

ISABELLA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

A Regular Meeting of the Isabella County Planning Commission was held on June 14, 2012 in Room 225 of the Isabella County Building, 200 North Main Street, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jerry Neyer, Joel Welty, Gordon Gilchrist, Evelyn Kent, Kelly Bean, Bob Thompson, Christine Alwood.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cheryl Jindeel, William Dailey.

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Tim Nieporte, Community Development Director
Mike Zalewski, Zoning Administrator
Brandy Harger, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Thompson at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Ms. Alwood, supported by Ms. Kent, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Yes: Neyer, Welty, Gilchrist, Kent, Bean, Thompson, Alwood.
No: None.

Motion carried.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the May 10, 2012 regular meeting were circulated to the Commission prior to the meeting for their review.

Ms. Alwood stated that the call to order should have stated that the Vice-Chairperson called the meeting to order and the heading should have stated May 10, 2012 as the date.

A motion was made by Ms. Alwood, supported by Mr. Neyer to approve the minutes as amended.

Yes: Neyer, Welty, Gilchrist, Kent, Bean, Thompson, Alwood.
No: None.

Motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS

Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Gilchrist reported that there were two cases at last months meeting; one was approved and one was denied.

Parks & Recreation – Ms. Alwood reported that the parks revenue is up 15% and that there is going to be a proposed parks millage on the ballot in August.

TOWNSHIP CONCERNS

Jackie Curtis, Denver Township, none heard.

Bob Neeland, Isabella Township, none heard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARING ON SPECIAL USE PERMIT #12-01

Mr. Thompson explained that the Planning Commission will consider taking action on a Special Use Permit request submitted by Glen H. Mast to construct an Amish School as a Public and Institutional Use in accordance with Article 12 of the Isabella County Zoning Ordinance. The property is located at 9522 South Rolland Road in Section 21 of Rolland Township.

Mr. Zalewski explained that the property will be a one acre parcel split off from an 80 acre parcel owned by Chrissie and Annie Miller. An Amish School is considered a public and institutional use by definition in the zoning ordinance. A public and institutional use is permitted by special use permit in the Ag districts. As a reminder, there are two components to a special use permit request, the first being the use of the property. The Planning Commission shall review Section 12.03 of the ordinance and make sure the use meets the general requirements for all special land uses. The second component is the actual site plan. The Planning Commission shall review the site plan and determine whether or not it meets the site plan review standards in Section 11.06. If the Commission determines that the applicant has met the requirements for both the site plan and the special use permit, it can be approved with one motion. As with any special use permit the Commission may stipulate conditions to the approval. These conditions may be modifications to the site plan or other such conditions that the Commission determines is appropriate for approval of the special use permit. Staff has reviewed the application and site plan. As noted in the site plan checklist, parking requirements for public and institutional uses are established by the Commission. As an Amish School, vehicle parking is not needed. The property has adequate space for horse/buggy traffic and the applicant has obtained a driveway permit from the Road Commission. The only concern staff has with the location of the School is the fact that it is located on a main road in Rolland Township. Rolland Road may not be considered a heavily traveled road, but the speed limit is 55 mph. With that said, the Commission may want to consider requiring the applicant speak with the Road Commission about the possibility of installing 'school signs' North and South of the property to caution drivers that there is a school building in the area.

Mr. Neyer asked if the Road Commission had been contacted yet about signage.

Mr. Mast stated that they have not yet contacted the Road Commission to inquire about signage.

Mr. Welty asked how many students would be going to the school.

Mr. Mast stated that they average about 25 students per year.

Mr. Welty asked what grades do the children attend school until.

Mr. Mast stated that children will attend school from 1st – 8th grades.

Mr. Thompson inquired as to whether there would be a well at the school.

Mr. Mast stated that there would be no well at this time; water will be carried in.

The public hearing was opened at 7:12 p.m.

No public comments were heard.

The public hearing was closed at 7:12 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Gilchrist supported by Mr. Bean to approve SUP #12-01 and the site plan as submitted as they are consistent with the requirements of section 12.03 of the Isabella County Zoning Ordinance. The applicant is also required to speak with the Road Commission about signage to the North and South of the property.

Yes: Neyer, Welty, Gilchrist, Kent, Bean, Thompson, Alwood.

No: None.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING ON SPECIAL USE PERMIT #12-02

Mr. Thompson explained that the Planning Commission will consider taking action on a Special Use Permit request submitted by Gilmore Church of Christ to establish an existing Public and Institutional Use (Church) in accordance with Article 12 of the Isabella County Zoning Ordinance. The property is located at 2067 West Coleman Road in Section 27 of Gilmore Township.

Mr. Zalewski stated that the Gilmore Church of Christ has been located on this property for over 100 years. At this time, they would like to move the original Church Building to a new foundation and location on the property. Presently, the church sits very close to the front property line. The Church would be moved to the back of the property. They would then like to construct a 40' x 44' building (classroom space, storage and bathrooms) that would attach the church to the existing building on the property. As noted, a Church is considered a Public and Institutional Use which is permitted in the Ag Districts with a special use permit. The Church obviously existed prior to Isabella County adopting a zoning ordinance. So the Church was never required to get a special use permit and is essentially a non-conforming use for that reason. Therefore, the Church is requesting the special use permit to become conforming with the ordinance and allow for them to receive site plan approval for the project. The only concerns staff has with the site plan are with lighting and health department approval. The applicant has indicated that additional lighting may be added to the parking lot, but will not know for sure until the building is moved. Any outdoor lighting shall meet the requirements of Section 3.20 of the zoning ordinance. The applicant stated they would speak with the health department and if necessary apply for and obtain any necessary approvals. Other than that, staff has no concerns with the project and actually considers this project a benefit as it will greatly reduce a nonconforming setback issue on the property and at the same time preserve a historical building.

Mr. Paul Barbour stated that the church was established in 1901 and the fellowship hall was built off the road in the late 50's or 60's. The original foundation of the church needs repaired; it is in the right of way

though. Moving the church out of the right of way as proposed causes the church to lose the basement; therefore the addition that is proposed will make up for that lost space.

Mr. Kenneth Seymour stated that the church is 111 years old and has a stone foundation. It was decided that something has to be done with the church now because the church is stable enough to be moved; it will gladly be moved out of the right of way. Removing the church from the basement and putting it on one level will greatly help the older congregation members.

Ms. Alwood asked if the steeple was going to be moved as well.

Mr. Seymour stated that they have been told it will be ok to move it with the building.

The public hearing was opened at 7:26 p.m.

Mr. Jack McConnell stated that the building will start to deteriorate in 30-35 years. Currently the building is sound and able to be moved.

The public hearing was closed at 7:28 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Kent supported by Mr. Gilchrist to approve SUP #12-02 contingent on approval from the Health Department and they follow up with proper, adequate lighting.

Yes: Neyer, Welty, Gilchrist, Kent, Bean, Thompson, Alwood.

No: None.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Zalewski stated that he has looked into the issue of fracking and passed out a hand-out of an explanation of what is currently being done about it.

Mr. Welty stated that he has a petition that anyone can sign to prohibit fracking in Michigan.

Mr. Zalewski stated that he reviewed the ordinance for changes due to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act changes in regards to wireless communications. There are a few changes that would need to be made to the Isabella County Zoning Ordinance to comply with the MZEA changes. He passed out draft language to amend the ordinance for their review. In order to save costs on public hearing notices, the Planning Commission can wait to set a public hearing on the amendment until such time that another public hearing is taking place.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Bean stated that there is a good article in the Planning & Zoning News on page 7 this month.

Mr. Gilchrist stated that he also read the article that Mr. Bean was referring to and it is really worth reading if you haven't already read it.

Mr. Welty stated that in the article they emphasized the need for local business not large chain businesses.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the call of the Chair at 7:55 p.m.

Christine Alwood, Secretary

Brandy Harger, Recording Secretary