

Minutes of the Antwerp Township Zoning Board of Appeals
Thursday, December 17, 2020
Draft

Consistent with Michigan Public Act 228 of 2020, attendance at this meeting was permitted in person, and also remotely by Zoom web application.

Members present: Phil Tarchala - Chair, Daniel Seibert (remote, Antwerp Township), Gary Stock (remote, Antwerp Township), Ron Stoyntoff (remote, Antwerp Township). Excused: Doug Cultra.

Guests present: none.

Chair Tarchala called the meeting to order at 6:30. Discussion ensued regarding remote use of Zoom.

Motion by Stoyntoff, second by Seibert to approve the minutes of October 28, 2020. All in favor.

Motion by Stoyntoff, second by Seibert to approve the minutes of November 19, 2020, All in favor.

Communications/Announcements: none.

New Business:

Motion by Seibert, second by Tarchala to approve a 2021 meeting schedule for (as needed) the fourth Thursday of the first ten months, and the third Thursday of November and December. All in favor.

Variance standards in the current ordinance have remained unchanged for many years. Prompted by a request from the Zoning Board of Appeals, David Jirousek of Horizon Community Planning drafted proposed new language to improve these standards. The Township Planning Commission recently reviewed the proposed language, and requested advisory review by the ZBA.

ZBA members read and discussed the new criteria, making direct comparisons to current criteria, and to various past decisions. Members agreed that the new criteria may make decisions more difficult. Upon early reading, they seem unintentionally to provide more leeway for granting variances under a wider range of conditions. This flexibility appears inconsistent with the function of the ZBA.

The members would like to offer applicants greater clarity about which objective circumstances allow a variance. The new language instead may suggest more ways for applicants to interpret standards, or to claim justification for a request. The ZBA would not welcome the prospect of more subjective decisions.

Members agreed that discussing these standards with the Township Planner would be helpful. Chair Tarchala will invite David Jirousek to attend the January 2021 ZBA meeting for that discussion.

Pending Business: none.

Other Business: none.

Any other Business: The ZBA will meet on January 28, 2021 to further review the proposed standards.

Chair Tarchala adjourned the meeting at 7:13 pm.