

**ZEELAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 9, 2024**

The Planning Commission of Zeeland Charter Township met at 7pm on January 9, 2024.

Members present: Karen Krueze, Tim Miedema, Robert Brower, Don Steenwyk, Randy Jarzembowski, Steve Nelson

Members Absent: Dennis Russcher, Troy Nykamp, Ron Brink

Also attending: Lori Castello, AICP, Township Planner, Katy Steenwyk, recording secretary and six members of the public.

Chairperson Krueze called the meeting to order. Motion made and supported to approve the December 12, 2023 minutes. **Motion Carried.**

Citizen comment for non-agenda items - None

New Business – None

Old Business:

An application from Timothy Glupker, owner of parcels 70-17-11-100-034 & -035, commonly known as 3616 and 3646 64th Ave., for special use permits to create 11 new parcels between 2 & 40 acres within the Agricultural Zoning District subject to Section 5.03.A of the Zeeland Charter Township Zoning Ordinance.

Motion made by Jarzembowski, supported by Miedema to continue deliberations for the request and Public Hearing which was held and decision to postpone to digest all of the evidence presented at the public hearing in December 2023. **Motion carried.**

The PC did not receive any additional information from Mr. Glupker and no additional discussion was had. The PC proceeded to make a Findings of Fact Determination per the standards for approval laid out in Sec. 16.03 of the zoning ordinance to approve a Special Use Permit:

1. *The Special Land Use shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in a manner harmonious with the character of adjacent property and the surrounding area.* The PC stated that the surrounding area is zoned Ag and adding an additional county road and 11 new homes would not be harmonious.

2. *The Special Land Use shall not change the essential character of the surrounding area* The consensus of the Commission is that the proposal would change the essential character of the surrounding area as stated in response to question #1.

3. *The Special Land Use shall not be hazardous to adjacent property, or involve uses, activities, materials or equipment which will be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of persons or property through the creation of hazardous or potentially hazardous situations or the excessive production of traffic, noise, odor, smoke, dust, fumes, glare or site drainage.* The Planning Commission determined that this standard does not apply as it involves more of use consequences than consequences from creation of parcels.
4. *The Special Land Use shall not place demands on public services and facilities more than current capacity.* The PC had concern about the potential of 17 new wells being installed in the area, which is another concern specific to Ottawa County at this time, as water tables have fluctuating. The addition of these wells may impact neighboring parcels by increasing the load on the aquifer. While this may not be in a particularly high impact area, this is an additional reason to discourage development as to avoid creating additional vulnerability, and part of the reason that the Master Plan guides us to direct development toward areas where existing infrastructure is located. The evidence presented does not indicate that this standard has been met.
5. *The Special Land Use shall be in general agreement with the Master Plan.* The Master Plan places farmland preservation as a specific objective, as well as discouraging residential growth outside of the existing infrastructure facilities. This area is planned to remain agricultural due to lack of infrastructure and existence of larger tracts of farmland in the area, therefore this standard has not been met.
6. *The Special Land Use shall comply with all site plan review standards.* As this application is for several lots created through the Land Division Act, not a particular development, the site plan as submitted is sufficient.

The Planning Commission then considered the specific standards for approval for lots over 2 acres within Sec. 5.03 of the zoning ordinance for development approval requirements in the Ag district. *Lot areas over 2 acres may be permitted by the Planning Commission as a Special Use, subject to the provisions of Section 16.03.A and the following:*

1. *Whether the increase lot size follows natural topography or existing lot lines to avoid encroachment into farmable areas.* The PC Determined that this standard was not met as there is no evidence that the development of the road and encompassing the ravined areas would not encroach into farmland.
2. *To encompass existing farmsteads.* This standard does not apply as providing support for the increased lot sizes as the parcel is vacant.
3. *To avoid creation of an area not conducive to farming due to topographical or existing property lines.* The Commission reviewed existing land use maps and aerial photography

which demonstrates that rather than avoiding creation of an area not conducive to farming, if permitted, it would create an area not conducive to farming- currently there are two large parcels that can be and are currently in active agricultural production. To create the parcels as proposed, a road would need to be constructed, and the remaining tillable area would be behind what amounts to a housing development, with no access other than via the public road that would only serve these parcels. Consensus among Commissioners was this standard was not met.

Motion made by Miedema, supported by Brower to deny the special use permit request based upon the Findings of Fact which determined that this request failed to meet most of the requirements needed in Sec. 16.03 (#1,2,4,5) and Sec. 5.03 (#1,3) as noted above. **Motion carried** with a roll call vote. Jarzembowski – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Brower - Aye, Krueze, Aye, Miedema – Aye, Steenwyk – Aye, Brink – absent, Nykamp – absent

No Citizen Comment

Board of Trustee Update – Ron

- Ron was absent. No report

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

Katy Steenwyk, Recording Secretary

Randy Jarzembowski, Secretary