival in September and the fees associated with this festival that are paid to the township.

Open discussion on the Polka Festival meeting and events occurred at the meeting.

2. **ZBA Representative:** Yeomans absent – No ZBA cases have been received at this time.
3. **Zoning Administrator:** Found a computer and printer and provided all the information to Shirley to purchase these items which should cost under \$1,000.00. Also working on updating applications and forms. A demolition fee was not established so one was added to the new fee structure and a new form was created. Still receiving calls regarding land divisions and helping people navigate through that process. On going calls and emails for construction questions and short-term rentals. Visited AirBnB and VRBO websites and identified the properties renting short term which are in violation of the ordinance. Found 20 of these properties and will send out letters to these property owners that this is not an allowable use in the township. Found several places with new construction which she did not have permits for. An email was sent to the Assessor requesting her to review her database and find out if any permits were issued prior to sending out letters of violation to these property owners.

**Morgan:** Questions if someone does not fall under our Bed & Breakfast Ordinance and operating as that, then an AirBnB is not a permissible use in any of our zoning districts?

**Deeren:** Correct, also stopped at the food truck down the road as food trucks are not a permissible use in the zoning ordinance. They did provide a land use permit that was issued by Tim Cypher in 2022 which expired in 2023. Not sure how this was permitted as this is not a use that is allowed within the ordinance.

**Paxton:** How do we move forward to make this a thing?

**Deeren:** We would have to create an ordinance to allow for this type of use. This can be discussed moving forward. We do not have to allow for all uses within the township, we can be discretionary on the types of things we allow to come into the township.

**Paxton:** Would like to see this as a future agenda item.

**Vandervlucht:** Asked what would happen if a person with a food truck applied for a permit?

**Deeren:** It would be denied as it is not an allowable use within the zoning ordinance.

**Further open board discussion on Food Trucks being allowed and a park ordinance.**

10. Old Business;

1. County PC Comments on Zoning Ordinance Amendment

**Yoder:** One member made a comment that he was confused on why the density is in the Master Plan and not the zoning ordinance. Yoder was not able to comment on this at the time because of a conflict of interest.

**Morgan:** There was also someone that wanted clarification on ½ acre on the north side of town and the acre on the south side of town.

**Yoder:** Thought it was weird that these were different. Staff caught one error which had two “thus” in the statement, which they wanted removed.

**Deeren:** Asked if they would like to see these corrections prior to this being sent to the township board for approval. Will be added to the next agenda as an old business item to finish prior to sending to the township board.

**Yoder:** Yes, that would be wise.

11. New Business;

1. Review Accessory Dwelling Units

**Deeren:** Provided each board member with a proposed ordinance which was not too elaborate in detail. Wanted to provide something crystal clear that this would be for a one family, which can't be converted to a multi-family use. Restricted wording to include that there must be an existing primary residence and that these would not be allowed to be used for Bed & Breakfast establishments, commercial or industrial use.

**Paxton:** So, you can't use the extra space for home-based businesses?

**Deeren:** Home based businesses are a residential use, this would be restricted so that you could not convert them into a commercial use such as a flower shop or a bakery. We would not allow these in a commercially zoned district.

**Paxton:** What is your definition of commercial?

**Deeren:** Commercial is having established business hours and with patrons entering and leaving the property. There is a line that needs to be established if you want to add accessory dwelling units for aging parents and children and now want to mix commercial use with that.

**Paxton:** My parents come live with me and then my parents die. Now I have extra space, what am I going to do with this. I could put someone else in there, make a business there or use it for productive things within the community instead of just empty space. She is one hundred percent behind this as we should be able to house our children and aging parents.

**Deeren:** If we are looking to add ADU's and create an ordinance for this to help solve the housing issue then allowing these to be changed into commercial uses does not solve the problem. There needs to be a clear intent moving forward. Are we looking at these for the housing issues or because we want more business to come into the area?

**Paxton:** We are making spaces on the map. These could be business and a new area of business. The housing crisis is only a crisis if you don't choose to go somewhere else. Do we want them to stay, do we want more people, and do we want our

children and parents to be here, do we want more business or do we not want more business. If we just don't want to grow more business, then write it up.

**Deeren:** You may be a little surprised at what you would find that they are paying in taxes. I reviewed some of the industrial park businesses and found that single family residences are paying much more in taxes than these businesses. Part of the reason is because they are not transferring ownership and uncapping where this is more likely to occur in the residential areas. The task was to bring you some ordinance language for ADU's which does not mean allowing these to become commercial in use. If we are looking to expand commercial businesses, then they should be in those zoned districts which already exist.

**Yoder:** Do we have anything in here that we wouldn't allow an ADU on anything less than 5 acres?

**Deeren:** The minimum acreage that was put in the draft was one acre, which would be small once you have all the buildings and improvements installed. The difficulty with a smaller sized parcel is the placement of the wells and septic systems due to the isolation distance between them and if the property contains any wetlands, then there is also a minimum setback from that.

**Vandervlucht:** Do you have a definition of what a short-term rental is?

**Deeren:** Anything less than 30 consecutive days.

**Yoder:** Is that in our current ordinance as far as being defined?

**Deeren:** There is nothing in the ordinance currently regarding short-term rentals.

**Yoder:** If we do an Accessory Dwelling Unit then we should add a definition and what a short-term rental is. If it is not referenced anywhere in the ordinance, then it could be up for discussion.

**Deeren:** Typically, if it is not delineated as a use then it is not a use allowed. The Bed and Breakfast Ordinance is currently the only ordinance which allows you to rent on a short-term basis which requires a Special Use Permit from the PC being approved and also requires it to be owner occupied.

**Paxton:** So, the majority of this seems reasonable. Doesn't agree with the construction timing of this. Is there any other way to look at the construction situation and timing? In terms of affordability, it would be more affordable to build a small building and live in that while constructing a larger building.

**Deeren:** Currently the zoning ordinance states; Accessory - accessory to a primary use. When referring to ADU's if they were constructing this first then it would be the primary building as would be the only building on the property. This would not be considered the accessory dwelling unit rather the primary dwelling unit.

**Yoder:** Isn't there something already in the ordinance stating that you can't have another dwelling if you are building a house?

**Deeren:** There is some language but more on not allowing accessory buildings without a primary residence. The only time that a building is allowed to be permitted on a parcel prior to a primary residence is for Agricultural use.

**Paxton:** With all the request for affordable housing trying to find resolution in things like this is how is it made affordable. We can't adjust the banks, lumber, or things like that, but we can adjust time and if time makes something more affordable then I am trying to resolve things in that direction.

**Deeren:** Understands where Morgan is going with on her points, but on the other hand it is not necessarily our job to make everything affordable for everyone to come live in the community either.

**Paxton:** It's not but we hear about it so much that at least we can say we discussed it, we thought about it, and we looked at it and we tried to find a solve.

**Morgan:** At least taking the time to look at this is a step towards helping.

**Deeren:** We do have a nice minimum building square footage of 400 square feet which is substantially smaller than what most communities have adopted. Stated that the PC has gone above and beyond to allow for various uses in the township that one doesn't see in other areas. Other places are more restrictive than Solon Township. The PC has been very gracious in opening areas and allowing for development and creativity to occur within the township. By allowing for the smaller dwelling unit size within the township this is promoting and encouraging affordability. The PC has already looked beyond in the ordinance to help remedy situations and invite new business and growth to the community. Some of the zoned districts do allow for multi-family dwellings. These need to be attached like a duplex but it is already an allowable use.

**Morgan:** Does anyone else have any concerns on the one-acre parcel size?

**Paxton:** If you put the well and septic in on a one acre parcel you won't have a lot of room to squeeze around the property with the isolation areas.

**Deeren:** There is also an established percentage of lot coverage which you can't exceed in each of the zoning districts. Keep those percentages which will also help limit over building on a property. We should also limit the size of the accessory dwelling as it is an accessory to the primary residence. What was provided to you was for conversation at this time.

**Yoder:** When thinking of an accessory dwelling unit doesn't think of something being 5,000 square feet. Does not have an issue with capping the size of an accessory dwelling unit.

**Morgan:** Questioning whether the square footage of an accessory dwelling unit should be limited.

**Deeren:** You don't want the accessory structure to exceed the square footage of the primary dwelling unit unless it becomes the primary and the primary becomes the accessory dwelling unit. Under this if a person had ten acres with a 3,500 square foot home and wanted to build a 5,000 square foot home it would be allowed. We need to be compatible with construction/building codes as far as setbacks between these structures.

**Yoder:** We don't want to be more or less restrictive than construction/building code.

**Morgan:** The intent of this is to help with the problem that we have if we can. Accessory Dwelling Units should be less than what is already there to provide additional housing for people that may need it. The intent is not to have two main residences on the property rather to have something minor to what exists to house someone in your immediate family.

**Vandervlucht:** Traverse City has a limit of 800 square feet.

**Paxton:** So, we want to put a cap on this. Feels 800 square feet at a maximum would be fair.

**Yoder:** Thinking 800 to 1,000 but would not want to exceed 1,000 square feet.

**Deeren:** We could make it not to exceed 1,000 square feet.

**Paxton:** That is fair.

**Morgan:** How do you stop these from being just rentals?

**Deeren:** You don't but you can at least require them to be a 30-day rental not only to benefit the property owner but also the renter.

**Morgan:** You can only control 30 days and anything over you can't control?

**Yoder:** Anything over 30 days is considered month to month.

**Morgan:** Does not want to see these being constructed as just rentals.

**Paxton:** We put rules in place with parameters.

**Yoder:** Not opposed to rentals as this is how some people get started.

**Morgan:** Now that we have a clearer path can Deeren provide something more.

**Deeren:** Will present some changes and additional language at the next meeting.

2. Landscape Ordinance – Review previous amendment with changes.

**Morgan:** The township board asked us to look at this ordinance and shorten it up.

**Yoder:** That was the direction given. They feel it is needed but way too long.

**Deeren:** Would like to see the PC go through it and see what makes sense to each member and we can bring it back to the next meeting. What do you think is pertinent and what can be stricken.

**Morgan:** We started this at 36 pages and worked to get it down to what it currently is. What he would like to see that could be shortened at turned back to the township. Take out the portion with the undesirable trees and put in one line that states that you can't put in invasion trees and plants.

**Yoder:** You must reference what is invasive and where to find that information.

**Paxton:** There is Invasive National Standard on the State of Michigan website.

**Yoder:** Then just add that in here.

**Paxton:** Cut out using undesirable trees and shrubs specifically defined.

**Vandervlucht:** Established by the American Association of Nurserymen.

**Yoder:** That was the question that came up during the township board conversation. Is this a formal website that we know of? Is there something more local like the Conservancy that we could go off?

**Deeren:** Possibly MSU website would have something available. Concerned with the minimal side setback of commercial properties adjacent to agricultural properties as the setback is only 10 feet.

**Yoder:** That should be defined in this landscape ordinance. If you are adjacent to an agricultural property, then you should have more distance. It either needs to be changed in the commercial district or here.

**Paxton:** Let's change it here then. For those of us that have read the ordinance we can give you, our opinions. A Master Landscaper came through and helped us with this. Should minimum standards be defined first? They are in the back but thought they need to be moved to the front of the ordinance.

**Deeren:** Agrees, if you can't meet the minimum standards then what is the point of reading the rest of the ordinance. This also needs to be enforceable.

**Yoder:** Go through and look at everything and remove anything not enforceable.

**Paxton:** Is anyone attached to figure 10-1, on page 2? If it not necessary, do we want to omit it?

**Vandervlucht:** Speaking of her personal property it is important.

**Yoder:** Just shrink it.

**Paxton:** Minimize 10-1. Omit page 10-2. Item B needs a period at the end of the sentence.

**Deeren:** We can minimize and redraft this.

**Paxton:** If you can combine D, E, F, H, and I they are all discussing basically the same things on sizes. Is there a way to condense into one or two letter points instead of five or six?

**Deeren:** Sure. We can also eliminate any duplications of items or language.

**Paxton:** Parking lot islands, item K. We had an issue with those.

**Deeren:** They do sometimes help with traffic patterns in a parking lot.

**Yoder:** They also help to break up the parking area.

**Paxton:** On figure 10-4, corners and entrances, defined by the Road Commission.

**Deeren:** Make sure that the clear site distance remains.

**Paxton:** On number 8, change his or her to them. 10-5 is still something the Road Commission will have some say in for the residential.

**Morgan:** Not outside of the right-of-way. This is regarding residential, and they do not have any jurisdiction outside of the right-of-way. They only have 30 feet within the right-of-way unless it is a clear vision issue. The other stuff that continues is outside of that control.

**Deeren:** The clear vision zone is not where you would want anything tall planted. Even signs need to be placed outside of this area so that it does not impede traffic or sight distances.

**Paxton:** We are going to define the undesirable trees and shrubs. What about enforcement?

**Deeren:** This landscape ordinance will go along with anything new so a property owner will have to comply with this going forward so it will be enforceable. Example: If a SUP is approved for a new store, they will have to comply with this landscape ordinance. If they do not comply with this then the PC has a right to revoke a SUP.

**Paxton:** Is this \$50.00 a day? You get shut down?

**Morgan:** You don't get a permit.

**Deeren:** There are fines and penalties put in the new fee structure that were not there before.

**Paxton:** So, we need to say that, if you are found to be in violation of this ordinance you will be fined in accordance with this list of money or what happens.

**Deeren:** Reminded the PC that in the future when approving SUP's, a motion will also need to be made for the applicant to adhere to the landscaping ordinance. This ordinance will be for any new PUD's and SUP's that are approved by the PC.

**Paxton:** We just cut out 30 percent of this. Good job.

**Yoder:** Good with everything discussed and it knocks a few pages off.

**Deeren:** Will move these all to Old Business on the next Agenda.

12. Other Business;

- 1.
- 2.

**Morgan:** No other business moves to ZA comments and PC comments.

13. ZA / Planning Commission Comments:

**Deeren:** No comments.

**No further comments from the Planning Commission.**

14. Public Comments; (Limited to three minutes per person unless extended by Chairman).

**Karen Smith:** How do you control what the ADU is going to be? What if someone brings in a trailer that meets all of your requirements.

**Paxton:** Trailers aren't allowed.

**Smith:** What about anything unusual like a trailer or a bus?

**Deeren:** You would establish a minimum building standard requirement. I couldn't bring a shed in and use that as an ADU, there are building standards and requirements. We don't allow long stays in travel trailers and campers. They couldn't be converted into an ADU.

**Smith:** You could potentially have long term rentals.

**Deeren:** Yes. Much better than short term.

**Smith:** Rentals concern me as someone could throw someone in something that meets the requirements, nothing beautiful just basic that does it strictly for the income and money. There is a blue house on S. Cedar on the left that has a tiny home which color coordinates with the house. Does not have any history of the property and questions how they got this permitted on their property.

**Paxton:** There was a business in there at one point and the business sold so the new people purchased it as is. It was going to be bigger at one point and they were stopped.

**Smith:** Isn't that just a regular residence now?

**Morgan:** It is now.

**Smith:** Then this tiny blue house appears.

**Paxton:** There are two houses in there and then the tiny house also.

**Deeren:** Does not know the history or how many buildings are currently on the property. It is not unusual for people to purchase something then begin converting the buildings.

**Smith:** Suddenly in the past two years this little blue house shows up.

**Deeren:** Maybe it wasn't permitted.

**Yoder:** Probably been 10 years ago.

**Smith:** Is it unrealistic to say that ADU's must be family related?

**Yoder:** How could you enforce that?

**Deeren:** That could also fall into a discrimination type of issue.

**Smith:** I can just see these ADU's blowing up.

**Deeren:** I can too. It is a hot topic; some zoning districts do allow for additional residences to be placed.

**Morgan:** We need to think about this long and hard about why we are doing this.

**Smith:** Would like to hear more dialog from Samantha. The more we talk about this the more answers we get.



**John Kunz:** Appreciates the discussion. It is great to find a balance for the character we all love here but also recognizing issues of wanting to bring in family. There is an affordable housing issue out there that does affect our kids and others. ADU's can be a small part of the solution. Wondering if ADU's could be put over a garage or perhaps part of the primary residence or an outbuilding. Questioning if this is addressed in the proposed ordinance language.

**Deeren:** Didn't look at converting a garage into living space or placing it above a garage. If you are currently in a zoned district which allows for multi-family, then that would be permissible under the current ordinance. This is for a specific standalone residential building to be permitted on that property that is detached from the primary structure.

**Kunz:** In many places, maybe just cities, where if you have wanted an ADU you would put it on a second floor in a building. We need to be careful of the term renters as evil people. If it is in someone's home, then they are probably looking after them more than anybody else and more concerned about who they are renting to.

**Deeren:** Looking at these as being a sole independent living space which is not required to be attached to a primary dwelling unit.

**No other public comments.**

15. Adjournment;

**Morgan adjourn at 7:52 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christina Deeren, Recording Secretary  
Submitted 7-22-2024