

**MINUTES**  
**MECOSTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mecosta County Services Building

April 4, 2024

**I. Roll Call**

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

Others Present: Administrator Paul Bullock, Attorney's Haider Kazim & Matthew Cross from CMDA Law.

**II. Persons wishing to be placed on the next agenda.**

1. Chair Stanek then asked if there was any person desiring to present matter(s) to the Planning Commission for the next meeting. There was no response.

**III. Public Hearings**

1. Site Plan Review #PPC24-004 – Felde Holdings LLC/Brittany Felde, 2355 Northland Dr., Morley, Aetna Township; Parcel #13 024 010 800. Property is zoned C-1

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

- As per her submitted application.
- The proposed capacity is 60 people or less.
- The venue will cater to smaller gatherings.
- No current set hours of operation but suggested closed by midnight so renters can have whole day use.
- Historically, the property has been commercial use.
- In communications with District Health Dept. #10 regarding permitting well and septic.
- Inflatable rental items are stored inside the structure and delivered to the event site when rented. No pickup at business.
- The facility has limited outdoor lighting.

The Chair asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of or against the petition, but there was no response.

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.

- Can see the need for this business in the area.
- The applicant may be required to obtain EGLE clearance for proximity to wetland area.

## Un-Approved

- Required parking spaces for the size and type of business is 1 space per every 3 seats, equaling 20 spaces needed.
- The applicant has 30 parking spaces available on drawing presented but 7 are in the road right-of-way (ROW) and cannot be used as presented.
- Parking spaces within the ROW could be reduced and moved to be parallel with the road to give additional space if needed.
- Recommend establishing set business hours to no later than midnight.
- Cannot stipulate on alcohol sales as this is governed by the state.
- ADA compliance for structure will be handled by the building department.
- Well and septic are being addressed by the Health Department.
- Crushed concrete viability in lieu of hard surface was proposed by a board member. However, ordinance for this type of business requires hard surface. Applicants would be required to obtain a variance for such a change. "Hard surface" is not further defined in zoning ordinance.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Bill Routley to approve site plan review #PPC24-004, review for change of use to rental venue space on a C-1 zoned property with the stipulation that applicant seek clearance from EGLE, parking be arranged to not sit within the ROW and at least two be ADA compliant, ADA compliance to building be handled by building department, and parking area be hard surface or obtain variance from Zoning Board of Appeals. Property is located at 2355 Northland Dr., Morley, Aetna Township; Parcel #13 024 010 800.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion passed unanimously with stipulation that applicant seek clearance from EGLE, parking spaces be arranged to not sit within the ROW, at least two parking spaces be ADA compliant (handicap accessible), ADA compliance to building be handled by building department, and parking area be hard surface or obtain variance from Zoning Board of Appeals.

2. Special Use Permit Petition #PPC24-006 – Robert & Sarah Glidewell, 17020 James Ave., Big Rapids, Grant Township; Parcel #02 042 067 100. Property is zoned LR. Request to allow a short-term rental on a LR zoned property.

The Chair read the request into the record. The applicants, Robert & Sarah Glidewell, were not present to speak in favor of the application.

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

Members present to speak against the petition were neighbors James & Diane Grunst, Karen Thompson, Clare Kwant, Judy & Kal Siegers, & Marjorie Steele. A letter from other area residents Mark Benson, Linda Morey, Scott Gimmel and John & Heather Mossel were read into the record.

- Several deeds were presented to the board to review. The deeds indicate the property is for residential purposes, not commercial.

## Un-Approved

- Members believe that renters do not care about the area. This results in Increased traffic, noise, lighting, fencing, dogs and late-night parties.
- Youngs Lake is certified zebra mussel free and remains so due to strict practices/protocol by long-term residents. Renters may compromise this status by not quarantining or cleaning watercraft prior to entering lake which could introduce contaminants to the lake.
- Allowing this rental will set precedence for all other future short-term rentals.
- This is a private lake, not a public lake.
- Lake lots are small and in close proximity, along with well and septic systems.
- Allowing a short-term rental (Air BnB) on the lake presents various problems: improper parking, garbage, picking up after animals, additional use of the area, individuals not doing seasonal cleanup.
- The rights of the long-term residents should be considered.
- Allowing short-term rental(s) may affect property taxes, and the quality of life for long-term residents.

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

- Hesitant to allow petition without specific ordinance in place for short term rentals (STR'S). STR's are uniquely problematic. The board is currently considering adding ordinance language for STR's.
- The applicant's property is in close proximity to neighbors.
- There is a steep drive with limited parking.
- Traffic could be a potential hazard.
- Safety and the welfare of residents is an issue when addressing the accessibility of emergency vehicles.
- Invasive species is a true concern.
- The deed as presented indicates a residential use rather than commercial use. An attorney consultation clarified that with special use permit standards, enforcement of deeds is generally a civil matter between homeowners in a development and not for the board to consider when making their decision.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Marilyn Bradstrom to deny special use permit #PPC24-006 for a short-term rental on an LR zoned property. The property is located at 17020 James Ave., Big Rapids, Grant Township; Parcel #02 042 067 100.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion passed unanimously to deny petition.

3. Special Use #PPC24-007 – Simon & Sarah Brenneman, 13717 5 Mile Rd., Deerfield Township; Parcel #14 011 006 000. Property is zoned AF. Request to expand the sawmill business for poly furniture construction & sales.

The Chair read the request into the record. The applicants, Simon & Sarah Brenneman, were not present to speak in favor of the application.

## Un-Approved

There were no additional members present to speak in favor of or against the petition.

With no one else to speak in favor of or against the petition, the Chair closed the public portion of the meeting and opened the floor to the Board for discussion and decision.

- Applicant has adequate space for expansion of business.
- The property has been well maintained.
- Staff clarified that the petitioner currently has permission for the current sawmill business, and that this petition is for change of use to expand business to include poly furniture construction and sales after the fact. The applicant did not know that special use to change the product produced at sawmill was needed.
- Expansion adds value, sustainability, and profitability to the owner.
- Have concerns over waste disposal and recycling of poly-waste.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Ethan Ray and supported by Marilyn Bradstrom to approve special use permit #PPC24-007, request to expand sawmill business for poly furniture construction & sales with stipulation that composite waste be disposed of accordingly and be removed from site in a proper manner. Property is zoned AF. The property is located at 13717 5 Mile Rd., Morley, Deerfield Township; Parcel #14 011 006 000.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion passed unanimously with stipulation that composite waste be disposed of accordingly and in a proper manner to be removed from site.

4. Special Use #PPC24-009 – Michael Burch & Bonny Scott, 16336 Polk Rd., Stanwood, Austin Township; Parcel #10 032 003 001. Property is zoned AG. Request to allow a home-based business for small equipment rental.

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

- Gave an overview of what type of equipment would be rented.
- Wishes to have an office space small structure less than 300 square feet on site.
- Works outside of home as well.
- This would be a way to supplement income in the off-work season.
- Rental business will include only small equipment: small skid-steers, mini excavator, woodchipper, chainsaws, and other items which could be hauled by a ½ ton pickup truck.
- This would be a side business intended to operate during warm weather months.

There were no additional members in favor or 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.

- Rural country setting and layout adequate.

## Un-Approved

- Junk vehicles should be removed.
- Upkeep and maintenance regarding oil was addressed – petitioner has a 150,000-waste oil furnace onsite.
- There is a need for this business type in the community.
- Office plan for business – petitioner will either have a mobile 8 x 20 construction trailer or a 10 x 12 pre-assembled shed depending on zoning ordinance allowance and building code requirements.
- Portable toilets – per staff, commercial use on residential property will be required to be discussed with District Health Dept. #10.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Marilyn Bradstrom and supported by Lorie Behrens to allow special use permit #PPC24-009, request to allow a home-based business for small equipment rental. Property is zoned AG. The property is located at 16336 Polk Rd., Stanwood, Austin Township; Parcel #10 032 003 001.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion passed unanimously.

5. Special Use Permit Petition #PPC24-010 – Gerald & Betty Kauffman, 9772 19 Mile Rd., Rodney, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 028 009 000. Property is zoned AG. Request to allow a wood pallet shop on an AG zoned property.

The Chair read the request into the record. The applicants, Gerald & Betty Kauffman, were present to speak in favor of the application.

- Split of property is in progress.
- Dirt work on site is for future AG barn.
- Has met with Chippewa Township staff to address noise reduction for the workshop.

There were members present who were in favor of the petition but with modifications. Members present were; Chippewa Township Supervisor Bryan Roels, current owner of property Joe Miller, and neighbor Carl Kerns.

- A review of the petitioner's McBain shop was conducted.
- Was determined there is an adequate fit to the neighborhood.
- Small concerns on the noise but could have mitigation tactics done to reduce.
- Noise level readings were collected. Sound reduction of some equipment would be necessary to mitigate generated noise of chop saw, generator, multi-head milling machine, & pneumatic Nailer.
- Noise mitigation tactics could include; housing generator inside and employing muffling devices, using fiberglass perforated steel for interior walls and acoustic panels.
- All support the petition stating mitigation tactics for noise is their only concern.
- Petitioners should have set hours, waste collection, parking area for trucks, and should encourage limitation on traffic by trucks.

Those present to speak against were none.

## Un-Approved

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

- Mitigation of noise is necessary. Recommend using all mentioned uses.
- Split of property and home being built on property will verify occupant being home-based business.
- Scrap wood (waste) will be used for heat during winter months and given away during warmer months.
- Construction of home and business occurring simultaneously.
- Stipulation of weekend hours should be considered.
- The board appreciates transparency in communication among interested parties.
- The business appears to be a good fit to the neighborhood and should not disturb neighbors.
- Staff noted building height allowed as 24 ft., and size limited to 3000 sq. ft. total per zoning ordinance for zoning district. The proposed building is oversized and will need approval from this board along with the use.
- It was clarified that a variance would not be needed if this board addresses now.
- Petition wishes for 28 ft. at peak, and up to 5800 sq foot structure including office space and loading dock.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Gary Lambrix and supported by Richard Hatkowski to allow Special Use Petition #PPC24-010, request to allow a wood pallet shop on an AG zoned property with the stipulation that the noise be mitigated by housing generator inside, employing muffling devices, using fiberglass perforated steel for interior walls and acoustic panels and hours on the weekend be limited to one Saturday per month. Property is located at 9772 19 Mile Rd., Rodney, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 028 009 000.

Roll Call Vote – 7 Yeas – 0 Nays, motion passed unanimously with the following stipulations; the noise be mitigated by housing generator inside, employing muffling devices, use fiberglass perforated steel for interior walls and acoustic panels and hours on the weekend be limited to one Saturday per month.

Before the next petition was read into the record, Rick Hatkowski made a comment on the proposed use for the next petition. After discussion Mr. Hatkowski made a motion to request a moratorium on Special Use Permits for Short Term Rentals. Motion was supported by Marilyn Bradstrom. Roll call vote was 1 yeah and 6 nays. Motion denied.

The chair turned the meeting back to public hearings presented for consideration.

6. Special Use Permit Petition #PPC24-011 – Andrew & Jena Tucker, 22457 60<sup>th</sup> Ave., Barryton, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 079 079 000. Property is zoned R-2. Request to allow a short-term rental on a R-2 zoned property.

## Un-Approved

The Chair read the request into the record. The applicants, Andrew and Jena Tucker, were present via Zoom, to speak in favor of the application.

- Was hard to hear the petitioner over computer on Zoom, staff relayed remarks.
- Stated they have placed a lot of money into the repairs and cleanup of the property.
- Will use most of the time but wish to rent out when they and family are not utilizing home and property.
- Wish to use the property as a supplemental income to cover the costs of repairs and purchase of the property.
- Another use was allowed down the road last year. Believes this is better use as they are farther from neighboring properties and not on a private road.

There were no additional members present who were in favor of or 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 property sits away from other homes in the area.
- Should set a use limit to 50% minimum.
- Is a larger piece of property (lot) in area.
- Has a drive off of public road so should limit traffic on private roadway.
- The board wishes for petitioners to set quiet hours for use. Will help reduce noise to neighboring properties.
- Stipulations should be set with a limit of use in a year, number of cars allowed on site, number of families at one time, recreational use and size of boats on lake.

After discussion and based on the findings of facts listed, a motion was made by Bill Routley and supported by Lorie Behrens to approve with stipulations for special use permit #PPC24-006, request to allow a short-term rental on a R-2 zoned property. Property is located at 22467 60<sup>th</sup> Ave., Barryton, Chippewa Township; Parcel #03 079 079 000.

Roll Call Vote – 4 Yeas – 3 Nays, motion approved with stipulations that the use be limited to 33% of the year, 1 week of the summer reserved for no use, no large boats used by renters on site, a 10 pm quiet time be in place, limited to two families renting at one time.

#### IV. Public Comment

The chair asked if there was anyone who wished to address the board on any subject. Those present were area residents.

- Deb Magnusson spoke on Green Township and Gotion; believing the board should not address Gotion's petition in May.
- Larry Finkbeiner made comments on how he's been watching the boards work and made comments on Gotion's application coming before the board soon.
- Marjorie Steele made comments on an old flood study that was done by Ferris State Students on the area where Gotion is placing the battery plant. She sent this study via email to board members and other agencies.

V. **Public Matters**

**Old Business**

1. STR's (short term rentals) –

- The board had discussion on the allowance of these within the County zoning area.
- Legal consultation was had, and a moratorium was discussed. Legal feels that this is not the way to handle the use.
- Many board members feel there should be some type of rules in place for this use before any are heard before this board in the future.
- The board believes that a request for a moratorium would allow the PC Board and staff time to review and propose a zoning amendment for the addition of STR use language within the county zoning ordinance. By researching and reviewing information, the board believes they can establish better criteria and regulations to assist staff with enforcement and guidelines to accepting the STR use within Mecosta County boundaries.

A motion was made by Rick Hatkowski and supported by Marilyn Bradstrom to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to have a moratorium placed on acceptance of STR applications for no more than 180 days. Roll call vote was unanimously approved. Staff will present a proposal to the Board of Commissioners at their next scheduled meeting.

**New Business**

PA 116 # 339 - to remove property from Land Preservation.

After discussion a motion was made by Marilyn Bradstrom and supported by Bill Routley to make a recommendation of approval to the Board of Commissioners for the removal of the PA116 land from the Land Preservation Program.

Roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 Nays. Motion approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

Rickard Hatkowski motioned to approve the March 7, 2024, minutes, supported by Marilyn Bradstrom and passed unanimously.

VI. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Straley / Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair

Bill Stanek

Mecosta County Planning Commission

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Date Approved