

MINUTES
MECOSTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Mecosta County Services Building

July 6, 2023

I. Roll Call

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

II. 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 or to be placed on the next agenda. There was no response.

III. Public Hearings on the agenda

1. Special Use Request #PPC23-012 – Mecosta Farmhouse, 19306 Monroe Rd, Morley, Aetna Township; Parcel #13 023 007 200. Property is zoned R-1. Preliminary site plan review for a platted subdivision.

The chair stated that this petition is a site plan review and recommendations will be made to items which may need to be added or addressed on this plated subdivision.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant, Ethan Gehrke, and his representative, Dave Hanko, were present to speak in favor of the application.

- Is from the area, Grand Rapids.
- Is only placing 9 homes on the site.
- The representative went over the petition and planned areas for the plat.

There were no additional members in favor of the petition.

Those present to speak against the petition were Dwayne Probst and Robert Books, area residents.

- Opposes the plat being area.
- Worried about the roads, hunting in the area, water well depletion, and hazards which may happen to the environment.

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.

Un-Approved

- Feel this may be a bad area to allow a platted subdivision but is an allowable use by right.
- The plated subdivision will need some type of performance guarantee such as a bond to ensure that the requirements are met.
- We are not the only approval needed. Will need to seek approval from other state agencies.
- Curbs, paved road and water runoff gutters will need to be in place before the lots can be sold or developed.
- May be a blind spot from the road, should be addressed with the County Road Commission.
- The road conditions and wear and tear should be addressed with MDOT and County Road Commission.
- Mature trees should stay on site, if at all possible, for screening and erosion purposes.
- The drain commissioner's office will need to address any soil erosion concerns due to the amount of soil being moved.
- This is preliminary only. Will need to come back once all other approvals are met with final plans for approval by this board.
- Will want to see underground electric and other utilities placed within the platted area.
- Will need well and septic approval from the district 10 Health Dept. for each lot.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Ethan Ray and supported by Bill Stanek to approve the preliminary site plan review request #PPC23-012 – with stipulations that a performance guarantee be put into place in the form of a bond with the County, to ensure that the utilities are placed underground where possible and all curbs, water gutters and roads are paved within the subdivision plat. The property is zoned R-1 and located at 19306 Monroe Rd. Morley, Aetna Township, Parcel #13 023 007 200.

Roll Call Vote – 5 Yeas – 1 Nays, motion approved.

2. Special Use Request #PPC23-019 – Amy Hayes, 10760 Lake St. Rodney, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 891 017 000. Property is zoned LR. Request to allow a pavilion on rental cabin space.

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

- Fell in love with the area.
- Moved here and took over the cabin/cottage rental business.
- Old structure was dangerous so have it removed and replaced with existing structure.
- Remodeled the inside of each cabin to make it more pleasing and inviting to guests.
- Did not know needed to have permit or zoning approval for placement of pavilion.

Un-Approved

Additional members present to speak in favor was Township representative, Julie Austin.

- Believe Amy has done a lot of work for the property.
- The petitioner has done a great job improving the site and the area which she resides.
- Recommend approval of the petition.

No one was 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.

- Has done a nice job with the cabins.
- Great improvement to the property.
- Agree that the old structure was dangerous but should have asked for permission before did the work.
- Electricity should be wired directly into the structure, not use extension cords for lighting.
- Wonderful addition to the property.
- Fits the area.
- No foreseeable negative impacts.
- Will be required to get a permit and inspected by building department.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts, a motion was made by Richard Hatkowski and supported by Gary Lambrix to approve special use request #PPC23-019 to allow a pavilion at the cabin space with the stipulation that the electric be hard wired to the structure. The property is zoned LR and located at 10760 Lake St. Rodney, Chippewa Township: Parcel #03 891 017 000.

Roll Call Vote – 5 Yeas – 1 Nays, motion approved.

3. Special Use Request #PPC23-020 – Joseph & Candis Soltau, 19795 Indian Dr. Paris, Green Township; Parcel #01 05281109000. Property is zoned R-2. Request to allow a second accessory structure than permitted by right.

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

- Petitioned to have a tiny home but wants to do things as can afford.
- Does not want to put the expense into a well and septic until can afford it.
- Is willing to work with the board and staff to allow the structure.

No one was present to speak against the petition, however, a letter in opposition was received and given to the board members.

Un-Approved

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.

- Have a concern with there being a second accessory structure on the property.
- Should have applied for a house permit then would be allowed and not need to come before the board.
- Understand not wanting to get a loan. But future use to turn in to a home may not be practicable.
- Structure must meet building code for home when constructed to save cost in the future for the owner to meet insulation values and energy code regulations.
- Concern that this may never be turned into a home in the future but used in that manner.
- Fines should be assessed if caught living in a structure without property permits or structure change of use in the future.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Bill Stanek to deny the petition. Motion had no support, so it has died.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Richard Hatkowski to approve special use request #PPC23-020 to allow a second accessory structure on the property. The property is zoned R-2 and located at 19795 Indian Dr., Paris, Green Township; Parcel #01 052 110 000.

Roll Call Vote – 4 Yeas – 2 Nays, motion approved.

4. Special Use Request #PPC23-021 – Mark & Angela Johnson, 8929 Lake View Blvd, Rodney, Martiny Township; Parcel #07 048 010 026. Property is zoned LR. Request to allow an oversized accessory structure than permitted by right.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicants, Mark and Angela Johnson, were present to speak in favor of the application.

- Let the board know they are looking to build the garage/accessory structure into the bank to not block the view of other neighboring properties.
- Will have a bathroom and office in the structure.
- Eventually want to live here full-time once the improvements are finished.
- Will be upgrading the septic system.

No one was 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.

- The roof height is limited to 20 feet.
- May need a variance to allow the height of the roof.
- Good fit and design for the area.

Un-Approved

- Incorporating it into the hill will help keep the height down and not block any views.
- Want to upgrade septic to attach the garage bathroom.
- Entry into the structure through the easement will be cohesive to the surrounding area.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Bill Stanek and supported by Lorie Behrens to approve special use request #PPC23-021 to allow an oversized accessory structure on the property. The property is zoned LR and located at 8929 Lake View Blvd, Rodney, Martiny Township: Parcel #07 048 010 026.

Roll Call Vote – 6 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion approved.

5. Special Use/Site Plan Review Request #PPC23-022 – Iltis Construction/ Crossroads Auto Care LLC, 19160 Northland Dr. Big Rapids, Green Township; Parcel #01 027 027 200. Property is zoned C-2. Request to allow an auto repair facility.

Use Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant's representative, John Iltis of Iltis Construction, was present to speak in favor of the application.

- Established businessman to the area.
- There is a need in the community for more auto repair facilities.
- Good fit for the area.
- Other businesses in the surrounding area.

No one was 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.

- Great location for business.
- The number of employees listed is good and meets the ordinance.
- There is a great need in the area for this type of business.
- Concerned about the wet land area. This should be addressed with soil erosion in the Drain Commissioners office.
- Has presented a good plan, so no reason cannot approve site plan review as well as special use at this time.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Bill Stanek and supported by Gary Lambrix to approve special use request and site plan review #PPC23-019 to allow an auto repair facility on the property. The property is zoned C-2 and located at 19160 Northland Dr., Big Rapids, Green Township: Parcel #01 027 027 200.

Roll Call Vote – 6 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion approved.

6. Special Use Request #PPC23-023 – Margaret Mieras, 14298 80th Ave, Mecosta, Martiny Township; Parcel #07 023 008 170. Property is zoned R-1. Request to allow rental space in an oversized accessory structure.

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

- Is available to answer questions from the board.
- Thought that she had asked for special use in 2021 when asked for oversized structure.
- The structure is heated and secured with limited traffic.
- There is a well and septic on the property for the bathroom inside the structure.
- Is a retired combat vet.
- Is offering alternate options to storage for neighboring properties.

Board members asked staff about the 2021 petition. Annette stated it was not clear on 2021 petition application, did not state other items would be stored, and therefore would need to re petition for rental space use.

Additional members in favor were contractor, Rich Davis.

- This is a big investment for the petitioner.
- The structure can fit and has room for 10 – 15 boats.

Those present to speak against the petition were area residents and neighbors, Danny Maxon, Don Roethlisberger, and Leonard Speckin.

- The impact on the area will be larger than most would expect.
- The structure is too large.
- Will be traffic impacts with visibility issues.
- The structure sits at the top of a hill, creating a blind spot for entry into the property.
- Status as a veteran has no bearing on the outcome of petition.
- Zoning ordinance states commercial use must be 50 feet from all property lines. The structure on the north side only has 20-foot setback.
- Initial request did not mention rental items or would have been at last meeting.
- Used the unit rental until found did not have permission.
- Backing in was difficult and had impacts on the local traffic, blocked people on the road.
- There is no clear view to enter into the driveway of property.

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.

- Doesn't meet setbacks for commercial use in a residential zone.

Un-Approved

- Traffic is heavy in lake areas, there may be large impacts during the holidays or summer season.
- The building may not be set up for commercial use. It may need a new building permit for change of use. Will have to speak with the building official on this matter.
- The building looks nice.
- Do not like the idea of commercial use in this area.
- May need to upgrade electric. Should speak with Building department about this as well.
- The view for traffic may be obstructed due to the location of the driveway.
- Will need to discuss driveway issues with Road Commission.
- Did not have a commercial site plan review, one may be required in the future if this is approved.
- Believe approval will set a bad example for future petitioners.
- Should have been clearer of intent on 2021 petition, structure may not have been approved if board knew was being used in this manner.
- Commercial use like this is not an allowable use by right or by special use in this zoned district.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Bill Routley to approve special use request #PPC23-023 to allow rental space in an oversized accessory structure. The property is zoned R-1 and located at 14298 80th Ave, Mecosta, Martiny Township; Parcel #07 023 008 170.

Roll Call Vote – 3 Yeas – 3 Nays, motion is a tie therefore according to Robert's Rules of Order, motion is denied.

IV. Public Comments

Chair Ray asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to make a comment. The following individual, Brent Mason, addressed the board on denial of petition PPC23-023 and permitted uses in a zoned district.

V. Business Session

Old Business

None presented.

New Business

1. Training for board members

- May be funds in the budget for training. Staff will ask permission at the next committee meeting to allow.
- There are several facilities and agencies which may be able to provide opportunities for online or daily training.

- Citizen Planner is an option and would be great for this board.
- Some may need refresher courses.
- Staff will check availability and bring information back to future meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Bill Stanek motioned to approve the June 1, 2023, minutes, supported by Gary Lambrix and passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Straley / Recording Secretary

_____, Chair
Ethan Ray
Mecosta County Planning Commission

Date Approved