

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
May 12, 2021**

Chairperson Mooradian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Varner, Uutinen, Mooradian, Baiardi, Moore

Absent: Repasky, Wallin

Visitors: Dave White, Tracy Beckley, Neil W. Ahrens, Liz Ahrens, Marci Spencer, Jimmy Spencer

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve agenda: **Uutinen moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Varner.**

Vote: All yes.

Public comments: None

Approve Minutes: It was suggested that the minutes be updated as follows:

- Page 2 – Insert "Birchwood" to read "Birchwood ACC"
- Page 3 – Insert "Planner's" to read "Planner's Report"
- Page 3 – Delete "...approvals to systems built." and insert "...until the system is built."
- Page 4 – Insert "Planner's" to read "Planner's Report"

Baiardi moved to accept the minutes with changes as suggested. Seconded by Uutinen.

Vote: All yes.

Case 1- 2021 continued review of Special Land use Permit, Pond Hill Farm to Operate a Commercial Event Facility: Mooradian reviewed the list of updates and issues. White reported that the applicant hopes to have all the answers to outstanding questions by the end of the month. White also noted he received an email from MDOT. Mooradian noted he was also copied on the email from MDOT which said they recommend that the driveway is moved to the west and improved, and that the current driveway is closed off. The email also said that the permit is currently on hold with MDOT with recommendations provided. Spencer said he has not read that email yet.

Spencer gave an update on the following items:

1. The new septic tanks and fields have been put in, but are awaiting approval.
2. He has the information on the isolation distance that was requested.
3. The engineer is drawing the road cross section.
4. He contacted with a third party to help define the ADA requirements.
5. The lighting is being worked on by a lighting engineer.
6. He wants the Planning Commission to define what parking information is needed.

He reported that the parking lot and septic systems should be done by the end of next week. Spencer said he has mixed feeling about relocating the drive because people are used to it. He has improved the road.

Parking lot: Moore mentioned that the site plan copy was cut off which is why there were questions about the parking. Spencer said that the electronic version has the entire site plan on it. Mooradian said the Planning Commission needs the entire file in print.

Septic: Mooradian asked how many people the drain field can support. He said original engineer submittals to the health department showed it was designed for 96 people based on the café size. Mooradian's concern was that this didn't include employees, the house, retail, etc. Spencer said that they have had only one issue with the drain field in the past and that with the improvements it can handle more people. He reported their staff numbers have been reduced due to streamlined operations, but on a busy summer day may have approximately 20 employees. Spencer said that the new drain field has options to be expanded. Mooradian said that in order for the Planning Commission to put a number on an event, they need to know how many people it can handle. The code for commercial events requires that facility capacity be based on infrastructure capacity. In order for the Planning Commission to put a number to an event they need to know the capacity of the system and then alternatives like port-a-potties for events can be discussed.

Mooradian said he understood the farm can have 200-300 people per day and 300-400 on a summer day. The safety requirements of the code must be followed. Spencer said he wished these questions were more clearly laid out ahead of time versus during the various meetings so he could be prepared. Mooradian said these same questions had been asked. Baiardi asked if the health department would have the capacity number. Mooradian feels that it must be a sufficient system and not fully dependent upon port-a-potties. Spencer said he will be submitting answers and documentation when he has all the pieces together.

Setback: Mooradian said the setback requirement from the road for a parking lot is 100 feet. M119 is misaligned, but the fence is 33 ft from the side of center. Mooradian reviewed Section 733B from the Zoning Ordinance as the applicant is looking for a variance. Spencer says they have a tall deer fence which would stop people from wandering towards the street and stop blowing refuse. Mooradian said he thought the code related to the view from the street or neighbors as well – the scenic value. Moore agreed that the code was taking into account the site line. Moore said he would be okay with the variance if it was only a handful of special events and if the parking area in question remains unpaved. Baiardi and Varner agree with Moore provided the area remains "grass paved."

Lighting: Spencer submitted cut sheets. Mooradian asked if they considered putting in lighting on the west side of the parking lot. Spencer said no since this lot is only used for large gatherings in the fall and they close at 6:00 pm when it is still light. Moore reported that he thought Repasky's questions last month had to do with wanting to see the light coverage and pattern on the site plan. Spencer will follow up on this. Mooradian mentioned the county has a 20-foot height limit. He feels it would be wise to use 20-foot lights or less due to light pollution and dissipated coverage. Zoning Ordinance says lights must be shielded downward and must also

consider safety. Moore clarified that by seeing the coverage the commissioners can review that the paths are lit safely. Mooradian said the Planning Commission should know the light heights.

Road: Spencer reported that Benchmark Engineering is working on this.

Hours of operation and amplified sound: Township doesn't have ordinance on hours of operation for the farm market and café, but the MLCC does. The township can regulate commercial events. However, Mooradian feels that starting at 9:00 am is a nonissue. Applicant is requesting a variance to stay open till 11:00 pm. An example of an event that may go to 11:00 pm is a wedding. Mooradian read the Zoning Ordinance 733E. Baiardi, Utinen and Varner all felt they were good with the later hour.

Mooradian moved Case 1- 2021 the continued review of Special Land use Permit for Pond Hill Farm to Operate a Commercial Event Facility be postponed until the next regularly scheduled meeting which is June 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. to allow the applicant more time to provide necessary information. Varner Seconded.

Vote: All yes.

Case 2 -2021 postpone to May 26, 2012, Public Hearing and Final Review of a Special Land Use Permit and PUD Amendment for a Site Condominium Development in Birchwood Farms. Tax ID #24-16-12-33-200-010, 24-16-12-33-200-009. Case postponed by request of applicant. They have requested a special meeting which will take place in two weeks. No discussion.

Review Addendum to Case 1-2021, Pond Hill Farm to add a Commercial Kitchen, second floor office and Pizza oven to rear of existing Farm Market and Café as part of Ag-Tourism business:

White reported that the Planner says this should be a recommendation from the Planning Commission to the Township Board. Spencer said they are hoping to build a kitchen to the back of the building with an office space over it. White asked for confirmation that they had outgrown their current kitchen and Spencer said their current kitchen is difficult for the staff and is located upstairs. Designing a kitchen with a good layout would be value added to their business. The current kitchen would be kept as a prep space. Spencer also reported the current office isn't private and the new office would allow for extra space. Mooradian asked if the addition would be on the north side of the building and Spencer confirmed this.

Mooradian reported that the planner is looking at this as an addendum to the main application but that the Planning Commission can manage it as an individual item. Utinen said this is straight forward and an asset to the operation so he has no problems with it. Moore said it doesn't affect public function so he is fine with it as are Varner and Mooradian. Baiardi also agrees with the understanding that there are outstanding questions about the main project in the Planner's Report. Mooradian noted we need to date plans submitted as 3/12/21 as listed on the drawings.

Motion to recommend that the West Traverse Township Board approve the requested Addendum dated 3/28/21 case #1-2021 Pond Hill Farm located at 5699 S. Lakeshore Dr., Parcel #24-16-12-33-100-001.

This approval relates solely to the building expansion on the north end of the existing Agri-Tourism Farm Café which will include a pizza oven, additional office space and storage areas. The expansion footprint is 21' x 46' as per the drawings dated 3/12/21.

The applicant clearly understands that this recommendation of the Addendum dated 3/28/21 to the Township Board for approval does not influence or grant any approval of the pending review for the Special Land Use Permit request dated 2/28/21 for “Commercial Events”. Conditioned upon compliance with all applicable requirements of Local State and Federal laws and statutes. Motion by Baiardi. Seconded by Uutinen

Roll Call: Varner - yes, Uutinen - yes, Mooradian - yes, Baiardi - yes, Moore – yes

Baiardi asked if Spencer would like to request a special meeting of the Township Board to consider the request. Spencer said yes and Baiardi said she would work on setting that up.

Zoning Administrators Report: Written report was presented.

Township Board Representative Report: None

Correspondence: One letter with a blight complaint. Uutinen asked where it was.

Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion): Tracy Beckley was welcomed. Moore brought up that .gov domain names are being offered for free if we are interested.

Public Comments: None.

Uutinen made a motion to adjourn at 8:19 pm. Baiardi seconded.