

Vergennes Township Planning Commission
August 26, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm.

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

There was a motion by Mastrovito to approve the July 11, 2013 minutes. Rasch seconded. Motion passed.

Agenda changes and approval – Motion to approve the agenda as written. Motion passed.

Impact Church Public Hearing

Impact Church Presentation:

They are looking to add 4200 square feet in this expansion. They will extend the existing sanctuary to the west. Most of the new building addition is in Vergennes Township. The parking lot expansion is in City of Lowell. There will be no additional parking in Vergennes Township. Williams and Works submitted storm water calculations that were requested at the last meeting. The exterior appearance of the building will be the same as the current building. There may be an accent color in lobby area between two buildings. It is a very straightforward project.

Public hearing was opened to public comment at 8:03pm.

Delores Myers of 1073 Beech Drive, Lowell. She enjoys the music from the church but it is too loud. She can hear the bass. She asked at the church one Sunday when teens were there. They turned the music down. The church members wanted to show her around but she declined. One evening the kids were pounding on garbage cans. When the leader saw her across the street watching them, the kids were excused. They should take the garbage cans home so the parents can listen to it. There is too much noise coming from the church and she is not going to move from a house she has been in since the 1950's.

Dave Szymczak of 1090 Lincoln Lake Ave, Lowell. When the church began expanding 4-5 years ago, he talked to the Pastor and others about the music noise. It just keeps getting louder and louder. His living room window vibrates from the bass. It starts at 8 am and goes all morning. His wife works till 6 am and sleeps during the day and has complained about the noise. One time the police were called at around 2 am. He has been in the building several times for various art shows, etc... Is there something they can do with their acoustics, turn down the bass? The parking is not an issue for him. He is all for freedom of religion and practicing your faith. He just has a problem with the noise.

Mrs. Meyers indicated she has called the authorities but there was nothing they could do since Vergennes does not have a noise ordinance.

Pastor Ryan Kresge regrets the above comments. To speak to the noise problem, one benefit of expansion is to have better acoustics. There will also be a storage area now between the sanctuary and the road. There will be two walls for the noise to work through before getting out of the building.

Mrs. Meyers asked about the wall on the west side where the band is. It looks almost like a barn and seems to have no insulation.

Scott Jernberg – there are many architectural options to help block noise. A metal building resonates noise right to the outside.

Pastor Kresge – the interior wall will have drywall and the storage room. Storage will also be drywalled.

Jernberg- an inexpensive way to insulate for noise is to put up two layers of 5/8” drywall and stagger the joints. The church needs to have a conversation with the neighbors and work out the differences. Additional landscaping can help bounce the noise back onto church property. There also are foam panels that can be bought in many different colors and sizes which hang from a track on the ceiling. He uses them a lot in school settings.

Delores Myers – she doesn't see other churches with noisy kids. Why this one?

Jernberg – they are trying to get young people involved in church and attract families.

Vandersloot – she talked with Dr. Marty Vredenberg that afternoon. His concern is that the addition will match the north side of the building. He wants it to be same color. His main issue is that he sees all the hvac equipment outside. It's not a good view to look at for him or his patients. Is there some way it can be screened?

Jernberg – the church can easily take away the eyesore by fencing or landscaping around it. The exterior was confirmed to be the darker color, bronze and the addition will match it.

Open to Planning Commission discussion –

Post – concern about lighting. The parking is in City jurisdiction. They are probably aware of our lighting ordinance which requires the light to be shining downward and to keep it away from neighbors as much as possible.

Vandersloot – will there be new lighting on the building? At overhead door and at exit to west is required. He will forward lighting specs to Vandersloot. They also need a landscaping plan.

No other comments from the Planning Commission. The public hearing was closed at 8:31pm.

Jernberg – he is all about growth, especially churches. We cannot dictate the inside of the building. The church does have an obligation to respect the neighbors' request. He agrees with the darker wall color. Do some work screening mechanicals on north side of building. Work on improving the landscaping over time to help with noise and to increase property value. Lighting needs to be downcast. Consider our lighting requirements when working with the city.

Planning Commission is ok with storm water plans, setbacks, etc...

Post motioned to recommend to the Township Board to accept the site plan and amend the existing special exception use permit for church addition with conditions that they work with neighbors on noise issue, landscape or fence around mechanicals and keep our lighting ordinance in mind when working on parking lot areas with the City of Lowell. Jernberg seconds. Motion passed.

Other business:

The joint staff meeting with the city about the church addition is in planning stages. No date has been set yet. Keep moving forward on church building in meantime until we can meet with city. September 9 is scheduled planning commission meeting in city.

A joint planning commission meeting is set for September 30 at 7pm at the city. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

With regard to inspections of church building, the City may agree that Mark Fleet, Vergennes Township Inspector, will do all building inspections and forward copies to city inspector.

Vandersloot is working with Township Board to meet next week Wednesday or Thursday during office hours for approval of Church's amendment to special use permit and approval of site plan. She will let them know time and date.

General Comments:

None

Post motions to close meeting at 8:38pm. Rasch seconds. Motion passed.

Next scheduled planning commission meeting is October 7, 2013.