

MINUTES
Blue Earth County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Wednesday April 7, 2010
7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Lyle Femrite. Planning Commission members present were Bill Anderson, Kurt Anderson, Lyle Femrite, Don Gerrish, and Chuck Grams. Planning and Zoning staff present were Sara Isebrand and George Leary.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bill Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 6th Regular Planning Commission Meeting and the February 3rd Planning Commission workshop on stream bank erosion. Chuck Grams seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Leary asked for time at the end of the meeting to discuss some items relating to the Zoning Chapter of the Code of Ordinances.

4. NEW BUSINESS

PC 02-10 Duane Hubmer - Conditional Use Permit to transfer a development right from the SW ¼ of the SW ¼ to the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ all of Section 21, McPherson Township.

Ms. Isebrand presented the staff report.

Michelle Larsen was present on behalf of the applicant and had nothing to add.

There was no public comment.

There was little discussion by the Planning Commission.

Kurt Anderson made a motion to recommend approval of the request to the County Board. The motion was seconded by Bill Anderson and unanimously approved.

PC 04-10 Mapleton Township Map Amendment- Request from the County Planning Department to classify property recently detached from the City of Mapleton as an Agricultural Zoned District. The affected properties include the NW ¼ of Section 9, the SW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 9, the W ½ of the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 9, the S ½ of the NW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 9, and the SW ¼ of the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 9, all located in Mapleton Township.

Mr. Leary presented the staff report.

There was no public comment.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the motives of the detachment.

Following the discussion, Kurt Anderson made a motion to recommend approval of the request to the County Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerrish and unanimously approved.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Leary led the Planning Commission in a discussion regarding some possible changes to Chapter 24 of the County Code of Ordinances. Chapter 24 is also known as the Zoning Chapter of the Ordinance.

The discussion items included:

Bonus Lots – Mr. Leary indicated that the directive of the County Land Use Plan adopted in 1998 was to remove the Bonus Lot provision from the Agricultural Zoning District. Mr. Leary added that the County Land Use Plan is the guiding document of the Code of Ordinances.

Some of the discussion by the Planning Commission included basic property rights and the protection of agricultural land.

Following the discussion, the Planning Commission directed staff to see if anything can be done to fine tune the Bonus Lot provision.

Transfer of Development Rights – Mr. Leary asked the Planning Commission for some direction on the transfer of development rights from one Qtr Qtr to an adjacent Qtr Qtr. Mr. Leary indicated that it is his opinion that the transfer request heard earlier in the meeting did nothing but facilitate development in the rural area as both the sending and receiving Qtr Qtr's were bare farmland. Mr. Leary also asked if the sending Qtr Qtr should not include an area that is suitable for development, i.e. include an area suitable for a primary and secondary septic drainfield and meet all of the required setbacks for the construction of a dwelling.

Again the discussion included comments on basic property rights and the protection of agricultural land. The Planning Commission discussed the basic principle of a development right including the characteristics of the sending Qtr Qtr to qualify as an eligible development right for transfer.

Following the discussion staff agreed to continue work on the topic and to report back to the Planning Commission at a later date.

Lot Width Requirement in the Agricultural Zoned District – Mr. Leary presented an example of a rural area that included crop land and a wood lot located 1,700 feet from a public road. Mr. Leary explained that the current lot width requirement in the Agricultural District is 150 feet. Mr. Leary's example showed the lot width of 150 feet, 66 feet and 33 feet and indicated that the access portion of the hypothetical lot using these widths would equate to 5.85, 2.57, and 1.29 acres respectively.

The Planning Commission discussed the lot width requirements and suggested at this time they would be comfortable with reducing this requirement to 33 feet. There was also some discussion of leaving the standard as-is and when needed approach the lot width requirement with a variance.

6. AJOURNMENT

There being no additional business, Kurt Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Gram and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date