

MINUTES
MECOSTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Mecosta County Services Building
September 7, 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, Marilyn Bradstrom, Bill Routley, Lorie Behrens, Bill Stanek, Annette Coles, Zoning Administrator, & Kim Straley, Recording Secretary.

II. Matters Pertaining to the Public

1. Chair Ray then asked if there was anyone who wished to be on the next agenda. There was no response.

III. Public Hearings on the agenda

1. Tabled, Site Plan Review Request #PPC23-024 – Thomas & Mary Watson, 13152 New Millpond Rd., Big Rapids, Colfax Township; Parcel #06 030 013 057. Property is zoned AG. Site plan review for a winery.

A motion to un-table and reopen the petition for discussion by the board was made by Ethan Ray and supported by Bill Stanek with a unanimous vote.

Chair Ray read the request back into the record. The applicant was not present to speak or give further comment.

As this matter already had an opportunity for public comment, the chair opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- The site plan lacks a lot of information.
- Plans submitted are not stamped by an engineer as required.
- Was told to submit proper plans at the last meeting and has not done so.
- Believe this is a waste of the boards time.
- Should reject the plan and make petitioner start over.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Bill Routley to table until petitioner can provide engineered stamped plans and Health Department approval for well and septic, for site plan review submission. Petition #PPC23-024 – 13152 New Millpond Rd., Big Rapids, Colfax Township and is zoned AG. Parcel #06 030 013 057.

Approved

Roll Call Vote – 6 Yeas – 1 Nays, Motion passed, petition is tabled until petitioner supplies requested information. Staff will contact the petitioner with the results of the meeting.

2. Tabled, Special Use Request #PPC23-026 – Connie Redman Rev Trust, 19262 W Chippewa Dr., Ewart, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 030 055 000. Property is zoned R-2. Special use request to allow an oversized accessory structure.

A motion to un-table and reopen the petition for discussion by the board was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Marilyn Bradstrom with a unanimous vote.

Chair Ray read the request into the record. The applicant, Connie Redman, was present to speak or give further comment.

- Understands the system a bit better.
- Has hired a contractor who helped her with the plan and drawings for the structure.
- Hopes she has provided all she needs to move forward with the project.

As this matter already had an opportunity for public comment, the chair opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- Appreciate the plans and wealth of information.
- The information provided helps the board make a better decision.
- See no foreseeable negative impacts.
- The change in the roof line allows petitioner to stay within height requirements.
- Will be required to have permanent staircase with a door at the bottom for egress.
- Will be required to have an egress window and smoke detector in the loft space.
- Love the design, will fit with the design of the home.
- Will not block neighboring views.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Bill Stanek to approve special request #PPC23-026 and allow an oversized accessory structure on the property with the stipulation that there be a door at the bottom of the staircase, smoke detectors and an egress window in the loft area. The property is located at 19262 W Chippewa St., Ewart, Chippewa Township, and zoned R-2. Parcel # 03 030 055 000.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays

3. Map Amendment #PPC23-031 – Gaylen Murray, 440 S Sheridan Ave. Remus, Wheatland Township; Parcel #12 021 005 100. Property is zoned R-4. Request to rezone property from R-4, multiple family residential to C-1, neighborhood commercial.

Approved

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

- The petitioner gave an overview of the building and how long has owned the property.
- Property has never been used residentially to his knowledge.
- Several commercial businesses have rented the space.
- Has no renter currently but is looking at his options for use in the future.
- Spoke with the township and they gave their approval based on the property tax classification.
- Tow company wants to use for an impound yard in the near future.
- Found out through staff what the property was zoned.
- Impound yard fence area would be 50 feet by 100 feet if allowed at a later date.
- Has a plan to fence off the property to deter trespassing and other people from using the area outside of any use allowed on site.

There were no additional members present which were in favor of the petition.

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.

- Surprised that this property is not already zoned commercial.
- Have only know the property to have commercial uses.
- Property is isolated from others in the area.
- Is a good fit for the neighborhood.
- There are commercial uses with ½ mile of proposed site.
- Fits with the Master Plan for the township and overall use around the area.
- Have a concern with the use of an impound yard hours of operation, but that will be delt with under special use or site plan review at a later date, another meeting.
- Fencing around and on the property is a great idea.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Bill Stanek and supported by Lorie Behrens to recommend approval to the Board of Commissioners for a map amendment. Request #PPC23-031 set to rezone the property from R-4, multiple family residential to C-1, neighborhood commercial. The property is located at 440 S Sheridan Ave., Remus, Wheatland Township, and is zoned R-4. Parcel #12 021 005 100.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion approved, and a recommendation to rezone will be sent to the Board of Commissioners by staff.

Approved

4. Special Use Request #PPC23-032 – Leon & Erin Ignatoski, 6051 Truman Rd., Barryton, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 079 076 000. Property is zoned R-2. Request to allow home-based Air BnB business on the property.

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

- Live in Grand Rapids area.
- Bought the property 1 ½ years ago.
- Enjoy the area and what it has to offer.
- Would like to share the beauty of the area with others through renting out, operating an Air BnB when not using it personally.
- Wants to supplement income for the family.

There were no additional members present who were in favor of the petition.

Those present to speak against were; area neighbors, Sam Hazen, and Sheila Roberts.

- Believes the access easement needs upkeep and the use will only give more wear and tear on the surface.
- There is no public access to the water from the proposed use.
- There are concerns with fire pits and campfires.
- Wants to know who will be responsible for guest getting out of hand.
- Like the neighbor but not the proposed use.
- Believes the use is already being done.

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 opposed to the use but understand the neighbors' concerns.
- Is a 2-bedroom home so guests will be limited to the size requirements.
- Should have rules established to mitigate issues.
- Short term versus long term use limits the use and allows more control through rules and regulations.
- A plat amendment is cost prohibitive.
- Using a rental organization to get patrons for use.
- Renters should be limited due to the size of the structure.
- Boundary lines should be established so users know the limitations of use and space surrounding the property.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Rick Hatkowski to approve special use request #PPC23-032 and allow an Air BnB on the property. The property is located at 6051 Truman Rd., Barryton, Chippewa Township and is zoned R-2. Parcel #03 079 076 000

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion approved to allow an Air BnB.

Approved

5. Map Amendment Petition #PPC23-033 – Stephen Hanford, 17099 Sierra Dr., Big Rapids, Colfax township; Parcel #06 030 001 000. Property is zoned R-1. Request to rezone the property from R-1, rural residential to AF, agricultural and forestry.

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

- Has lived on the property since 1992.
- Thanked staff for the help and information on rezoning the property.
- Neighboring property owners changed their zoning a few years ago.
- Neighboring property, with their horse trailer loaded, causes the same wear and tear on roads as petitioner with his equipment.
- Believes that the violations were ridiculous and done out of vengeance because neighbor's mother does not like him.

Additional members in favor were; area resident, Therese Ventocilla.

- Stated the petitioner is a builder and brings his equipment home each night.
- Has had the equipment on the property since 1992.
- Arguments between neighbors are over the easement usage, and rezoning should help solve some of the issues.
- Property is prime for agricultural use if petitioner chooses to use in that manner in future.

Those present to speak against were; area neighbors Joe Strohkirch, Terry Strohkirch, Kristine Green, Suzanne Hosking, and several emails and letters received by staff and placed on record.

- Owned property in area for many years
- Petitioner has had a commercial business of property for a long time.
- Many believe there has been damage to the road due to the large equipment going on and off the petitioner's property.
- Mentioned several items which are civil matters between neighbors and petitioner.
- Has hours of operation at all times of the night.
- Believes the petitioner has buried products on the property.
- Believes the petitioner has been in trouble with several law enforcement agencies.
- Comes through the residential zoned area to access property.
- Several members believe that McKinley Road does not allow commercial use to go up and down the road, therefore, should not be allowed to have on property.
- Some believe the petitioner acts viciously towards others.
- Believe the equipment is too heavy and causes damage to the roads.
- Many are upset that the use of a commercial style business has not been stopped or brought into compliance earlier than now.

Approved

- Many believe that the petitioner should not be allowed to change the zoning district due to the lack of following the rules in current zoning district's regulations.

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.

- Traffic through the subdivision is a concern. Asked staff to clarify.
- Staff replied – an easement was platted and added to the plat allowing access to the six parcels which sit south of the subdivision. This is the only access on record for those parcels.
- Road maintenance can be an issue, but not considering a special use, looking at a map amendment proposal.
- The size of equipment mentioned is not different than many sizes of farm equipment used on area farms.
- Sad to see childish behavior being done between neighbors.
- The request is within the petitioners' rights.
- If special use is required, hours of operation can be discussed at that time.
- Any property owner should be allowed to bring their tools home, even if they are larger than others.
- There may be safety issues or concerns with traveling through the subdivision but supports the tools of the occupation being allowed at home.
- Some of the matters presented by both sides are civil matters and should be handled through litigation or court proceedings.
- Would approve the amendment based on the facts provided for rezoning not the civil matters or special use discussed.
- Fits within the Master Plan for the area.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Bill Routley to make a recommendation of approval to the Board of Commissioners for a map amendment. Request #PPC23-033 set to rezone the property from R-1, rural residential to AF, agricultural and forestry. The property is located at 17099 Sierra Dr., Big Rapids, Colfax Township and is zoned R-1. Parcel #06 030 001 000.

Roll Call Vote – 5 Yeas – 2 Nays, motion approved, and a recommendation to rezone will be sent to the Board of Commissioners by staff.

IV. **Public Comment** (3-minute limit per person)

Chair Ray asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to make a comment.

- Marjorie Steele spoke on the Air BnB, the manner of how the meeting was held and the separation of church and state.
- Brandy Sweet stated she was here to observe how the board operates and votes on agenda items.

- Terrie Strohkirch, Larry Shult and Louis Kusay spoke on subdivision rules and other matters for agenda item #5.
- Joe Strohkirch spoke on the public notices going out to more people.
- Steve Hanford made a comment on easement being brought off of Arthur Road for property owners.

V. Business Session

Old Business

1. **Camping sewage disposal** – was tabled until November meeting.
2. **Jeff Storey Site Plan Review**, Wheatland Township, a new set of plans, as requested from board, for site plan review were received by staff and are available in the office for review if anyone wished to look them over.

New Business

Annette Coles will not be at the October meeting; she has the fall conference in Traverse City. Kim will be here, taking minutes and available to help. Consider reading up on your ordinance and ask questions before October 3 if wishing for specific input.

Approval of Minutes

Bill Stanek motioned to approve the August 3, 2023, minutes, supported by Lorie Behrens and passed unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Straley / Recording Secretary



_____, Chair
Ethan Ray

10/05/2023
Date Approved

Mecosta County Planning Commission