

**PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2011 MEETING**

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**Members Present:** Howard Balzer, Christopher Finn, Glen Hymer, Hulda Moffitt, Bruce Whyte

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Connie Swisher, zoning inspector

**Call to Order:** Mr. Balzer called the meeting of the Prairie Township Zoning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, at the Township Hall.

**Meeting Minutes:**

Mr. Balzer asked for a motion to approve or correct the December 28, 2010, Prairie Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Finn said that Connie Swisher's last name was not spelled correctly in the list of "Others Present."

Mr. Hymer made a motion to approve the December 28, 2010, Prairie Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes with correction as made by Mr. Finn.

Mr. Finn seconded the motion.

Roll call as follows:

1. Glen Hymer       Aye
2. Hulda Moffitt    Aye
3. Bruce Whyte     Aye
4. Christopher Finn  Aye
5. Howard Balzer    Aye

The motion was approved unanimously.

**Old Business:**   Garage Sales

Article 10:    Supplementary District Regulations

Section 1012: Temporary Uses

Number 5:    Garage Sales

Garage Sales: Number

Mr. Balzer stated that at the December meeting Ms. Swisher requested that Commission members review the temporary use “garage sales” in Section 1012 of the Zoning Resolution prior to the January meeting. The regulation currently allows for the issuance of a temporary zoning permit only three times within any 12-month period for a garage sale on the same property. Also, each garage sale covered by the permit cannot exceed a period of four consecutive days.

Being limited to three garage sales per year no longer appears to be sufficient to satisfy the needs of many people in the Township. The increase in requests the Zoning office is receiving for zoning permits for garage sales is likely related to unemployment and other issues associated with the downturn in the U.S. economy. In many instances, garage sales are being held to generate income for basic necessities.

Ms. Swisher said that increasing the number of garage sales should decrease the time that the limited number of zoning staff now devotes to monitoring, and often denying, garage sale permits. Time saved could be more productively spent on higher-priority Township issues.

Ms. Swisher pointed out that increasing the number of garage sales does not change the fact that residents participating in community-sponsored garage sales do not have to purchase individual permits. That is, community participation does not affect their total entitlement.

Following a discussion, Commission members decided by consensus to recommend that the number of garage sales allowed per any 12-month period should be increased to six (6).

Mr. Finn remarked that since garage sales are held primarily during the summer months, the increase in frequency likely would occur in a relatively short time period. This, in turn, could be a source of complaints from some residents about their neighbors holding too many garage sales.

Garage Sales: Consecutive Days

The discussion then turned to the “four (4) consecutive days” language in the regulation, specifically, whether “consecutive” should be deleted. The purpose of the requirement was questioned because garage sales are typically held on two consecutive days.

Mr. Finn said he’d observed that garage sales are most often held on Thursday and Friday. Although two days appear to be the norm, “four” may be in the text to compensate for bad weather days.

Mr. Hymer stated that the word “consecutive” was likely included so that a single permit would not in effect allow two, two-day garage sales covering a four-day period—each one during a different end of week.

If the word “consecutive” were to be deleted and the number of garage sales increased to six, an individual could potentially hold 12, two-day garages sales every 12-month period. That would be 24 days of garage sale, and mostly during the summertime.

By consensus Commission members decided to recommend no change to the “four (4) consecutive days” language in Section 1012, Number 5.

Package of Changes to Zoning Resolution

Ms. Swisher told the Commission that its recommended change about garage sales would be added to changes previously recommended in the Table charts. She said that it was her intention to present a complete package to be voted upon by the Zoning Commission.

**New Business: Election of Officers for 2011**

Mr. Balzer announced that the next order of business was to elect Zoning Commission officers for the year 2011.

Mr. Hymer made a motion to elect officers in entirety and that the current officers continue in their same positions for the year 2011.

Mr. Whyte seconded the motion.

Mr. Balzer inquired if there were any objections to bypassing the parliamentary procedure of nominating and voting on each of the three officers individually. No one objected.

Mr. Balzer asked if any current officer did not want to continue in his or her position in 2011. No officer so responded.

Mr. Balzer inquired if there was any further discussion about voting on officers in entirety. There was no discussion.

Mr. Balzer stated that the officers being voted upon in entirety are:

- Howard Balzer, Chairman
- Christopher Finn, Vice-Chairman
- Hulda Moffitt, Secretary

Roll call as follows:

1. Glen Hymer       Aye
2. Hulda Moffitt    Aye
3. Bruce Whyte     Aye
4. Christopher Finn Aye
5. Howard Balzer    Aye

The motion was approved unanimously.

**Next Meeting:**

Mr. Balzer announced that the next meeting of the Prairie Township Zoning Commission will be Tuesday, February 22, 2011, at 3:00 p.m. at the Township Hall, 23 Maple Drive.

There being no further business before the Prairie Township Zoning Commission, Mr. Balzer adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hulda Moffitt, Secretary

