

MINUTES
MECOSTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Mecosta County Services Building

May 4, 2023

I. Roll Call

Chair, Ethan Ray called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Present for roll call were; Richard Hatkowski, Gary Lambrix, Bill Routley, Lorie Behrens, Bill Stanek, Annette Coles, Zoning Administrator, & Kim Straley, Recording Secretary.

Glen Norton was not present.

II. Public Hearings on the agenda

Chair Ethan Ray, announced that item number five (5) on the agenda, Map Amendment Request #PPC23-015 – Gotion, Inc., has been withdrawn and there will be no discussion on this petition.

1. Special Use/Site Plan Review #PPC23-011 – JBS Contracting Inc./Wheatland Music Organization, 7251 50th Ave, Remus, Wheatland Township; Parcel #12 030 011 100. Property is zoned AF. Request/site plan review to allow an accessory structure for fire crew storage and use.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant's representative, John Stadtfeld, from JBS Contracting was present to speak in favor of the application.

- The structure will eliminate the use of a tent which the organization rents for events.
- No firetrucks or large equipment vehicles will be stored in the structure.
- Structure will store the small ATV and water wagon which is used to put out campfires as they are not allowed on site.
- Additional fire rescue equipment will be stored that is used during events.
- There will be safety lighting and minimal plugs for charging equipment.

Those present to speak against were none.

No one else to speak for or against the petition. Chair closed the public portion of the meeting and opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- Organization is great for the community.
- See no issues with this structure or how will be used.
- Meets all setbacks.
- No variance is required for the size of structure requested.
- The structure is within usable size for zoning district.

Approved

- Site plan meets all requirements.
- Safety lighting will be placed on the structure.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Lorie Behrens to approve Site Plan Review #PPC23-011 – JBS Contracting Inc./Wheatland Music Organization, 7251 50th Ave, Remus, Wheatland Township; Parcel #12 030 011 100. Property is zoned AF. Special use/site plan review to allow an accessory structure for fire crew storage and use.

Roll Call Vote – 6 Yeas – 0 Nays

2. Site Plan Review #PPC23-012 – Mecosta Farm House LLC, 19306 Monroe Rd, Morley, Aetna Township; Parcel #13 023 007 200. Property is zoned R-1. Site plan review for a proposed platted subdivision.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant's representative, Adam Feenstra, was present to speak in favor of the application.

- Drain Commissioners has been consulted.
- Has no information on Health Department approval nor does he know if sites will perk for water wells.
- Is available to answer board questions but is stepping in for another who had a last-minute appointment.

Additional members in favor were none.

Those present to speak against were area neighbors, Russ Eckert, Rob Brooks, Maggie Winger, Tom Eyk, Rod Mavis, Jessica, Mindy Smith, Connie Schultz, Chris Pelton, Robert Miller, Duane Probst, and Tom Wheeler.

- Development will hurt the hunting area.
- Will be large traffic impacts for a road that already has large wear and tear.
- Believe that the water drainage could cause neighboring properties to become wet and retain water.
- Wells are shallow in this area; additional water wells could run the water table down and deteriorate neighboring wells.
- Not an area for development to be placed.
- Will impact the agricultural lifestyle and people may not like the area ag smells.

No one else to speak for or against the petition. Chair closed the public portion of the meeting and opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- Not a good fit for a rural area.
- Would be better suited for a split or condo plan not a platted subdivision.
- May be issues with well and septic.

Approved

- Does not have approval from Health Department for well and does not know if property will perk to allow large number of wells on each area.
- Would be better suited to be in a different area.
- Firearms and hunting in the area would be a concern for all residents.
- Density and storm water runoff could be a large concern.
- County roads may need to be updated for additional traffic impacts.
- Habitat and vegetation may be damaged or upset.
- Subdivisions are not suited for rural, agricultural areas, closer to a metropolis area may be better suited.
- Appears to be undesirable to the area.
- Main road would need to be paved before any lots could be sold.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrich and supported by Bill Stanek to deny/disapprove special use/site plan review #PPC23-012 –to allow a platted subdivision, property located at 19306 Monroe Rd, Morley, Aetna Township; Parcel #13-023-007-200.

Roll Call Vote – 6 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion passed. Platted subdivision is not allowed.

3. Map Amendment Request #PPC23-013 – Thomas & Mary Watson, 13152 New Millpond Rd., Big Rapids, Colfax Township; Parcel #06 030 013 057. Property is zoned R-3. Request to rezone from R-3, One and Two Family Residential to AG, Agricultural.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant, Thomas Watson, was present to speak in favor of the application.

- Wants to start a winery on the property.
- Believes the land will be better suited as AG to allow for planting and growing of crops and grape vines.
- Winery will bring tourism to the area of Big Rapids.
- Loves the winery industry.

No additional members in favor.

There was no one present to speak against the petition.

No one else to speak for or against the petition. Chair closed the public portion of the meeting and opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- Staff was asked about future use benefits. Staff stated that agricultural use of growing and planting vines would be allowed in an AG zoned area by right along with current zoned area through the right to farm act.
- Traffic impacts should be minimal.
- The applicant will have a limit on the number of employees.

Approved

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Bill Stanek to recommend denial to the Board of Commissioners. There was no support, so the motion died.

Discussion continued

- The request would not be considered spot zoning as there are many other agricultural zoned properties in the area.
- Conforms with the area and use of other properties.
- Applicant would comply with zoning use for future use.
- The current zoning allows for a winery under special use, but agricultural use will be a better fit for the future use of planting, harvesting, and cultivating the land.
- A site plan review will be required for future use of the property as a winery.

After further discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Rick Hatkowski and supported by Bill Routley for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for approval of a map amendment request #PPC23-013. The property is located at 13152 New Millpond Rd., Big Rapids, Colfax Township: Parcel #06 030 013 057. Property is currently zoned R-3.

Roll Call Vote – 5 Yeas – 1 Nays

4. Special Use Request #PPC23-014 – Cliff Youngs, 114 Mill St, Paris, Green Township; Parcel #01 891 007 000. Property is zoned R-3. Request to allow camp cabins on property.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant, Cliff Youngs, was present to speak in favor of the application.

- Has reduced the number of cabins to 4 total on property.
- DNR will regulate the use of crossing the trail for access to structures.
- Petitioner's easements permit to cross the White Pine Trail expires in June of 2023. Is currently waiting for reply to renew with DNR.
- Is willing to add any screening whether it be a fence or shrubbery to help reduce impact on neighboring properties.
- Stated that the cabins will be used for family when they come to visit. In the off season it may be rented from time to time.

Additional members in favor were area resident, Ted Cline.

- Tree clearing and removal of shrubbery has already improved the look of the property.
- Believes the petitioner will help improve the environment and look of the area.
- Would like to see the use approved so he will be able to enjoy the area when he visits the friend.

Those present to speak against were neighbors, Ken Devroy, and Ralph Kilpatrick.

- There are concerns about the property being used as rentals.

Approved

- The drive across the White Pine Trail is temporary and limited by the DNR approval.
- Is happier with the reduction in the number of cabins proposed to build.

Some statements were made about splitting the property and what the property is currently zoned. Staff clarified.

- The property is not being split into smaller sections, petitioner is requesting to allow additional cabin homes on the property by special use,
- Zoning ordinance does not allow more than one home per property.
- At time of the petition, the petitioner was awaiting approval of a map amendment from the Board of Commissioners.
- This approval was granted, and the property is now zoned LR, Lake and River Resort.

No one else to speak for or against the petition. Chair closed the public portion of the meeting and opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- The reduction in the number of cabins will help reduce the impacts to neighbors.
- There is a concern with vehicle traffic interfering with the users and vehicle traffic crossing the White Pine Trail.
- DNR mandate restrictions and use of the trail. They will place any signage on the trail if and as deemed necessary.
- Is believed to be for personal use.
- Has done a wonderful job clearing the area.
- Construction of the first cabin is allowed by right.
- The size of the proposed cabins is small and appears they will fit within the area.
- Screening of some type will be required on the northeast side of the property near adjacent homes.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made with the stipulation of screening being placed between the existing home and new construction in the northeast area of the property by Bill Stanek and supported by Gary Lambrich to approve special use request #PPC23-014 to allow camp cabins on the property. The property is located at 114 Mill Street, Paris, Green Township: Parcel #01 891 007 000. Property is zoned LR.

Roll Call Vote – 6 Yeas – 0 Nays

5. Map Amendment Request #PPC23-015 – Gotion, Inc., 18 MILE RD, 22270 18 MILE RD, 22124 18 MILE RD, 22156 18 MILE RD, 21545 19 MILE RD, 21715 19 MILE RD, 18800 220TH AVE, 18300 220TH AVE, 220TH AVE, 18222 220TH AVE, Green Township; Parcel # 01 032 005 000, #01 032 015 502, #01 032 006 000, #01 032 016 000, #01 032 015 501, #01 032 015 000, #01 033 021 975, #01 033 022 000, #01 033 018 000, #01 033 017 000, #01 033 019 001 (**11 parcels**). Property is zoned AF, AG. Request to rezone properties to I (Industrial).

The petitioner has withdrawn the petition.

Matters Pertaining to the Public

1. Chair Ray asked if there was anyone who wished to address the Commission regarding any subject that wasn't on the agenda. There was no response.
2. Chair Ray then asked if there was anyone who wished to be on the next agenda. There was no response.

III. Public Comment

Chair Ray asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to make comment. There were several who wished to address the board about Gotion Inc.

Those present who spoke were; Eddie Kabacinski, Jessica Kooikel, Carmen Bean, Pete Hoekstra, Kimberly Herring, Nancy, Jeff Thorne, Tom, Harry King, Lori Brock, Marjorie Steele, Brent Mason, John Holdsworth, Dawn, Jeremy, Rose Rice, Tina, Bruce Everett, Jeff Petticola, Michael Arersa, Debbie Dygerd, Bruce Baker, Rod McKenzie, Klaus Rietsma, Kimberly Smith, Dana, Steve Lowry, Norm Mclain, Tom Watson, and Mindy Smith.

When they were done, they thanked the board for their time.

III. Business Session

Old Business

1. Past petition question
 - Update on petition PPC22-028, 18755 Northland Dr. LLC, Alan Johns
 - Staff received a call from petitioner.
 - Had questions on altering the size to reduce two storage unit sizes.
 - The board stated it was ok to reduce the size of the structure but any changes to increase or otherwise change the use will need to come back before the board.
 - Staff will inform the petitioner of the board's comments.

New Business

1. Public comment speak time.
 - Discussion was had on public speaking time.
 - The board believes current time of 5 minutes is too long.
 - Would like to reduce the allowed time to 3 minutes to match what the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners allow.
 - Staff, department director, Annette Coles, will make the recommended amendment to the board by laws and bring back for approval.

Approved

2. Code enforcement officer

- The department is not asking for a code enforcement officer.
- Will be utilizing the building department staff to help do inspections and send out letters and notices for blight, zoning and building code violations.
- This has been implemented and is working very well.

Approval of Minutes

Bill Routley motioned to approve the April 6, 2023 minutes, supported by Rick Hatkowski and passed unanimously.

IV. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Straley / Recording Secretary

_____, Chair
Ethan Ray
Mecosta County Planning Commission

Date Approved