

Vergennes Township Planning Commission
April 1, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Jernberg.

Roll Call - Mastrovito, Post, and Rasch and Jernberg were present. Baird was absent.

There was a motion by Post to accept the minutes as written from the January 7, 2013 meeting; seconded by Mastrovito. Motion passed.

There was a motion by Mastrovito to approve agenda with no changes; seconded by Rasch. Motion passed.

1. Discuss Ordinance Amendments

Jeanne Vandersloot went over suggested ordinance amendment submitted by Brian Wegener of Williams and Works. Changes are needed based on a request by Ronald Steffens to establish a farm market on a property located at 1152 Flat River Dr. with frontage on Lincoln Lake Avenue. The market would be off Lincoln Lake Avenue.

Mr. Steffens approached the Township Board about the market at the February and March board meetings. The board asked the Planning Commission to write language to add this type of business to the ordinance. Currently there is only language to allow a roadside market on property where the product is actually grown. Brian Wegener came up with some language and a parking formula for the Planning Commission to review.

The property is currently zoned R-2.

Mr. Steffens intends to purchase the entire parcel, developing approximately four acres along Lincoln Lake for the market. Mr. Steffens would like to design the market after the Fulton Street Market in Grand Rapids as far as set up but keep the look rustic. He would use 4 x 4 construction and paint it to look country-ish. He also has plans to split the house and some land off so the market is on a separate parcel. He is currently leasing the property from the owner and has a four year agreement with her to do so. If the market is successful, he will pursue purchasing the property and go forward with the split. The minimum lot size in R-2 is 17000 square feet with 100' of lot width.

Jernberg asked what he intended to do about restroom facilities. He was thinking of using porta-potties the first year. Jernberg was not sure that would be ok with building official and health department. It was recommended that he look into that before getting too far into project.

Duane Rasch was asked his opinion as he sells fruit from several markets in the area – he has no problem with market. He does feel there are quite a few farm markets around and that the market may be saturated. He feels it could work but may have a rough go of it.

Jernberg asked what else he was planning to sell there, if anything. Besides the fruit and vegetables, he would like to see some hand crafters selling wares there. It would not be a flea market but perhaps something like leatherworks or fly tying. There are a lot of fishermen in the area. He would also like to have a picnic area and maybe some type of concession stand for ice cream, hot dogs, etc. It would be seasonal as going year round would require an enclosed building. There is also no produce to speak of from about October through March.

Post commented that his biggest concern would be the traffic.

Jernberg suggested the entrances line up with the drives across the road. The road commission is more likely to approve plan if they do. They went into details of what could be required from the KCRC, should meet with them asap.

Mr. Steffens is planning to have up to 100 spaces. Fulton St spaces are 4' x 8'. Ada has 50 spaces of 10' x 10' and everyone brings their own tents and tables. It was suggested he speak with an Engineer and/or survey company. Explain what his plans are and have them draw it up to see if his ideas will fit in the space. A firm can help him with KCRC, KCDC, MDEQ, etc. He also needs to make sure the DEQ is ok with plan since it is close to a drainage area to the Flat River. Since there are a few items to complete before he can be up and running, he is planning to delay the opening until May, 2014. He is 70% positive he can make this go by May, 2014.

Feedback to Brian on ordinance language:

Add art and crafts to definition. Do we need language for hot dog or ice crème stand? Picnic area?

Determine if this should be principal use or accessory use. Consensus is leaning toward accessory use. They want Brian to write up some pros and cons for each.

Should this be restricted to R2 district? Township Board does not want to rezone this property. Area probably cannot support more than one of these markets anyway.

Add Kent County Road Commission review and approval to standards.

Do we want some architectural requirements or go with the applicant plans?

Clarification on the parking formula.

Planning Commission will table further discussion of this ordinance amendment until the July 1 meeting. Mr. Steffens will follow up on Commission's suggestions and come back at that time with a better idea of whether this will go forward.

No public comment.

There was a motion to adjourn by Mastrovito, seconded by Post. Motion passed. The meeting ended at 8:12 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2013.