

MINUTES
Blue Earth County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Wednesday March 2, 2016
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, Chuck Grams and Barry Jacques. County staff members Aaron Stubbs, Chris Meeks, Chris Hedin and George Leary were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bruender made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2016 Regular Planning Commission Meeting. Bill Anderson seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

4. NEW BUSINESS

PC 03-16

Randall Cords and Scott & Gretchen Cords - Request for a Conditional Use Permit to construct a new total confinement swine finishing facility capable of housing 3,300 finishing pigs, or 1,320 Animal Units. The property is located in Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 16 Decoria Township, and is zoned Agricultural.

Mr. Meeks presented the staff report.

The applicants were present. Scott and Gretchen Cords advised the commission that farming is their livelihood and they are proposing to add livestock to diversify the operation. They added that they chose this location because it is close to their home. They stated the manure produced from the facility will be applied by a licensed commercial animal waste technician to approximately 250 acres of land annually and they have 650 acres available. The Cords also stated trees will be planted to the north and south of the proposed structure to disperse the air.

Laurie Putze addressed the commission. She indicated she represented approximately 45 homes in a developed area along CSAH 15. Ms. Putze's concerns included the following:

- Water usage and aquifer depletion
- Pollution of waterways
- Leaching of manure and contaminates and associated health affects
- Nitrate contamination of wells and associated health affects
- Air pollution and associated health affects
- Antibiotic usage and associated health affects
- Property value impacts

Ed Winch spoke on behalf of the residents of Cedar Meadows Subdivision located approximately 1 ½ miles west of the proposed site. Mr. Winch stated he represented those for and those against the proposal. Mr. Winch stated that only one letter was received for a parcel that was owned in common with the association members.

Gary Spence spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Spence stated his profession is an agronomist and he lives in Cedar Meadows Subdivision. Mr. Spence commented on the land application of commercial fertilizers, adding that the land application of manure does require specific setbacks. Mr. Spence opined that from a fertility perspective, the land application of manure is less of an issue.

Alan Kunz spoke on behalf of his mother who lives north of the proposal. Mr. Kunz acknowledged the proposal does meet the present criteria. Mr. Kunz expressed his concerns with environmental and human health issues. He concluded his comments by asking the commission to vote no on the proposal.

Charles Frederickson asked if the applicants would be constructing future barns on the site. He also asked who will manage the facility in the future. No response was provided.

There was no further public comment.

Mr. Femrite commented on the thoroughness of the report. He added that the facility proposal meets all of the ordinance requirements and the project is in the agricultural zoned district.

Kurt Anderson asked staff for the number of permitted swine operations in Blue Earth County. Mr. Leary stated there are approximately 420 permitted feedlots and surmised this would include approximately 300 or more total confinement swine operations. Mr. Leary provided additional information on the engineering and inspection process of the concrete manure storage pit. Mr. Anderson also asked for clarification on the hearing notice mailing. Mr. Leary stated that hearing notices were mailed out to property owners within one mile of the proposed site.

Bill Anderson asked staff what involvement the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency had with the review. Mr. Meeks advised the commission that the MPCA is processing an NPDES permit application for this site and the NPDES Permit will be in place for five years. He added that coverage of the NPDES permit could continue at the applicant's discretion.

Mr. Bruender recalled a feedlot operation that was permitted near Madison Lake of which residents had similar concerns to those of the present proposal. He further recalled receiving only one call of concern following the construction and operation of the site near Madison Lake. He added that he had even contacted some of the individuals with previous concerns to see if there were any follow-up issues.

Following the discussion, Bill Anderson made a motion to forward to the County Board, a recommendation of approval of the request with the conditions recommended by staff. Mr. Grams seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 05-16

Mark's Farms Inc. - Request for a Conditional Use Permit for the Construction to construct a new total confinement poultry barn capable of housing 100,000 laying hens, or 1,000 Animal Units. The proposal will also include the construction of a structure to hold the manure generated from the facility. This is an addition to an existing poultry operation. The property is located in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 15 of Mapleton Township.

Mr. Meeks presented the staff report.

The applicant was present and had no comment. There was no public comment.

Kurt Anderson commented on the thoroughness of the report. He recalled the variance proposal from earlier and added that it appeared the applicant had met all of the criteria. Mr. Anderson continued with a motion to forward to the County Board a recommendation of approval of the request as outlined by staff. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 06-16

Reinarts Family Estate - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a Bonus Lot dwelling. The property is zoned Agricultural and a portion of the property is located within the Shoreland Overlay District of the Morgan Creek Tributary Stream. The property is located in the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 29, Cambria Township.

Mr. Stubbs presented the staff report.

The applicants were present and had no comment. There was no public comment.

Kurt Anderson recalled the code review from 2012 and the unanimous decision to keep the bonus lot provision. He added that bonus lot applications are not common and that he was satisfied with the proposal.

Mr. Femrite opined that the bonus lot provision has proven beneficial.

Kurt Anderson made a motion to forward to the County Board a recommendation of approval of the request as outlined by staff. Mr. Bruender seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 07-16

Scott & Corralee Borgmeier - Request for review and approval of the preliminary plat of Borgmeier's Jamestown Subdivision. A subdivision plat consisting of one lot and one outlot. The property is zoned agricultural and is located in the south half of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter and the south half of the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter both located in Section 32 of Jamestown Township.

Mr. Leary presented the staff report.

The applicant was present and had no comment. There was no public comment.

There was little discussion by the Planning Commission.

Following the discussion, Kurt Anderson made a motion to forward to the County Board a recommendation of approval of the request as outlined by staff. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 08-16

Jason & Heather Quint - Request to vacate an unoccupied utility easement lying on parts of Lots 18 and 19 of Block 1 of the Deer Meadows Subdivision. The parcels are located in part of the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 20, Decoria Township. The properties are zoned Conservation and Lot 18 includes a small area within the Shoreland Overlay District of the Big Cobb River.

Mr. Stubbs presented the staff report.

The applicant was present and had no comment. There was no public comment.

Mr. Femrite indicated his familiarity with the site and agreed there was no need for the utility easement.

Following the discussion, Kurt Anderson made a motion to forward to the County Board a recommendation of approval of the request as outlined by staff. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. Mr. Grams made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Jacques and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date