

CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
November 6, 2019 Meeting

APPROVED MINUTES, Approved December 4, 2019

The Planning Commission regular meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:30 pm by Chairman Doug Dow with members Andrew Brown, Jerry Kohn, Richard Carlson and John Chipman present. Bill Marske and Grace Rappe were absent.

The Agenda was reviewed with no suggested changes. Jerry Kohn moved to approve the agenda, supported by John Chipman. Motion carried.

Amended Minutes of the October 2, 2019 meeting were reviewed with no changes. John Chipman moved to approve the minutes, supported by Jerry Kohn. Motion carried.

Old Business: Chairman Dow noted that the new Zoning Ordinance has been approved by the Township Board and will become effective as of January 1, 2020. Van Thornton and John Chipman are working on a guide to make it easier to use by the public.

Other Communication: None

Reports: None

New Business:

Amendment to Special Land Use #155
Glorious Gardens, 13841 Three Oaks Road. Sawyer
Amending SLU #155 to hire additional employees

Chairman Doug Dow provided a statement that he has had a personal business relationship with Glorious Gardens in the past, but has no financial interest and does not feel it will present a conflict of interest regarding this issue. The Commission members agreed that Dow's recusal was not needed.

Zoning Administrator Van Thornton began with a statement that this property is zoned R-2 which allows a Type II Home Business under Article 17.03, but with a limited number of outside employees. Complaints have been received this summer regarding unsafe conditions along Three Oaks Road with patrons parking along the road and trucks entering and leaving the property.

The applicant, Karen Villwock, explained that the current limit on employees is two. With reduced involvement of family in the business today, there is a need to increase the use of outside employees. Current need is 7 to 10 employees during maximum season. Preference was stated as 10 full-time equivalent employees.

Discussion then focused on the traffic safety issues. The applicant stated that it is intended to improve the internal road circulation and parking as well as providing a turn-around to trucks to safely enter and leave the property without backing out on Three Oaks Road.

Chipman verifies R-2 zoning district and asks how far are they from neighbors. Applicant says they have a large woods between them and the church to the north, and it is a 20-acre separation. The neighbor to the south has an abandoned house and they erected a fence to keep him from seeing the business

operation. Thornton comments on prior issues with parking. Applicant says they have perhaps three (3) semi deliveries per year, and they are improving the drive with a “U Shaped” section allowing semis and customers to drive around and not back out on the road. A discussion follows regarding the benefit of the drive addition.

Carlson reports he visited the site today and the drive is virtually impassible. MV says that during the season they add crushed limestone frequently. Kohn comments on difficulty of semis backing onto street and problem with cars parking on the street. Brown comments that it would be better if the farm stand is further back on the parcel. Dow supports need to control the vehicles and trucks. Carlson agrees stating that the facility needs an entrance drive and an exit drive to eliminate backing out on the road. A discussion followed after KV advises trucks back in about one hundred fifty (150') feet. Consensus that the to drive concept is critical. Brown states that the Board needs to determine the conditions for the new section of drive.

Dow agrees with Brown and adds that they definitely need to improve the drive. He comments that it is Rural Residential and that the Board wants to work with them, but it can only be allowed to be “so big”.

Jerry Kohn suggested that these improvements are not apparent on the existing site plan, so a drawing should be provided which clearly shows the new driveway additions and parking areas for trucks, staff and patrons. The applicant agreed to provide a revised site drawing.

Andrew Brown made a motion that SLU #155 be approved, with the following conditions: A maximum number of full-time equivalent employees is ten; A revised site plan showing employee, patron and commercial parking spaces, and a revised truck turn-around based upon appropriate semi-truck maneuvering dimensions. The revised drawing will be submitted prior to the December meeting of the Planning Commission for final approval. Motion seconded by John Chipman.

Motion Approved.

Public Comments: John Chipman provided an update on the MDOT proposal to implement a Road Diet for Route 12 from the Indiana state line to New Buffalo. Public opinion is being sought prior to approval.

Adjournment:

With no further business before the Commission, Richard Carlson moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 pm. Supported by Andrew Brown. Motion Carried. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,
Richard Carlson
For Bill Marske, Secretary, Chikaming Township Planning Commission