

Minutes of the Porter Plan Commission

August 18, 2004

A. The meeting was called to order at 7:55 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Mr. Bell, Mr. Eriksson, Mr. Liebert, Mrs. Snyder, Mr. Childress, and Mr. Babcock.

Absent: Mr. Timm. Quorum was established. Also present were Mr. Mandon and Mr. Lyp.

C. Consideration of Minutes from Previous Meetings

Motion to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2004 meeting as written made by Mr. Liebert; second by Mr. Childress. Motion carried 6 – 0.

D. Audience Participation

Jerry Stefan, 218 Spring View Drive, with concerns that the Commission was going to discuss square footage requirements and many people he knows did not come because the BZA public hearing on the related subject was postponed. Also commented there are many homes near the Markovich lot (BZA subject lot) the same size or larger than his proposed home. The Commission informed him there would not be any ordinance changes without the required public hearing and anyone not present tonight will be able to appear then.

E. Preliminary Hearings

None

F. Public Hearing

None

G. Old Business

1. Paul G. Nelson – sub-division petition at 1371 Old Porter Road to locate a billboard on a portion of the property for advertisement purposes.

Mr. Greg Babcock, attorney for petitioner, requested via letter that the petition be tabled for 90 days while his client seeks remedy in the court system over BZA use variance decision.

Motion to table Paul G. Nelson subdivision petition for 90 days or earlier if requested by the petitioner made by Mr. Childress; second by Mr. Eriksson. Motion passed 6 – 0.

H. Other Business

1. Amendments to Plan Commission Rules and Procedures

There were amendments to the location of Commission meetings, adding a Findings of Fact item to the agenda, changing the time frame to forward recommendations and other items to the Town Council, and sending final Findings and minutes to the Council when needed instead of draft versions.

Motion to pass the amendments as written made by Mr. Eriksson; second by Mr. Liebert.
Motion carried 6 – 0.

2. Discussion on commercial vehicle parking in a residential zone.

Commission discussed items to help staff members with writing a draft ordinance on commercial, recreational, construction vehicles and equipment in residential zones. Mr. Mandon reviewed several factors outlined in his letter to the members dated July 29, 2004 (see attached). All comments to be included in a first draft of the proposed ordinance for review at the next Commission meeting.

3. Discussion on amending the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) re: required square footage in residential home construction.

Mr. Childress: He does not want to relax our new ZO square footage requirements. He understands this will create a lot of BZA variance requests in older sub-divisions.

Mr. Babcock: Neighboring towns have smaller square footage requirements than Porter. It is the two-story and bi-level requirements that are the problems with builders. A drawback of not adjusting our numbers may be older sub-divisions that do not get completely built out.

Mrs. Snyder: Stats from NW Indiana Realtors Association show that only 18 of 48 homes listed as sold in Porter County this year meet our current requirements for a two-story home. This argues that we need to make changes.

Mr. Bell: Let's see what happens at the first BZA petition concerning this subject (which is currently tabled in the BZA).

Mr. Eriksson: Table and discuss further. Perhaps we need to compromise on our numbers but also wants to wait on BZA hearing.

Mr. Mandon: Could amend ordinance for all lots that are legal non-conforming with new ZO with a second set of numbers for them and leave the numbers alone for new sub-divisions with the new lot sizes.

Motion to table taking action on this subject until the next Commission meeting made by
Mr. Eriksson; second by Mr. Childress. Motion carried 6 – 0.

H. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Liebert; second by Mr. Babcock. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Lorain Bell
President

Lisa M. Liebert

