

Springfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes August 20, 2019

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the August 20, 2019 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Dean Baker
Ruth Ann Hines
Dave Hopper
George Mansour
Jason Pliska

Commissioners Absent

Terry Rusnell
Kevin Sclesky

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin Walls, Supervisor
Erin Mattice, Planning Administrator

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Hines moved to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the July 16, 2019 meeting

Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2019 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing:

None

New Business:

1. General RV – Request for Signage Plan Revision, 8665 Dixie Highway

David Brink, Allen Industries, and Bill Brown, General RV Manager, introduced himself to the Commissioners.

Mr. Brink stated that they are asking for permission from the Commission for an expressway sign for General RV. General RV needs to get some identification along the expressway. This is the core of business for General RV and the locations are built along the expressway for this reason. This property has some unique characteristics including topography.

Chairperson Baker summarized General RV's appearance and approval before the Zoning Board of Appeals on June 19, 2019. He stated to have this work commence, the Planning Commission has a responsibility to offer comment on this sign addition.

Mr. Doug Lewan stated that the Planning Commission is required by ordinance to review any signage that was not part of the original site plan approval.

Commissioner Mansour asked why this request was not presented to the Commission during the site plan process.

Mr. Brown stated that they were originally going to put a sign on the back of the building which he understands the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals was not in favor of. He stated that the ZBA suggested installing an additional ground sign at the expressway as an alternative but to do this, they had to purchase property from the church. The church was open to it and they have purchased a piece of property where the sign is proposed to go. At the time of building, this was not even an option. There are a lot of RV's there, but in driving past, you don't know it is General RV Center. The proposed sign will only be lit on the north side so it will not impact the church or the residential neighbors.

Commissioner Mansour asked how they came up with the proposed square footage for the sign.

Chairperson Baker stated that there are computations that impact the ability of a sign to be seen and read when traveling on roads at 70 mph. General RV provided information about how the sign would be seen at different spots along I-75. This information was given to the Zoning Board of Appeals members and the Commissioners. General RV offered the proposed sign as an alternate for a rooftop sign. The height location of the sign takes into account the sign's base will be located 12-15 feet below road surface because of the topography.

Mr. Brown stated that they reduced the sign from 50 foot, which is at all of their other locations, to 40 foot, at this location. They were trying to be not too impactful with the sign but also provide recognition of who they are for people traveling on the expressway.

Commissioner Pliska asked if the Wixom sign and the proposed sign were similar except for the ten feet difference.

Mr. Brink stated that two signs are very similar in square footage, but the difference is in the 10 feet. They also added the decorative stone pedestal because it was more in keeping with Springfield Township's design elements.

Commissioner Pliska stated that the Wixom sign did not appear to be overly imposing. It is a more industrial area.

Mr. Brink stated that all General RV signs are similar in design for all the locations. All the different locations are recognized on the sign as well. Springfield Township on the sign was included in the square footage.

Commissioner Hines stated that she is not in favor of having signs along the interstate in the Township. She asked what is to stop other businesses that have frontage on I-75 from asking for another sign along the highway.

Chairperson Baker stated that any other property owner that seeks to bring attention to their business with a second sign on their location would have to come to the Zoning Board of Appeals. ZBA decisions are not precedent-setting.

Mr. Brink stated that General RV does not have any building signage and the building is so far away that it cannot be seen from I-75.

Commissioner Hines reiterated that she is not in favor of signs along I-75.

Mr. Brown stated that they want a sign that identifies them as part of the General RV family.

Commissioner Pliska asked about the marketing purpose of the sign.

Mr. Brown stated that most people can Google the store; this is a sign recognizing their company and brand recognition.

Mr. Brink stated that this sign is significantly smaller than a billboard.

Commissioner Hopper stated that a second sign for the project is deserving. The church next door has signs on both roads. He questioned the two foot grades and feels that it would even appear smaller than depicted. He questioned the square footage because he sees it as a 264 square foot variance. He feels the sign as designed is appropriate and he appreciates the high quality of it.

Commissioner Hopper moved to approved a modification to the site plan for Parcel #07-24-101-102 with the addition of the sign parcel as received in our packet and the Zoning Board of Appeals at its June 19, 2019 meeting approved a variance to allow the additional ground sign with a size increase to 323 square feet and a height of 40 feet as measured from ground height of the proposed sign. Further, the site is unique as it has I-75 frontage, the elevation of the proposed sign is a considerable

elevation below the adjacent roadway, the letter size is adequate to be visible from passing vehicles on I-75 and no light will be visible from the adjacent residential use property. Supported by Commissioner Pliska. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: Hines. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

2. 12850 Fountain Square – Request for Recommendation to Allow Indoor Storage in an Office Service District – OS Parcel #07-17-301-013.

Eric Gervason, Operations and Facilities Manager for Park West Gallery, and Joe Novitsky, Architect, introduced themselves to the Commission.

Eric Gervason stated that they would like to put in a loading dock so they can bring a truck into the dock. They want to use this facility as a remote location to store art work that does not move swiftly. This would be low volume. During the move-in period, the first eight weeks, there would be 1-2 trucks per day. As an ongoing procedure, they would have 1-2 trucks per week operating between 8 am to 5 pm. They will not be making noise and will be good neighbors.

Mr. Doug Lewan summarized his memo dated August 9, 2019 that was supplied to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Mansour asked what would designate a Special Land Use as opposed to a Use by Right.

Mr. Lewan stated that for every land use there are Uses Permitted by Right and Special Land Uses, which allow the Planning Commission and ultimately the Township Board to have some discretion with approval and they can also be denied. The Special Land Use is an extra layer of review based on a perceived intensity.

Chairperson Baker stated that if the applicant goes to the Zoning Board tomorrow and after review, determines that it is a Special Land Use, the applicant will return to the Planning Commission, have a public hearing and will then go to the Township Board. If it is determined to be a Use by Right, it would return to the Planning Commission to examine all the site plan elements.

Mr. Lewan stated that it has not been determined yet if what the applicant is proposing is an administrative site plan or a “full-blown” site plan. They are proposing a truck dock and proposing changes in parking and it is a change of use, but a real determination has not been made.

Chairperson Baker stated that the Commission has to make a recommendation to the Zoning Board as to the use.

Commissioner Hines stated that a Use Permitted by Right within the OS district is appropriate for what they are proposing.

Commissioner Pliska agreed. The intended use is less traffic inducing than any of the previous uses of the building.

Commissioner Hopper concurred. He asked how much work would be required inside.

Eric Gervason stated that they need to finish the floors, put some type of interior wall around the perimeter, install new HVAC systems and install security and lighting.

Commissioner Hopper asked if they were planning on maintaining the parking lot, lawn and landscaping.

Eric Gervason answered that they will. He directed the Commissioners toward their other buildings that are very well maintained.

Eric Gervason stated that they use 12-foot box trucks for regular deliveries with possibly a 22-foot box truck during the move-in period.

Commissioner Mansour asked if they were converting it to a taxable entity.

Petitioner answered yes.

Commissioner Hopper asked if adding the truck well and parking lot would require any additional screening.

Mr. Lewan answered maybe the truck dock. He reiterated that this would be looked at during plan review and the site would be evaluated using all current ordinance standards.

Chairperson Baker stated that a letter was received dated August 20, 2019 from Diana Walls opposing this request. She indicated that she wrote it not only on her behalf but for other business owners.

Commissioner Hines moved to make a recommendation to allow indoor storage and office as described in the materials provided as a Use Permitted by Right in the Office Service zoning district. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Other Business:

1. Priority Task List

Commissioners reviewed and suggested changes to the Priority Task List. Commissioners concluded that they would like Stormwater Management on the agenda as a discussion item in September.

Public Comment:

None

Adjournment:

Commissioner Mansour moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Pliska. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary