

Ganges Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes for March 25, 2025
Ganges Township Hall
119th Avenue and 64th Street
Fennville MI, Allegan County

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair: Jackie **DeZwaan** called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call: Chair: Jackie **DeZwaan** - Present

Vice Chair: Dale **Pierson** - Present

Secretary: Phil **Badra** - Present

Commissioner: Edward **Gregory** - Absent

Commission Trustee: Dick **Hutchins** - Present

Zoning Administrator: Tasha **Smalley** - Present

Recording Secretary: Katie **Wolfe** - Present

McKenna Planner: Brad **Misner** - Present

II. Additions to the Agenda and adoption

Badra made a motion to approve the agenda, as presented. **Hutchins** seconded the motion. Motion passed.

III. General Public Comment - None

IV. Correspondence and Upcoming Seminars

Smalley to **DeZwaan** Re: Possibility of a Private Road coming in April

Gregory to **PC** Re: Zoning Ordinance Update

8 emails **Badra** to **PC** and **Misner** Re: Zoning Ordinance Update

Misner to **Badra** & **Badra** to **PC** Re: Zoning Ordinance Update

3 emails **Pierson** to **Misner** and **PC** Re: Zoning Ordinance

Pierson to **Phelps** Re: Zoning Ordinance Update

4 emails **Phelps** to **PC** Re: Zoning Ordinance Update

Badra to Mulderink and Kavanaugh Re: the Private Road

V. Public Hearing - Zoning Ordinance Update

DeZwaan noted that this Zoning Ordinance came about because the Master Plan changed. **DeZwaan** shared a brief summary of what the Planning Commission has accomplished. This included: organizing the articles, sections and the tables of uses, updating the definitions based on the changes the PC is recommending, updating two changes to proposed districts, updating changes to the State Department name (EGLE), proposing changes to Private Roads and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), and adding requirements for new Special Land Uses that are being proposed.

Opening of Public Hearing - 7:05 PM

Kerry **Curtis**, 2266 Lakeshore Dr., stated that she highly supports the proposed change to the driveway requirements.

Carol **Josefowicz**, 2334 Lakeshore Dr., thanked the Planning Commission for all their work on the Zoning Ordinance and had a few concerns. According to Section 3.8.c., for waterfront lots the water side is considered the front yard. **Josefowicz** feels that this should be rephrased to say waterfront lots on Lake Michigan only, shall have two front yards and no rear yards for the purpose of setbacks. She feels that this would help with fencing too as there is a lot with a tall fence along Lakeshore Drive.

Josefowicz's next concern was lot coverage, specifically in high risk erosion areas. She is suggesting instead of using the high water mark, use the bluff in high risk erosion areas along Lake Michigan.

Josefowicz's last concern was driveways. She suggested when calculating building to land and lot coverage, if you have a double car garage, you should have a driveway width to get cars in.

Josefowicz shared the Michigan Administrative Code R 125.1944, titled: Setbacks from property boundary lines.

Ed **Reimink**, 6438 119th Ave., wondered why the Ordinance is limiting the number dwellings on a private road IN THE AG DISTRICT.

Sue **Poolman**, 7021 114th Ave., thanked the PC for all their hard work and time spent working on the Ordinance.

Close of Public Hearing - 7:15 PM

VI. Approval of Prior Minutes

Motion made by Pierson, seconded by Hutchins to approve the March 10, 2025, Special Meeting minutes, with corrections. Motion passed.

VII. Old Business - None

VIII. New Business - Zoning Ordinance Update

Badra responded to Josefowicz's comments. In regards to Lakeshore Drive and fencing, according to the ordinance the fence cannot exceed 4 ft in height within 50 ft of the road right of way.

Badra continued, in regards to the front/rear yard, in order to allow a resident to build a shed, the lake side had to be considered the front yard with the roadside being the rear yard. **Badra** added that the set back from the lake is determined by EGLE from the edge of the bluff.

Pierson responded that Josefowicz's comment was more geared towards the setback from the road to be equal to the setback from the lake to make them both 40 ft, meaning both yards are considered the front yard.

DeZwaan replied that the setback in that district is different than any other district due to the size of the lots being much smaller.

The Planning Commission decided not to change the setback ordinance.

Pierson responded to the private road comments. He stated that the PC changed the private road allowance in the agricultural district to two (2) houses on any new private road. **DeZwaan** noted that the consensus on why was because of the feedback the PC

received from the community regarding preserving agricultural land and maintaining rural character. The PC is also proposing a change to the minimum lot size in the Ag district from 3 acres to 5 acres, in an attempt to preserve agricultural land. This would only apply to the Ag district, not Res/Ag.

In regards to preserving farmland, Brad **Misner** noted that if the Township gets inquiries in the future the PC could reconsider the Ordinance then.

Badra noted that once the Planning Commission recommends the Zoning Ordinance, it will then get sent to the Township Board for approval. **Curtis** asked if the Board could make any changes. **DeZwaan** noted that once the Ordinance gets recommended to the Township Board, if there is something they do not agree with, typically the Board will send it back to the Planning Commission.

Josefowicz commented on her concern of building in High Risk Erosion Areas. She feels that the scale of the home should be appropriate for the actual buildable land. **DeZwaan** noted that the Planning Commission has had discussions to try to determine what is considered buildable land, especially regarding Lake Michigan and Hutchins Lake. **DeZwaan** added that whether you consider it a bluff or not, it doesn't change the buildable area, to a great degree.

Bekah **Johnson**, 1381 Blue Star Hwy., noted that she just learned about the Glenn Hamlet, Mixed Use change. She wanted to come and learn more about it and to see if it was supported by the community. **DeZwaan** replied that part of the reason the Planning Commission looked at the Glenn Hamlet was to respond to the feedback from the surveys that were sent out. The Planning Commission is hoping this will help to promote affordable housing BY REDUCING LOT SIZES and BY ENCOURAGING similar businesses in the GLENN AREA Township, while maintaining the character TO MAINTAIN GLENN'S CHARACTER. **Badra** added, within the Glenn Hamlet Mixed Use District, the commercial area is gone, there are specific businesses that would be allowed which are listed in the Table of Uses.

DeZwaan noted the addition of Energy Storage Facilities in the Ordinance. The purpose of this addition is to maintain what local control the Township ~~could~~ HAS over the smaller types of solar, wind energy and energy storage facilities, ~~rather than relinquish all power to the state.~~ AS THE STATE WILL NOT REGULATE THESE SMALLER FACILITIES.

Pierson made a motion to recommend the new Ordinance #65 to the Ganges Township Board. **Hutchins** seconded the motion. Motion passed by roll call vote.

Hutchins - Yes

DeZwaan - Yes

Pierson - Yes

Badra - Yes

Gregory - Absent

Hutchins mentioned the following typos for **Misner** to edit:

Pg 16-3. Add a space in the first sentence (of land).

Pg 17-3. Word change from 'Detention' to 'Retention'.

Badra stated that he will send an email to the Township Board requesting that they consider adopting the Ordinance, plus rezoning the areas in Glenn that need rezoning. Badra will ask the Board to put it on the agenda for the April 8th meeting.

IX. Administrative Updates

a. Township Board

Hutchins reported that construction will be starting at Pier Cove Park; the park will be closed for the summer. The Board plans to move forward with pursuing legal action against Selah Way. The Board elected Jason Jager as the new fire chief.

b. Zoning Board of Appeals

Pierson reported that the ZBA had denied the setback variance request of 10 ft from the roadside at 2268 Lakeshore Drive, at the March 6th meeting.

c. Zoning Administrator

Smalley reported that there would be a Private Road application and a Public Hearing at the April 22nd Meeting.

X. Future Meeting Dates - April 22nd & May 27th

XI. General Public Comments -

Reimink voiced concerns about affordable housing in the Glenn Hamlet.

Curtis asked when the new ordinance would go into effect once the Board approves it.

Smalley responded that once the board approves, there has to be a post in the newspaper within 15 days. The new Ordinance then takes effect 8 days after that.

DeZwaan asked **Misner** about next steps. **Misner** responded that he will send the updated Ordinance to Badra and Pierson FOR REVIEW. **Badra** will then share the Ordinance with the Township Clerk to add to the website.

XII. Adjournment

Badra made a motion to adjourn the meeting, **Pierson** seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katelynn Wolfe, Ganges Township Recording Secretary

