

Rochester Township Planning and Zoning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
April 11, 2023

Members Present: Chair Arthur Handelman, Laura Laudon,  
Josef Pleticha

Others Present: , Jason Kappers, Jamie Niesen, Roger Ihrke, Jered  
Staton, Michael Melford

Chair Handelman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Laura Laudon made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 7  
meeting. Josef Pleticha seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

**Additional Agenda Items**

None

**Tabled Items**

None

**New Business Items**

**Mayo Woodlands Fourth Final Plat**

Ed Clark said he's been in contact with Rochester Public Utilities and  
Charter.

He stated Rochester Public Utilities has been paid. The cable line will  
be placed underground as well as the remaining power line.

It was stated that Mayo Woodlands Fourth consists of 20.76 acres, 6 lots and 1 out-lot.

The development will have access to Mayo Woodlands Road SW. There will be individual septic systems and one shared well.

There was a letter sent to the Postmaster inquiring about single mailboxes. There has not been a response yet.

Ed Clark stated they are all ready to go this Spring. He said transformers are in stock as there had been a shortage of those.

Chair Handelman asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment.

Laura Laudon made a motion to approve the Mayo Woodlands Final Plat. Josef Pleticha seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

### **Mailbox Policy**

The draft of this policy includes language for cluster mailboxes, placement and private lots.

Questions were asked if this should be a separate ordinance? Mr. Ihrke stated we can't as it wasn't advertised that way. Otherwise, we would have to adopt under zoning regulations in which we would need a public hearing.

There was discussion about the Township's responsibility if a snowplow accidentally knocks out a mailbox, how this would be stated in the ordinance, how the Township would go about replacing a mailbox, etc.

It was suggested to put a mailbox tab on the Rochester Township website which would address these issues.

After further discussion, Josef Pleticha made a motion to table this item. Laura Laudon seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Members felt the mailbox language should be included in the subdivision ordinance and put on the website. This would be opposed to a standalone ordinance.

### **Board of Adjustment**

Mr. Ihrke stated there are three members on this board: Chairman is the County Attorney. Other members are Jeff Orth and Jim Norman.

The board hasn't met in a long time.

Mr. Ihrke explained every zoning ordinance must have a board of appeals.

The proposal is for the Township Board to act as the Board of Appeals. This would not take away the Planning Commission's right to grant variances.

Josef Pleticha made a motion to make this change in the zoning ordinance as proposed.

Laura Laudon seconded the motion.

Vote was unanimous.

### **Subdivision Ordinance**

Jered Staton began by saying this is a solid document.

Brad Lewis (who was unable to attend) shared his thoughts in a document.

The main issue seems to be centered around lot size. Mr. Ihrke stated that if the goal is to maximize space for the Township, then homes should be 20 feet apart. There would be a minimum number of roads. The Postal Service would not have far to go in between each home.

Chair Handelman stated that builders want to maximize revenue with smaller lots which then is more homes. This then leads to higher road usage.

The question was raised whether we should change the ordinance to state all subdivisions from this point forward must be 3.5 acres.

There was county ordinance for all lot sizes to be 3.5 acres, but that was removed in 2020.

We could change the Rochester Township Use Plan to 3.5 acres.

It was discussed that some developers want larger lots as in more than 2 acres. This eliminates the need for open spaces which is sometimes unfavorable for Homeowner's Associations. If open spaces are not maintained, then weeds start growing, etc.

Another member stated that Homeowner's Associations are great for about 20 years. After that, it's not unusual for the property taxes to lapse and then the open space gets returned to the county. The land use plan to require 3.5 acres, then it wouldn't preclude a developer in asking for a variance.

## Other thoughts/opinions

Density Issue-should that be in land use plan as a policy zoning ordinance? Would this encourage larger lots?

Then option for a variance is already there.

If our ordinance states lot sizes must be 3.5 acres, would this prevent other developers from coming in and selling in Rochester Township?

Would there be a mechanism for exceptions?

The discussion continued until 9:20 PM

Laura Laudon made a motion to table the subdivision ordinance and continue the public hearing until the next meeting.

Chair Handelman seconded the motion.

Vote was unanimous.

Laura Laudon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM.  
Josef Pleticha seconded the motion.

**Our next meeting will be Tuesday, May 9 at 7:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Laudon

