

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 3/28/18**

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:30pm at the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, MI. Chair Eidt called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chair Eidt, Commissioners Brown-Timm, Giese, Weston, Stanford, Flore, LaMore, Davis and Trustee Eyster. Quorum established.

New member Jim Flore was introduced. Jim is a Professor Emeritus from MSU with a PhD in Horticulture and also a fruit and vegetable grower. Welcome Jim.

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Consultant Mike Deem of McKenna Associates and Jim Howard, Planning Assistant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Davis, second by Weston to approve the minutes of January 24, 2018.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC HEARING #1

BARKHAM CREEK FARMS:

Chair Eidt opened the public hearing.

Mike Deem, McKenna Associates, went through his review letter of March 7, 2018 starting with items 1 – 20 related to the site plan, noting problems with scale on the plan, lack of other agency comments, no screening of overflow parking area, a 2nd access not shown, the 40' parking setback not shown, and that the plans were not sealed. He further reviewed the remaining 19 items under Standards for Site Plan Approval, the 10 items related to Section 8.03.00 (AG Tourism) of the Zoning Ordinance and the Standards for Granting Special land use approval.

Commissioners had questions related to defining AG-Tourism facilities by size, and whether there had been contact with the applicant as far as reviewing the deficiencies.

Robert Barkham then reviewed his proposal, stating that he wasn't going to spend a lot of money on applications to the Health Department and Road Department before he got approval from the

Township. He further stated that the actual locations of the Corn Maize and Pumpkin Patch may change.

Mike Deem expressed his concerns about conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Chair Eidt had a question about the well and septic costs and whether the plan could be approved conditionally.

Chair Eidt then called for public comment in favor of the proposal.

Karen Steinbach (sp?), 6131 Lounsbury (?) spoke in favor of the project but had several concerns about the process.

Mark Santucchi (sp?) stated that we need to give farmers the opportunity to make money and to allow farms to do a variety of things and that the Planning Commission needs to make Bob Barkham's job easier

(Chair Eidt reminded the audience that he was the one who asked the Township Board to waive the required fees.)

Chuck Lipke (sp?) runs the greenhouses on the property and very angrily referred to the process as a "bait and switch"

Nancy Horton, 5632 Shoeman, thought the operation should be grandfathered and too much information is required on site plan, it is only a seasonal operation

Kit Rich, 101 Granite, expressed that they are "wonderful, kind, generous people" who provide a farm experience, hope there's a way to make it work

Monica Schafer (sp?), 1691 Osprey, stated that it is a great experience for small families in a subdivision, do a special meeting if needed

Mike Deem mentioned that the original letter was sent the day after the January meeting, and that this is not additional information being requested, but rather the same information.

Chair Eidt then asked for any comments in opposition to the proposal.

There were none.

Chair Eidt then suggested that the public hearing be continued to the next meeting.

There was discussion about holding a special meeting.

The fact that the Planning Commission could waive the landscaping/parking/lighting requirements was also discussed.

Motion by Brown-Timm, second by Davis to close the public hearing.

Motion approved 8 – 1 (Eidt voted no).

Motion by Stanford, second by LaMore to give preliminary approval to the Barkham Creek Farms Plan with the condition that applicant Bob Barkham satisfactorily address the outstanding items cited in the McKenna letter dated March 7, 2018 before final Township approval.

Discussion: none

Motion approved 8 – 1 (Eidt no).

After further discussion by the Township planning consultant and the Planning Commission regarding sealed plans, a companion motion was made.

Motion by Stanford, second by LaMore to give preliminary approval to the Barkham Creek Farms Plan with the condition that applicant Bob Barkham satisfactorily address the outstanding items cited in the McKenna letter dated March 7, 2018 before final Township approval “and the applicant provide a sealed set of plans as required.”

Discussion: none

Motion approved 9 – 0.

-SMALL WINERIES/HARD CIDER PRODUCTION FACILITIES/SMALL DISTILLERIES

Chair Eidt then opened the 2nd Public Hearing on Small Wineries/Hard Cider Production Facilities/Small Distilleries.

Mike Deem, planning consultant, reviewed the proposed language mentioning that the regulations are consistent with the State standards of the Liquor Control Commission.

Question raised about whether to allow distilleries in AG-C.

In the definitions section the term apples was changed to “fruit” consistent with Liquor Control Commission language.

Chair Eidt called for comments in support.

There were none.

Chair Eidt then called for comments opposed.

There were none.

Discussion items included:

- whether a distillery and winery could be on the same parcel
- about separating uses as required by the state
- about allowing in the AG-C District

Also discussed was the concern about “creeping commercial” in AG as well as allowing farmers to grow their operation.

Motion by Giese, second by Stanford to close the public hearing.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

Motion by Weston, second by Davis to recommend approval to the Township Board with the changes incorporated (allowed in AG-C, apples changed to fruit)

Discussion: none

Motion approved 9 – 0.

-SOLAR ENERGY

Discussion ensued about solar energy systems and the “Solar Powering Sunnyside” exercise.

After checking calendars it was agreed that it would be scheduled for May 17,2018 at 7:00pm.

Motion by Giese, second by Weston to table the Solar Energy Ordinance language until the May meeting.

Discussion: none

Motion approved 9 – 0.

-MASTER PLAN

Commissioner Stanford initiated a discussion of items to be updated in the Master Plan based on comments received from other commissioners that he compiled.

Chair Eidt suggested setting up a committee; volunteering were Eidt, Stanford and Davis. An April meeting was suggested, with date to be coordinated.

-MEETING SCHEDULE

Chair Eidt began discussion on the meeting schedule for the upcoming year.

Motion by Davis, second by Weston to continue the meeting schedule on the 4th Wednesday of every other month, but to change the starting time to 7:00pm.

Discussion: none

Motion approved 9 – 0.

Commissioner Flore mentioned he may have a conflict with the July meeting.

-PARKS AND REC PLAN

Howard updated commissioners on the status of the Parks and Rec Plan, primarily to include the purchase of the 7 acre parcel inholding along Grand River. Plan to next go to the Parks and Rec Committee.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Trustee Eyster discussed the following:

- The board had passed the budget
- Police assessment will stay the same
- Trying to get Mitchell Road speed limit reduced to 35 mph
- Board passed a neighborhood road policy

Chair had no report.

Howard mentioned the following:

- Attended a solar energy meeting in Mason discussing the solar installations on MSU's campus
- Mentioned the upcoming MAP Spring Institute on 4/26 focusing on Climate Change Mitigation

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

REVIEW

Chair Eidt reviewed the Planning commission's actions:

- Introduced and welcomed new member Jim Flore
- Held Public hearing on Barkham Creek Farms
- Held Public Hearing on Ordinance language for Small Wineries/Hard Cider Producers/Small Distillers
- Gave "preliminary " approval to Barkham Creek Farms conditioned on compliance with all deficiencies identified in Mike Deem's review letter of 3/7/18, including providing a sealed set of plans
- Set date of May 17th at 7:00pm for the "Solar Powering Sunnyside" exercise
- Tabled proposed Ordinance language for Solar Energy Systems to the May meeting
- Recommended approval, with changes, to Township Board of Ordinance language for Small Wineries/Hard Cider Production Facilities/Small Distilleries
- Set up Master Plan Review Committee consisting of Eidt, Stanford and Davis
- Set meeting schedule for 2018-2019, continuing on the 4th Wednesday of every other month, but with a meeting time of 7:00pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Davis, second by Stanford to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10:14pm.

Jim Howard

Recording secretary

Secretary Brown-Timm