

Almont Township

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ALMONT TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

April 8, 2009

The regular meeting of the Almont Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairperson Francis, at the Almont Township Hall, 819 N. Main Street, Almont, Michigan. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT, Steve Francis, Jean Gross, Bonnie Krauss, Kim Streeter, Dennis Sweers, and Bryan Zender. Also present: Brian Wilson of Community Planning & Management, P.C., and Mr. Ray Davis, P.S. of Davis Land Surveying & Engineering, P.C.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Fred Hunter, excused absence.

ALSO PRESENT: Approx. 15 guests

CORRESPONDENCE: Correspondence was presented.

MINUTES: MOVED BY ZENDER AND SUPPORTED BY GROSS TO ACCEPT THE MARCH 18, 2009 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mr. Jim Lessenberry, a dog behaviorist, noted that he was interested in purchasing the former K & M Bump Shop to operate his dog training business. Mr. Lessenberry stated that he felt that the location and building would suit his needs. Mr. Lessenberry noted that he would train the dogs inside with some outside area set aside for the dogs. The dogs would be boarded for 6-8 weeks while in training. The property would need to be fenced. Mr. Lessenberry asked the Planning Commission for direction and as to whether a special land use would be feasible. Mr. Wilson noted that Mr. Lessenberry's proposal could work, but that it would need to follow the procedures as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance for special land uses.

LATE AGENDA ITEMS: None

INTRODUCTIONS: None

PUBLIC HEARING: Special Land Use #08-003 – Novak Supply & Equipment

Chairman Francis explained the procedures for a public hearing. Chairman Francis opened the public hearing at 7:08 P.M.

Mr. Timothy Denney, an attorney, was present representing Mr. Jim Novak, the applicant. Mr. Denney noted that Mr. Novak felt that he was operating the site the same as the previous owners of the property, although due to encouragement from the Township, Mr. Novak was willing to work with the Township in bringing the site into compliance. Mr. Denney noted that Mr. Novak operates a landscaping and excavating business with retail sales of lawn equipment along with repair of such. Mr. Novak also sells plumbing supplies, landscaping supplies, manhole covers, gravel, farm supplies, tools and tires.

Mr. Denney noted that the previous owner, Cornillie Brick & Supply, was mainly in the construction supply business and received special land use approval to conduct said business. Mr. Denney noted that part of the approval was that the property would be fenced-in. The property is currently fenced with a chain-linked fence, 8-feet high, with barbed wire on top of the fence.

Mr. Denney noted that Mr. Novak agrees to pave the parking areas and made note of the unloading/loading areas on the pavement and site plan. Mr. Novak also noted that Mr. Novak will have all the unlicensed semi-trailers on the property licensed, and would like to explore options as to the amount of outdoor sale items that would be allowed to be displayed.

Chairman Francis opened the public hearing to hear comments from the audience. Mr. Jeff Schuessler stated that he was in favor of Mr. Novak's special land use. Mr. John Brzozowski of American Tree stated that he too was in favor of Mr. Novak's business, but stated that the site should be brought up to standards just as his site was made to do, so that everyone is on the same playing field.

Noting that no further comments from the public were offered, Chairman Francis asked the Planning Commission to offer their opinions and to ask any questions they may have of the applicant.

The Planning Commission reviewed the site plan and the comments made by the Planner and the Engineer. Commissioner Krauss asked that the barbed wire on the fence be removed as it does not meet the current standard for fencing in an industrial zoned area.

Commissioner Zender noted that there are 5 unlicensed semi-trailers that needed to be removed or licensed; times and days that the crushing of concrete would be allowed needs to be set; and that the parking areas need to be defined, paved, or removed and grassed over.

Special Land Use #08-003 – Novak Supply & Equipment Continued:

Commissioner Streeter noted that the front yard display area was outside of what the ordinance allows and would recommend that the display area be moved further back and that the crushing of concrete be limited to weekdays and not on weekends; and that the semi-trailers be considered as a temporary storage unit and be removed as soon as possible after a permanent structure is built for storage.

Commissioner Gross noted that everyone should be held to the same standards and that each applicant be judged on its merit, as one size does not fit every applicant. Commissioner Gross also expressed concern regarding the shared driveway. The drive should be brought up to the Township's current standards.

Commissioner Sweers stated that his concerns were the number of vehicles on display, the retention basins being covered, customer parking, and the fence.

Mr. Davis noted that a list of everything Mr. Novak sells and does on site be provided to the Planning Commission. Mr. Novak needs to be very specific so that the Planning Commission is aware of what the special land use, if approved, is being granted for. Mr. Davis also noted that the asphalt needs to show grade levels on the site plan.

Mr. Wilson noted that his concerns were the location and paving of the parking areas and that they be better defined, the shared driveway needs to be maintained, and that the fence be moved back to the front of the building.

Commissioner Krauss noted the landscaping plan and stated that the Planning Commission although willing to work with the applicant, the applicant in turn must work with the Planning Commission by providing the Planning Commission with a detailed list of all items for sale in the store and on display, and that the semi-trailers be licensed or removed from the site.

Commissioner Zender proposed that the Planning Commission give the applicant a detailed list of what the Planning Commission would accept. Chairman Francis noted that Mr. Denney had been taking notes, plus that Mr. Novak also had copies of the reviews by the Planner and Engineer.

MOVED BY SWEERS AND SUPPORTED BY KRAUSS THAT DUE TO THE FACT THAT NO FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS WERE OFFERED THAT PUBLIC HEARING FOR SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATION #08-003 BE CLOSED AT 8:40 P.M. MOTION CARRIED.

MOVED BY ZENDER AND SUPPORTED BY GROSS TO TABLE SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATION #08-003 – NOVAK SUPPLY & EQUIPMENT FOR 90 DAYS THEREBY GIVING THE APPLICANT TIME TO MAKE THE NECESSARY REVISIONS TO THE SITE PLAN AND RESUBMIT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION. MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Francis called for a break at 8:42 P.M. Chairman Francis called the meeting back into order at 8:49 P.M.

OLD BUSINESS: #1. Sign Ordinance 51.1 - Review

Chairman Francis noted that there was a workshop offered on April 29th, in Flint at MOTT College. One of the topics of discussion was on digital signs and before the Planning Commission put any further time into the sign ordinance, that some of the Commissioners might want to first attend the seminar. Chairman Francis and Commissioner Zender both stated that they would attend.

Consensus of commissioners agreed to postpone any further discussion on the sign ordinance until after the seminar.

NEW BUSINESS: #1. Wind Energy Conversion Systems (proposed Section 2.31)

Commissioner Streeter noted that a local business in Romeo is researching producing windmills and as more residential property owners are looking into windmills as an alternative source of energy, that Almont Township should also review standards for residential windmills.

Mr. Wilson noted that he had provided the Planning Commission with a rough draft for Wind Energy Conversion Systems. Commissioner Streeter noted that she found the draft to need more work.

Chairman Francis noted that windmills will also be discussed at the April 29th workshop in Flint and suggested that a committee be formed to study windmills for residential properties. Commissioners Krauss and Streeter volunteered along with Tom Rinke, who has studied windmills over the past 18 months, to work on said committee.

#2. Form Base Codes

Commissioner Krauss noted that she liked some of the ideas, but not all of them. The Planning Commission should take a look at their current standards and see if they can revise them to include some language that would direct applicants towards what the Township was looking for, such as locating the parking behind the buildings and not in front as what is traditional.

County Commissioner Ian Kemp cautioned the Commissioners that in posing restrictive design criteria, it could cause many small businesses from being able to comply, and therefore could deter some businesses from locating in Almont Township.

Commissioner Streeter asked that this be kept under advisement for now.

REPORTS:

Planner: Asked that discussion on fences be placed on the May agenda

Engineer: No Report.

Zoning Board of Appeals: No Report.

Zoning & Building: Zoning & Building Report for March was submitted.

General Comments: None were offered

Agenda for May 13, 2009


Public Hearing: None

Old Business: Sign Ordinance 51.1 - Review

New Business: Fences - Review of section 2.11

**MOVED BY ZENDER AND SUPPORTED BY STREETER TO ADJOURN THE
MEETING AT 9: 38 P.M. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully submitted by



Ida L. Lloyd, Recording Secretary