

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes September 15, 2020

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Tom Kaldunski at 8:00 PM at the Empire Township Public Works Building.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Chris Williamson, Bob Bjerke, Harry Davis, Charles Seipel, and liaison Ed Gerten.

George Maverick of Glenhaven Events presented information on a proposed wedding chapel barn that he would like to construct on the property at 1595 220th Street East. The business currently operates at the property under a CUP. The proposed chapel would be 3,000 sq. ft., seat 250 to 300 people, and be located where an existing building footprint is located on the west side of the property. George proposed reducing the footprint of an existing storage building to the north of the proposed chapel.

The Commission discussed if the addition of a chapel would make the property more difficult or easier to sell if the current owner closed the business. It was the consensus of the Commission that this would be an improvement to the property. There have been no complains about existing operations on the property.

The Township needs to research if the addition of the chapel would be permissible under the zoning ordinance as it is a non-conforming use in the Ag District with a residence on the property, including the possibility of rezoning this and adjacent properties. The potential for a future extension of a road on the westside of the property was discussed. The chapel should be located to an area of the property that would not interfere with future road expansion. If the chapel is permitted, there should be no increase in the number of parking stalls permitted on the property as the capacity of guest permitted at events on the property should not be increased. George was open to the idea of adding a condition that the house on the property be demolished by a certain date. The Commission added that that option may open a building right elsewhere in the Township.

This should be discussed at the next Town Board Meeting to seek input from the Board and the Township Planner on the proposal and then brought back to the Planning Commission.

Ralph and Deb Hanson, property owners at 20655 Clayton Ave., requested information on options for storage on the property before the proposed home is constructed on the property. A permit application for the home has been submitted to Inspectron, but with the current price of lumber, construction on the home might not begin until spring of 2021. The Planning Commission indicated that the construction of a storage shed before the home would not be permitted. Discussion was held on the placement of 80' X 40' storage containers on the property. The Planning Commission indicated that they would permit the placement of two storage containers on the property with the condition that the containers be removed from the property within one year of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the house.

Zachary Geragi, a resident at 19422 Carmel Trl., provided information on a CNC machine that he operates in the garage of his home. Zachary indicated that the operation of the machine meets the definition of a Home Occupation as the operation of the machine is not noticeable from the outside, there is no signage, no employees or customers come to the property, and is not hazardous to other properties in the neighborhood. He has been machining for 7 years and is not expanding the operation. He is requesting a letter from the Township indicating that he is not in violation of any ordinances for his licensing. Zachary showed a sample of the gun component that his machine makes. It was recommended that the Town Board consider directing the Clerk to send a letter to Zachary indicating that the operation of his CNC machine on his property does not violate Township Ordinances.

The property owner at 20485 Chippendale Ave. W., American Motors, would like to put a new roof on the building at the property. The new roof will raise the pitch to 24', which is less than the 35' maximum. The Planning Commission commented that the north side of the roof needs to have a gutter installed for the entire length of the building. The Commission had no other comment on the proposed project. Pavel Klimenko is the coordinator for this project.

Charles Seipel reported that a letter that was sent to the property owners at 2951 Vermillion River Trl. regarding the violation of Township ordinances for the keeping of chickens and rooters on the property was returned to him. The Township should contact the attorney to begin the process of sending notice of ordinance violation to the property owners.

It was reported that adjustments have been made to the Dakota County Land Conservation Plan in the southern portion of Empire Township, with more focused areas proposed for future conservation easements. Al Singer with Dakota County Environmental Resources will discuss the plan at the September 17th meeting of the Dakota County Township Officers. The Planning Commission feels that the plan goes to far in identifying areas in the County for future conservation easements.

Chris Williamson stated that he would like to submit his resignation from the Planning Commission, effective the end of October of 2020. Chris has enjoyed his time on the Commission.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.