

Blendon Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
March 5, 2019

1. **The meeting was called to order** at 7:00 pm by Chairman Rick Lamer.

2. **Invocation** was given by Jason Vander Kodde

3. **Roll Call:** PRESENT:      Rick Lamer                                      Terry Huberts  
   Jeff Van Eck                                      Jim Vander Veen  
   Jason Vander Kodde  
   ABSENT:      Jeff De Wind

4. **Also Attending:**

- a) Andrew Moore – Planning Consultant
- b) Kurt Gernaat, - Fire Chief
  - Absent: Kirk Scharphorn Jr. – Zoning Administrator

5. **Motion to approve the agenda** was made by Jason Vander Kodde. Support by Terry Huberts.

Motion Carried

6. **Motion to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, dated February 5, 2019,** was made by Jason Vander Kodde, support by Terry Huberts with the following amendment:

- Under 9b: Rush Creek Lot 51
  - Motion was made by Jason Vander Kodde, supported by Jim Vander Veen, requiring the submission of a complete Site Plan for Phase III, meeting Blendon Township requirements, that includes Lot 50, Lot 51 and the greenspace as stated in Condition 7 on the original site plan approval before further discussion can take place.

Motion Carried

7. **Opportunity for public comment and communication of business not on the Agenda:**  
None

8. **New Business:**

a) **Darin Emelander Rezone Request:**

- Applicant was not present
- Zoning Administrator – Kirk Scharphorn Jr. was not present.
- Kurt Gernaat read the Public Hearing Notice that was published in the Grand Rapids Press.
- Chairman Rick Lamer opened the Public Hearing at 7:06 pm
  - Mark Jongekrijg, of 5781- 56<sup>th</sup> Ave, addressed the Commissioners as to why Mr. Emelander was requesting the rezone, what were the benefits of changing from AG to R1 and if there was the possibility of additional splits in the future.
    - ✓ Chairman Lamer and Commissioner Vander Veen both addressed Mr. Jongekrijg's questions.

- The Commission is not sure why the applicant is requesting the rezone, as his proposed lot split size, as indicated on the application, would be permitted under AG.
- With no further comments, Chairman Rick Lamer closed the Public Hearing at 7:17 pm.
- *Motion was made by Terry Huberts, supported by Jeff Van Eck, to table the Rezone request until the April meeting so either Darin Emelander or Kirk Scharphorn Jr can be present to clarify the reason for the request.*

Motion Carried

**b) Marihuana Opt-out Ordinance:**

- Township Consultant, Andrew Moore, reviewed the proposed zoning ordinance amendment concerning marihuana.
  - In order for further discussion or adoption of the ordinance, a public hearing notice would have to be published prior to the meeting.
- Commissioners agreed to have the public hearing at the April 9 meeting.
- Andrew will have the Township Attorney, Jim Scales, review the ordinance draft and make any necessary changes prior to the April 9 meeting.

**9. Old Business:**

**a) Farmhaus Cider SLU Amendment:**

- This item was 'suspended' at the February meeting; therefore, Chairman Lamer stated that discussion on the Farmhaus Cider SLU Amendment would now resume.
  - Commissioner Jim Vander Veen, once again, recused himself from the discussion, due to conflict of interest, at 7:24 pm.
- Mike and Bev Hill were present at the meeting. Mr. Hill addressed the Commissioners stating the following things:
  - He and Farmhaus Cider owner, John Behrens, had a meeting last fall and he felt that they had a 'very peaceful' fall; he is disappointed that Farmhaus is asking for more, especially after they had started getting along better.
  - Mr. Hill disputed the claims made by Jerry Behrens, during the February meeting, that the parking at his house if used for hunting.
    - ✓ Stated that it is used for overflow parking for Farmhaus Cider. Mr. Hill showed pictures to prove his statement.
  - Customers are parking in areas that are not designated for parking on the site plan.
  - There were cars lined up on the road waiting for parking openings so they can get into Farmhaus Cider.
  - Mr. Hill disputes Zoning Administrator, Kirk Scharphorn Jr.'s account from last month's meeting that violations were immediately corrected
    - ✓ Mr. Hill states that nothing was or has been corrected.
  - The 8-foot-tall fence that Mr. Behrens installed is a clear zoning violation.
  - Mr. Hill asked the Commissioners why Farmhaus Cider does not need to abide by the same rules and ordinances as everyone else and no one ever does anything about it?
    - ✓ He states that multiple violations have taken place and have been shown to the Commission; he feels that Farmhaus Cider should lose their Special Land Use (SLU) Permit.

- Planning Consultant, Andrew Moore, reviewed items and conditions that were agreed upon at the Planning Commission Sub-Committee meeting that took place, with John Behrens, on February 20, 2019.
- Andrew also presented a list of modifications that Mr. Behrens would like made to the agreed upon conditions that were made at the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - ✓ Chairman Lamer stated that we can either disregard Mr. Behrens comments and requests, since that was the intended purpose of the meeting in the first place, or the sub-committee could meet one more time to work out these details.
  - ✓ Decision was made by the Commission that the sub-committee will meet again with Mr. Behrens. All conditions decided at this meeting must be signed by all parties in agreement and there will be no changes made to the signed agreement.
    - Meeting to be held, at the township hall, Thursday March 21 @ 3:30 pm (Commissioner Jeff Van Eck will be absent)
- Farmhaus Cider SLU Amendment to remain suspended until the April 9 meeting. (Commissioner Vander Veen rejoined at 7:42 pm)

**b) Rush Creek Lot 51:**

- Per his conversation with Kirk Scharphorn Jr., Andrew Moore relayed that West View Capital / Allen Edwin Homes has gone back to the original developer, Heritage Group Properties, to figure things out and they are not submitting anything at this time.

**c) 48 West:**

- Per his conversation with Kirk Scharphorn Jr., Andrew Moore updated the Commission.
  - Mr. Van Singel would like this topic to remain tabled at this time.
  - Currently there is discussion of a tentative agreement with South Blendon Vista pertaining to utility service.
  - Mr. Van Singel will return and present a new option when available to move forward.
  - Commissioners agreed to leave the topic tabled for now.

**d) Bonds and SLUs:**

- Zoning Administrator – Kirk Scharphorn Jr, submitted a chart showing the current, expired and closed Surety Bonds and the current SLU's with recurring reviews.
  - ERS Tele-com: (72<sup>nd</sup> and Barry St)
    - ✓ ERS states that they have applied for the Bond but have not received it, they will get it turned in as soon as it is received.
    - ✓ Some of the Commissioners feel that we should place a violation sticker on site until the bond is received.
  - Ferwerda SLU is currently expired. Waiting on the Township Board's decision on the Outdoor Events Ordinance before contacting Mr. Ferwerda about his upcoming events.

**e) Planning Commission New Member Update:**

- No word on a final decision
- Chairman Lamer conducted interviews with all of the applicants and submitted the recommendation of Brett Huizinga to Township Supervisor, Bill Vanden Berg, who he felt would be the best choice and the reasons supporting that opinion.
- Chairman Lamer's full list of recommendations are added to the end of the minutes.

**f) Township Board Meeting Update:**

- Commissioner Jim Vander Veen updated the Commissioners on the following items that the Board was working on:
  - 2019-2020 Budget
    - ✓ Making sure that the Planning Commission is budgeted for 12 meetings.
    - ✓ Continuing to advocate for money to provide educational opportunities for the commissioners.
  - Outdoor Events Ordinance:
    - ✓ Reviewing and voting on at the March meeting
  - Marihuana Opt-Out Ordinance:
    - ✓ Board recommended that the Planning Commission further look into how this new ordinance affects the current Zoning Ordinances.
  - Water:
    - ✓ Update on discussions related to future water distribution in the township; extensions from Georgetown Township facilities, etc.

**10. Correspondence:**

- a) Eagles Landing Phase II Plat certified by the state.
- b) PCI – Letter to Tim Roland (Roland Machine and Mold)
- c) PCI – Letter to Aj Ademolic (Aj's Pallets)
- d) Chairman Rick Lamer notified the commissioners that, after roughly 20 years of service, he would like to retire from the Planning Commission, effective immediately following the April 9 meeting. However, Rick also stated, if the new commissioner was not in place at that time, he would remain on as a commissioner until the commission was not working at a deficit. He would be stepping down as the Chair however.
  - Commissioner Jim Vander Veen thanked Chairman Lamer for his many years of service.

**11. Upcoming Events:**

- a) Township Board Meeting:            March 18, 2019
- b) Planning Commission Meeting:    April 9, 2019

**12. Adjournment:**

- a) *With no other business to be brought before the Planning Commission, a motion was made by Terry Huberts, supported by Jeff Van Eck, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm.*

Recorded by Tina Vander Schuur  
Submitted by Jeff De Wind

I have either talked on the phone or in person to everyone that was on the list for the vacant Planning Commission seat.

My recommendations are as follows:

1. Brett Huizenga – He has some good personal experience in the development area. He has been and is currently involved in some projects in Allendale township. That experience will be helpful to the other P.C. members and himself. He also appears to have a good general understanding of how the zoning ordinances work.
2. Joel Hovingh – What I liked most about Joel was his wanting to learn. We had a rather lengthy conversation on the phone. He has been at more than a few of our meetings, which shows an interest. He also asked a lot of good and in-depth questions that most probably wouldn't think of.
3. Lynette Peters – Lynette is one that would dig into the Zoning Ordinance. In talking to her, and others that know her, she likes to learn. She also impressed me during the entire Blendon Vista Apartments request. When that first came in front of the P.C., she and her husband Kevin were dead set against it. But after some meetings and some conversations, they both got a better understanding of what we have to do, and how we have to do it. I'm sure they would still prefer not to have the apartments, but they understand and had a willingness to change and compromise.
4. Kevin Peters – Same as Lynette, but Kevin felt that Lynette might be the better choice do to her willingness to learn new things. I still feel Kevin would do a good job, and he also brings in some experience from a builders perspective.
5. Duane Gunnink – Hard to argue with Duane's experience in the P.C. world. If he had lived in the township for more than 7 months, I feel he would be a great choice. But Blendon is its own unique little place in the world. Having a better understanding of the people and how things work in Blendon Township is a huge thing to me. After Duane has lived in the township for a couple years, I feel he would make a good fit.

Now these are just a couple things about each of the applicants. I could type up a book about all of them, but I don't have the time, and you don't want to waste the time reading it.

Thank You

Rick Lamer  
Blendon Township Planning Commission Chairman