

# MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 9, 2020 --- 7:00 p.m.

Big Rapids Township Hall, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

## I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Amanda Wethington called the regular meeting of the Big Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission to order at the township hall on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

## II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Carman Bean, Mike Bigford, Zach Cook, Mary Davis, Gordon Oliver, Mark Sweppenheiser and Amanda Wethington. The record shows there is a quorum. Also present: Zoning Administrator and Recording Secretary, Timothy Kleinheksel and Township Supervisor, Bill Stanek.

## III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Mrs. Wethington asked if any of the Commission members had known conflicts of interest with any of the items on the agenda for this meeting. No one indicated that a conflict of interest existed.

## IV. MINUTES:

Mrs. Wethington asked the Commission members to review the minutes of the May 19, 2020 meeting. Mr. Sweppenheiser made a motion to approve the May 19, 2020 minutes as submitted. Mr. Bean supported the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with seven ayes.

## V. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Kleinheksel updated the Commission on the 2020 Master Plan Project stating that Mr. Bee is not able to attend because he will be busy for the next two years working with the Federal Government on the CARES Act. The next step in the Master Plan Project will involve collecting community data and developing maps. This will be done with GIS/Mapping. It will also involve gathering/updating data that was in the 2015 plan. Census information will probably not be available until the middle of next year since they haven't been knocking on doors as of yet. Mr. Bigford asked if Mr. Bee has fulfilled the contract to completion. Mr. Stanek stated that Mr. Bee has not fulfilled the contract nor has he been paid. Mr. Sweppenheiser inquired as to the due date of the Project. Mr. Kleinheksel stated that it needs to be finalized by the end of this year.

Mr. Stanek presented information on the proposed communication tower to be erected on Township property. The project has been approved by the Township Board and a Special Use Permit public hearing will be scheduled as soon as the application is made from the tower owner. This is expected to be a go by August, 2020.

## **VI. PUBLIC HEARING-CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Chairman Amanda Wethington called the public hearing for the Capital Improvement Plan to order at 7:15 P.M. Upon hearing no public comment, Mrs. Wethington declared the public hearing closed at 7:16 P.M. Mr. Kleinheksel referred to the Capital Improvement request spreadsheet that was updated with the rankings as decided in the May 19, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Kleinheksel noted that at that meeting we assigned ranking to each item using one as low priority and five as high. In reality the scale in the database was one as high priority and five as low. When updating the database, ones were entered as fives, twos as fours, etc. Discussion followed. Mr. Bean made a motion to recommend the Capital Improvement Plan to the Big Rapids Charter Township Board of Trustees as submitted. Mr. Oliver supported the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with seven ayes.

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARING-SUP20-001 BUSCHMANN**

Chairman Amanda Wethington called the public hearing for Special Use Permit SUP20-001 to order at 7:30 P.M. a request by Mr. Aaron Buschmann to operate an internet retail operation from 22671 14 Mile Road located in the Agricultural (AG) district. Parcel # 54 05 029 003 400. Mr. Buschmann was present for discussion via Zoom, an internet video and audio conferencing application. Mrs. Wethington allowed Mr. Buschmann to introduce his business as rootnaturally.com, an internet based organic fertilizer retailer selling primarily via Amazon. The product is delivered by truck, typically a small box truck and occasionally a 48 foot semi trailer. Mr. Buschmann stated that there is adequate driveway for accommodating this type of equipment. Mrs. Wethington asked for public input from anyone opposing the permit and upon receiving none, she asked if there were any public support for the permit. There was no public support. Mrs. Wethington acknowledged two Township residents who indicated that they were present only to observe. Mrs. Wethington closed the public hearing at 7:39 P.M. The Planning Commission then verbalized the following discussions: Mr. Bigford asked if the business was a wholesale distributor with no re-packaging done on site. Mr. Buschmann stated that there would be no re-packaging of products. Mr. Bigford asked how much product would be stored at any given time. Mr. Buschmann stated that typically approximately ten pallets of product would be in storage. Mr. Bean asked if any products would be stored outside. Mr. Buschmann stated that the products cannot be exposed to the elements and that they would always be stored indoors. Mrs. Davis asked if there was an objectionable odor to the products. Mr. Buschmann stated that the products are packaged in sealed bags and odor was minimal. Mr. Bigford inquired about the possibility in the future that if the business outgrows the existing facility, would construction of a new pole barn be allowable with just a building permit. Mr. Stanek stated that a new application for a Special Use Permit would be necessary at that time. Mr. Bigford inquired as to the flammability of the products. Mr. Buschmann stated that the products are not flammable. Mrs. Davis asked if there would be a retail outlet at this address. Mr. Buschmann stated there would not be any retail business at this address, only online. Mr. Stanek asked Mr. Buschmann if the business was owned by him alone. Mr. Buschmann stated that the business was owned by himself and his brother. Mrs. Wethington read the following verbiage from the Township Ordinance asking Planning Commission members for comment.

1. The nature, location, and size of the special use shall not change the essential character of the surroundings area, nor disrupt the orderly and proper development of the district as a whole. The use shall not be in conflict with, or discourage the adjacent or neighboring

lands or buildings.

2. The special use shall not diminish the value of the land, buildings or structures in the neighborhood.
3. The special use shall not increase traffic hazards or cause congestion on the public highways or streets of the area. Adequate access to the parcel shall be furnished.
4. The water supply and sewage disposal system shall be adequate for the proposed special use by conforming to State and County Health Department requirements, and the special use shall not over-burden any existing services or facilities.
5. Uses by special permit shall not be significantly more objectionable to nearby properties by reason of traffic, noise, vibrations, dust, fumes, odor, smoke, glare, lights, or disposal of waste than the operation of any principal permitted use, nor shall the special use increase hazards from fire or other dangers to either the property or adjacent property.
6. The Planning Commission may require that the premises be permanently screened from adjoining or contiguous properties by a wall, fence, plant screen and/or other approved enclosure when deemed necessary to buffer the surrounding uses from objectionable noise, light, etc., created by the special use.
7. The special use shall be consistent with the intent and purpose of this Ordinance and with the intent of the Land Use Plan for Big Rapids Township. The special use shall be compatible with the natural environment and shall not be inimical to the public health, safety and general welfare.

After discussion by the Planning Commission members, there were no issues or conflicts with any of the seven conditions that had not been previously addressed. Mrs. Wethington welcomed two residents of Big Rapids Township and asked if they had any comments or objections. Ms. Barbara Schwaderer replied that their only concern was the additional road traffic that the business would produce. They had no objections. Mr. Bean made a motion to approve SUP20-001 as submitted with the stipulation that no product would be stored outside. Mrs. Davis supported the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with seven ayes via roll call vote.

#### **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Hearing no further business for the Planning Commission, Mrs. Wethington adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of June 9, 2020 by: Mr. Cook.  
Seconded by: Mr. Sweppenheiser. Roll call vote carried with six ayes.

Timothy Kleinheksel,  
Timothy Kleinheksel, Recording Secretary  
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION

September 8, 2020  
Date Approved