

**Charter Township of Elmwood
Planning Commission Special Workshop Meeting
Elmwood Township Hall (10090 E Lincoln Road)
June 22, 2023 at 7:00 PM**

A. Call to Order: Chairman Bechtold called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance: The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call: Present: Chris Mikowski, Doug Roberts, Kendra Luta, Rick Bechtold, Jeff Aprill, Jonah Kuzma
Excused: Nate McDonald

D. Agenda Modifications/Approval: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LUTA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUZMA TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRINTED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

E. Declaration of Conflict of Interest: None

F. Purpose of the Meeting: The Planning Commission discussion on amending Zoning Ordinance for special event facilities.

Chairman Bechtold stated they had a consultant present, Sara Kopriva, from Beckett and Raeder, and the Commission has a memo from her dated June 19, 2023.

Sara Kopriva gave an outline of the process. Her understanding from the last meeting is they are interested in adding the use back into the Zoning Ordinance, but there is some concern with the language, as seen from the attorney, that is currently drafted. So, to try to get to something that would try to make everybody happy, she thought it would be good to have some general discussion. She wasn't looking for word smithing, but for broader policy consensus so they can go back and look at the language and tweak the language to achieve what they are looking for. Her memo included some questions to think about in the process to help them with the conversation based on the criteria they're using to make a decision to recommend an amendment to the Township Board.

The Commissioners discussed the questions of, is this use necessary in the Township (is it needed, is it not available in any other Zoning District or Township locally), and did anything in State Law change that would make them need to amend the Ordinance. They also discussed if someone is actively farming and has annual production to maybe allow a percentage of land to be used for events.

Sara Kopriva asked, when they talk about minimum production or active agriculture, a lot of times individuals have multiple properties in the area that they're using to be active in

producing something, are you looking for that to be on that specific parcel, adjacent to, in the area of?

Chairman Bechtold said the size of the parcel was a critical concern and that something should be growing or in production.

Sara Kopriva asked if there has been any consideration on the number of attendees and said that is something they could think about.

The Commissioners would like the use to be supplemental to AG and to be submitted as a Special Use Permit.

Fred Campbell asked, when they originally went through the different variations, the text amendment was the only option that was available to them. They submitted a text amendment, reviewed by the attorneys, it came back and the attorney essentially said, rewrite it in this format. He asked if they have the ability to rewrite it in that format as a text amendment strictly for the Gallagher farm because it's the only one, instead of developing a new Ordinance? If the concern is all the farms are going to become event centers, we have somebody that is approved and is non-conforming, is that the avenue that we can get to do what we said? In the impact assessment statement that was approved, there's a statement that says they're putting in a future septic field, is that allowed because it was approved as part of the submission. If the Commissioners decided they don't want event centers in the AG district, will they deny the text amendment that has been submitted?

Sara Kopriva responded, the process would be, if the Planning Commission decided either they don't want the use at all, or they can't agree on language, they can recommend denial. Then, it'll go through the whole process so, the Planning Commission would make a recommendation following a public hearing, then it would go to the County Planning Commission, then the Township Board would ultimately make the decision on it. If the Planning Commission made a recommendation for approval, it goes to the Township Board, and the Township Board could still deny the use.

Fred Campbell said in an attempt to do what they're trying to do, trying to meet the Gallagher's site specific and yet they're trying to do an Ordinance that covers everything.

Chairman Bechtold responded, because they can't spot-zone. If they do amend the Ordinance, they're going to have conditions because in the Master Plan they also have to be mindful of the neighbors and surrounding property owners.

Fred Campbell asked, going back to the Attorney's letter and the statement he was saying that it shouldn't be tied to Agriculture, it should be its own use. If you ask anybody's opinion, everybody's going to have a different one, and how do we cover everything and make it work?

Sara Kopriva said based on the conversation tonight, she doesn't think that's an option for them because they want to be tied to an Agriculture use, so the answer would be they're not passing an amendment that's not tied to Agriculture use.

Staff said in her discussion with the Attorney, he said special events are by themselves a primary use of the property and if you want it to be accessory, or tied to some Agriculture, do so through creating certain standards of approval for the use.

The Chair said they could bring their current discussion to a close. They've given Sara Kopriva some thoughts and ideas to be crafted into some potential language and they'll have to take a look at that and see where the Commission wants to go from there.

Sara Kopriva added, once the Commission looks at additional language, there is going to be a time where the Commission will have make a decision on what's best for the community regarding the use.

G. Public Comment: None

H. Adjournment: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LUTA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ROBERTS TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 8:27 PM. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.