

MINUTES

Blue Earth County Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

Wednesday April 4, 2018

7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Femrite. Planning Commission members present were Bill Anderson, Kurt Anderson, Kip Bruender, Lyle Femrite, Barry Jacques, Michael Riley, and Joe Smentek. County staff members Garrett Rohlfing, Aaron Stubbs, George Leary, and Jaclyn Essandoh were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kurt Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes for the March 7th, 2018 regular Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Leary indicated there was no change to the agenda.

4. NEW BUSINESS

PC 09-18

James Will - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to expand an existing total confinement swine finishing operation. The existing site has two total confinement finishing barns capable of housing 3,000 finishing pigs. The expansion will include the construction of one additional total confinement finishing barn capable of housing 2,000 finishing pigs. The site is zoned Agricultural and is located in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 31, Medo Township.

Mr. Rohlfing presented the staff report.

The applicant was present and made no further comment. There was no public comment.

Mr. Femrite commented that staff had done an excellent job of preparing this report and mentioned that he had no issues with the request. There were no comments or questions from members of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Bruender continued with a motion to approve the request with the findings and conditions proposed by staff. Mr. Smentek seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 10-18

Innovative Power Systems - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Large Solar Energy System. The proposed project will span approximately 3 acres, and will have a power capacity of up to 240 kilovolts (kV), which by Blue Earth County standards, classifies it as a Large Energy System. The property is zoned Agricultural and the proposed project will be located in part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 32, Le Ray Township.

Mr. Stubbs presented the staff report.

The applicants were represented by, Mr. Evan Carlson who works with Innovative Power Systems. Mr. Carlson mentioned that the proposal is a small project that will have pollinator seed mix underneath the panels. He added that Innovative Power Systems is a Minnesota company that has been operating since 1991 and that their client is likely to be the long-term owner of the project. There was no public comment.

Mr. Femrite commented that staff had done a good job of presenting the details and added that there have been some similar proposals in the area. He also asked Planning and Zoning staff if there is a time when the panels may be situated that will create glare to anyone in the area. Mr. Stubbs responded by saying that the question had come up before in other projects. He added that, even though a glare study was not requested with this project, it was determined in other similar projects that, the panels are coded in a way that does not generate enough glare to be a hazard. Mr. Carlson added that the panels are constructed the same way.

Mr. Smentek continued with a motion to approve the request with the findings and conditions proposed by staff. Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 11-18

Carl Nelson - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Marine Engine Repair Business as a Level II Home Occupation. The property is zoned Agricultural and is located in part of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 33, Lyra Township.

Ms. Essandoh presented the staff report.

The applicant was present and made no further comment. There was no public comment.

Mr. Femrite commented that staff had done a good job of presenting the details. He also asked if there were any boats or vehicles outside the storage referring to similar facilities within the county which had started with good intention but have ended up as junkyards. Mr. Stubbs responded to the question by stating that, staff had visited the property, and that there is enough space within the two structures for storage of boats and engines. Mr. Stubbs added that, nobody would have an idea of the operations on the property while driving pass it.

Mr. Kurt Anderson continued with a motion to approve the request with the findings and conditions proposed by staff. Mr. Smentek seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Stubbs presented the concept of the Replatting of the 2006 Plat of the Johnson/Montgomery Pleasant View Estates to the Planning Commission to inquire if there are any items they feel needs to be explored. During his presentation, he mentioned that the subdivision is zoned Rural Townsite and is located in the Urban Fringe Overlay District of the City of Mankato which restricts rezoning, dividing, subdividing or re-subdiving property for the purpose of expanding or developing new nonfarm uses as stated in Subsection C of Section 24-504 of the county's zoning Ordinance. Also included in this section is language that allows the City of Mankato to support any of the above listed actions if they are consisted with the goals and objectives of the City's Land Use Plan. He added that, because the platted lots are smaller than what is allowed by today's standards, it would be difficult to meet the regulations for lot coverage, setbacks, impervious surface coverage, and have necessary room to accommodate two septic drainfields. Mr. Stubbs also mentioned that, the City of Mankato has stated that they would not object to a replat of the area if the number of residential lots does not increase.

Mr. Femrite commented that a lot more land was being utilized to create larger lots. He added that, without considering the details, the Initial Concept of the Re-Plat had some nice sized lots.

Mr. Kurt Anderson asked if the proposed lots were going to be serviced by municipal services. Mr. Stubbs responded by saying that they were not and that is why larger lots were required to accommodate primary and secondary drainfield locations. He added that the drainage plan on the initial plat led the storm water to be directed north to Fox Lake which is against the MPCA regulations. The provision of these primary and secondary drainfield locations will result in the developer ending up with less than the ten (10) proposed lots.

Mr. Smentek also asked if the south side of the Initial Concept of the Re-Plat met the definition of a bluff. Mr. Stubbs while referring to the Initial Concept of the Re-Plat which was displayed on the monitors, showed the high point of the bluff, the toe of the bluff and the 5-foot setback from the toe of the bluff.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kurt Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date