THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting, June 23, 2025

1. Call to Order:

   A. The meeting was called to order by Tom Kilgore at 7:00 p.m. at the Thornapple Township Hall located at 200 East Main Street Middleville, Michigan 49333.

   B. Present: Tom Kilgore, Sandy Rairigh, Bryan Finkbeiner, Elaine Denton, Linda Gasper, Craig Wandrie, and Elizabeth Hansson. Also present: Sydney LaDere, Nicole Lyke, Brad Brown, Emily Croff, Rosemary Herbert, Bob Curtiss, Kendra Curtiss, Brian Eggers, Ashley Mize, Kaylee Ketchum, Marshall Pierce, Kathee Pierce, Laura Otto, Jon Starkey, Phil Gensterblum and Brenda Hess.

2. Approval of Agenda:

   MOTION by Gasper, **SUPPORT** by Denton to approve the agenda with removal of New Business Item 6-a Cornerstone Development. **MOTION CARRIED** with 7 yes voice votes.

3. Approval of Minutes:

   MOTION by Rairigh **SUPPORT** by Finkbeiner to approve the May 19, 2025, meeting minutes with a spelling correction in Item 9-b . **MOTION CARRIED** with 7 yes voice votes.

4. Citizen Comments: None.

5. Public Hearings:

   A. Special Land Use #174 – Day Care Second Address – Sydney LaDere

      I. Applicant Presentation: Sydney LaDere is requesting an additional SLU for her daycare. Recently her daycare was granted a second separate address from her home as requested by her accountant for tax purposes. This SLU would be for the new address and would include building an office above the garage. The previous address was granted SLU #163. LaDere reviewed the work she has done to be sure the daycare is compliant with state and local requirements. She has had complaints from some neighbors about running a daycare in the neighborhood. There have also been concerns regarding her fiancée being a registered sex offender. LaDere wants to be a good neighbor and expressed a desire to have her daycare be an asset to the community. She addressed concerns regarding having a second home-based business by stating the salon in her home is only for family and is not a home business. She noted she does have a traveling stylist business, but that no clients are seen in her home. She commented that her daycare does not currently have fencing but would take care of the requirement immediately.

      II. Planning and Zoning Administrator: Gensterblum explained the house was not completed during the first site plan visit and suggested the site plan committee visit once the fence has been installed.

      III. Public Hearing: Opened at 7:19 pm.

      a. Brian Eggers does not want two businesses across the street from his property. Expressed concerns about traffic. Says applicant wants second address solely to run a second business from the same location. He opposes granting the second address SLU #174.

      b. Rosemary Herbert is new to Middleville and lives almost across the street from the applicant. She views the daycare as being positive and has not personally noticed excessive traffic. Expressed appreciation for applicants "entrepreneurial spirit" and added the home is neat and well kept.

Commented if the second address is good for business and the applicant is following the rules, her request for SLU #174 should not be rejected.

c. Emily Croft is the parent of a child in applicant's daycare and lives in the neighborhood. Expressed support of SLU #174, but acknowledged change is hard. Says applicant's daycare is a safe place and the children are well cared for. She is unsure of what she would do should the daycare close, citing the high cost and inconvenience of "center based" daycares. She is supportive of the applicant being granted SLU #174.

d. Ashley Meyers is a neighbor who also has children in applicant's care. She noted her husband is in law enforcement and has done a thorough check of the applicant's fiancée and is satisfied the children are in no danger. She supports the applicant being granted SLU #174.

e. Nicole Lyke is a daycare client of the applicant. Commented the applicant gives back to the community and has gone out of the way to help with her children during her cancer treatment. She reported trying many other daycares and they are too expensive, too far away, don't have openings, or have long wait lists. She believes the applicant provides quality daycare and should be granted SLU #174.

f. Hailey Ketchum is a daycare client of applicant. She is uncertain what she would do for childcare should the daycare close. Says applicant goes above and beyond with her care and shared a personal experience of her caring for her child while her other child was in the NICU. She is in favor of granting SLU #174.

Public Hearing: Closed at 7:35 pm.

IV. Commission Questions and Deliberation: Kilgore noted township residents are allowed one business per parcel of land, not one per address. If applicant is granted SLU #174, she could not open another business as both addresses are for the same parcel of land. Rairigh stated when SLU #163 was granted, Finkbeiner asked about the salon and applicant stated she was not going to open a salon. The applicant reiterated the salon area is only for family. She acknowledged she had made the mistake of advertising the salon space as a rental to an interested stylist via Facebook. Once she was informed a second business was not allowed, she withdrew her post. The applicant was reminded that having a fence is a standard requirement for all daycares within the township. Applicant is willing to put up a fence. Applicant was reminded that any traffic should be for pick-up and drop-off of children. Rairigh asked for clarification of why the applicant needed a second address and was told it was at the advice of her accountant for tax purposes. Gasper noted the original SLU #163 had seven requirements, and the second requirement was to have an outdoor space fenced. Noted because there is not a fence SLU #163 is not in compliance. Gasper does not want to approve SLU #174 until SLU #163 is in compliance. The applicant stated a fence would be installed as soon as possible. Denton agreed that SLU #174 should not be granted until the first is in full compliance. Finkbeiner inquired about the next steps and Gasper suggested tabling the decision to following month, giving the applicant time to install the fence and for the site plan committee inspect the property. Gensterblum noted that a fence needs to be a minimum of three feet tall. Applicant will send photos of the fence once installed. Applicant will need to get a zoning permit for the fence and Gensterblum will provide her with Section 19.42 daycare requirements for Thornapple Township.

MOTION by Gasper, **SUPPORT** by Finkbeiner to **TABLE** the decision on SLU #174 until the July meeting to give applicant time to be in full compliance with original SLU #163, and for the site plan committee to visit the property to verify requirements are met. **Roll Call Vote:** Finkbeiner-Yes, Denton-Yes, Gasper-Yes, Hansson-Yes, Kilgore-Yes, Rairigh-Yes, Wandrie-Yes. **MOTION CARRIED** with 7 yes roll call votes and 0 no votes.

B. Special Use 175 - Jon Starkey - Accessory Building in Front Yard

I. Applicant Presentation: Jon Starkey states he would like to build an accessory building in his front yard off to the side of his driveway due to the topography of his backyard and the existence of utilities in same. The building will be 26' x 36' and will match the existing home.

II. Planning and Zoning Administrator: Gensterblum noted that there are others who have had the same issue with backyards being incompatible with the construction of accessory buildings.

III. Public Hearing: Opened at 7:59 pm.

a. Kathy Pierce commented as a neighbor in direct proximity to the Starkeys, she supports this Special Use.

Public Hearing: Closed at 8:00.

IV. Commission Questions and Deliberations: Discussion centered around the appearance of the building, where the door would be, and if the applicant received information regarding Township requirement 21.3-Accessory Buildings. Denton asked Gensterblum to make sure the applicant receives this information. It was noted the total percentage of a parcel of land which can be dedicated to an accessory building is three percent of the total amount of land.

MOTION by Finkbeiner **SUPPORT** by Rairigh to approve Special Use #175 for Jon Starkey - Accessory Building in Front Yard. **Roll Call Vote:** Finkbeiner-Yes, Denton-Yes, Gasper-Yes, Hansson-Yes, Kilgore-Yes, Rairigh-Yes, Wandrie-Yes. **MOTION CARRIED** with 7 yes roll call votes and 0 no votes.

C. Special Use 176 – Bob Curtiss - Accessory Building in Front Yard

I. Applicant Presentation: The Curtiss's property is secluded and is not visible from the road. The building will be for their fifth wheel camper to keep it out of the elements. Because their property is both hilly and wooded there is not an option to put the accessory building behind the house. It was noted there is already an existing accessory building, but it is not relevant to SLU #176. Presently the new accessory building is planned to only have a roof and will be "carport" style. Applicant was reminded that structure needs to match house. Having sides on the building was discussed and applicant agreed that sides would be added if required.

II. Planning and Zoning Administrator: The Curtiss's property is hilly and wooded, and the best option for an accessory building is in the front yard.

III. Public Hearing: Opened 8:11 pm.

a. Lauren Otto is a neighbor and has concerns the Curtiss' are running a home-based business from their property and if so, she would not be in favor of approving SLU #176. Applicants explained they were not running a home-based business and have no intention of doing so. Otto was invited to see the property by the applicants. Otto was satisfied and stated she would not be in opposition to the SLU provided it meant they would not run a home-based business.

Public Hearing: Closed at 8:13 pm.

IV. Commission Questions and Deliberations: Finkbeiner noted the building should have sides. Kilgore agreed. The applicant said there would be a drop door on the front. Gasper reminded the applicant that the structure must match the house.

MOTION by Finkbeiner **SUPPORT** by Wandrie to approve Special Use #176 for Bob Curtiss - Accessory Building in Front Yard. **Roll Call Vote:** Finkbeiner-Yes, Denton-Yes, Gasper-Yes, Hansson-Yes, Kilgore-Yes, Rairigh-Yes, Wandrie-Yes. **MOTION CARRIED** with 7 yes roll call votes and 0 no votes.

6. New Business: None

7. Unfinished Business: None

8. Committee Reports:

   A. Ordinance Committee – [Kilgore, Finkbeiner, Rairigh, Gasper (alt)] – Will meet Tuesday, July 1 at 9:00 am to discuss Williams & Works project.
   B. Site Plan Committee – [Finkbeiner, Denton, Wandrie, Hansson (alt)] – None
   C. Joint Planning Committee – [Rairigh, Gasper, Denton, Kilgore (alt)] - None

9. Administrator's Report:

   A. Zoning Ordinance Audit: None
   B. Zoning Report: Gensterblum said there had been thirty-seven permits issued, with two still pending. There is one new home being built on Robertson Road. Two accessory buildings have been approved as well as several pools. There is one home roof solar project.
   C. Code Enforcement Report: Gensterblum reported he has been busy with the SLUs and haven't had many code enforcement issues. He has not heard from Hildebrands.

10. Commissioner Comments: Rairigh reported $1,095.75 has been spent so far on the ordinance revision project with Williams & Works.

11. Adjournment:

    MOTION by Rairigh, **SUPPORT** by Finkbeiner to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. **MOTION CARRIED** with 7 voice votes.

Sandra Rairigh

Sandra Rairigh, Secretary

Brenda Hess

Brenda Hess, Recording Secretary

Approved 7/28/25