

**Charter Township of Elmwood  
Planning Commission Special Meeting  
Elmwood Township Hall (10090 E. Lincoln Rd)  
November 15, 2023 at 6:30 PM**

**A. Call to Order:** Chairman Bechtold called the meeting to order at 6:30 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, Nate McDonald

**D. Limited Public Comment:** None

**E. Agenda Modifications/Approval: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROBERTS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER APRILL TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED 7-0.**

**F. Declaration of Conflict of Interest:** None

**G. Purpose of the Meeting**

**1.) SPR 2023-11 (no public hearing required) Request by Michael Finazzo, regarding property at 13360 S. West-Bay Shore Dr. for Masonic Building-Personal Service Establishment.**

Jeff Brackett 13360 S. West Bay Shore Dr. representing on behalf of Michael Finazzo. They want to take a small portion of their building and add a dog grooming business for extra income for the Lodge. They'll put in an exterior door for its own ingress and egress to the building.

The Chair noted he did not see an interior plan to see what portion of the overall footprint the proposed project would occupy. Jeff Brackett responded, it's an area approximately 8' x 22'. The Chair said typically the applicant will give the Commissioners a floor plan that identifies that to give them an idea of the location. Staff noted if they look at the interior layout, there's a room on the western portion of the building labeled storage that the narrative indicates is in that area.

Commissioner Roberts said what he was looking at didn't show an exterior door, but there was one in the photographs.

Jeff Brackett responded the door will not be installed until approval.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the 2 doors going into the dining area from what would be the pet grooming area. Jeff Brackett said those would be sealed off.

Staff added, she did receive evidence that the applicant reached out to the other agencies so she did provide that to the Commission and also, they did receive a review from the Fire Chief. It's an existing structure, but he did recommend that no alteration be made to the existing canopy at the main entrance that would further obstruct the fire apparatus access lane. He recommended that as a condition for approval.

The Chair asked if the dumpster needed to be enclosed. Staff replied, if it was visible from a residential area, it would need screening, but it's not.

Commissioner Mikowski questioned where the facilities for customers would be and where facilities for the dogs would be. Jeff Brackett responded the customers have access to the Lodge and there would be ample room for the dogs outside.

The Commissioners reviewed the plan and the draft document that Staff provided.

Staff noted they could condition the location as marked on the plan.

The Commissioners went through Requirements for Site Plan Review and Conditions for Approval.

**Conditions:**

- 1) The property owner is responsible for obtaining all other applicable permits that shall be done prior to obtaining a land use permit.
- 2) The Planning Commission is not approving any signage under the Site Plan Review. Any proposed signage will need to comply with the Zoning Ordinance on the property. The owner shall obtain a Sign Permit from the Zoning Administrator.
- 3) The project shall comply with all requirements in the Zoning Ordinance in effect at time of approval.
- 4) Recommendations proposed by the Fire Chief in his November 15, 2023 letter that
  - a) there shall be no modifications to the front canopy as to not impede any fire apparatus coming or going.
  - b) Complying with IFC standards for clear widths.
  - c) Should new occupancy have a different address than the main building that shall be provided to the Fire Department.
  - d) The applicant shall provide signage for no parking, fire lane, outside the access.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LUTA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD TO APPROVE SPR 2023-11 WITH THE IDENTIFIED CONDITIONS. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**2.) Planning Commission Discussion on Amending Zoning Ordinance for Special Event Facilities**

The Chair said, as they recall, several months ago, their consultant, Sara Kopriva was there giving them ideas and she was back to further discuss the topic.

Sara Kopriva said last month they talked about doing some changes to the language but had questions for the Attorney. She did update the definition, but one of the things they need to discuss is the lot size. At the last meeting they couldn't settle on what the lot size should be. Right now, 2b has a minimum lot size of 20 acres. She did provide another map that has individual parcels, not based on names, just parcels and how big they are. Last month they talked about 80 and 100 acres, so they looked to see how many parcels would be left over if you started going that large, because in essence if they're regulating them out so no parcels can be developed, then they might as well not put it in the Ordinance to allow it because essentially, they're drafting language that's too restrictive.

Commissioner Roberts suggested adding "the property shall be an active farm operation as defined by this Ordinance".

Sara Kopriva said some of the other changes they made were h) sound cannot be heard or objectively measured greater than normal conversation at any property that is not described in the Zoning Ordinance, and j) the duration of the events shall not last longer than 12 hours with some of the hour language that came from the old regulations, k) the maximum number of events from the old language was brought over, and then the updates to the definition in Article II.

The Commissioners discussed the number of acres.

Commissioner Aprill felt like they were spending a lot of time regulating something that in his opinion, they don't really want in the Township.

Chairman Bechtold asked if they abandoned the development of an Event Ordinance in AG, is that indirectly putting any of the operating farms in jeopardy because that's not something they could take advantage of in the future if they felt they needed to supplement income from their farming operation.

Sara Kopriva responded anybody that's already been approved can continue to run theirs as a non-conforming use, but it can't be expanded. The operation has to stay the same and nobody else would be able to do that. There are 2 under Special Event Facility and 1 under Wine Associated Activities that would be non-conforming. That is how they ended up where they are because Gallagher's are currently non-conforming due to the Township not having any regulations and they want to make some changes but the only way to do that is to get out from being non-conforming. Depending on what lot size they pick, Gallagher's only have 38 acres, so they're still non-conforming if they pick 80 acres. She noted she is not saying they should write an Ordinance tailored to them, they need to do it in the best interest of the Township, for everybody that are here. If they were to say 80 acres and they only have 38, they're non-conforming and would need to make their parcel at least 80 to be able to make changes under the new Ordinance.

The Chair asked what would prevent the owner of a farm wanting to combine 2-40 acre fields into an 80 and just have one tax number for the 80.

Sara Kopriva said there is nothing that could stop them from doing that. There is some potential for that to happen if there are neighboring parcels that are owned by the same owner, or they could buy property next to them if they wanted to do it.

The Commissioners discussed the topic further.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROBERTS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MIKOWSKI TO MOVE TO A PUBLIC HEARING, BUT TO REMOVE THE REFERENCE TO A REGISTERED FARM AGENCY AND TO ADD THE MINIMAL LOT SIZE SHALL BE 40 ACRES.**

**DISCUSSION**

**MOTION PASSED 4-3.**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LUTA TO MOVE THE DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 MEETING TO DECEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 AT 6:30 PM. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**H. Discussion on Zoning Ordinance:** None

**I. Comments from the Chair:** Commissioner Bechtold thanked the Commissioners for their comments and making an attempt to look at the big picture.

**J. Comments from Planning Commissioners:** Commissioner Mikowski said she finished the Citizen Planner Program and found it very informative and helpful and recommended it to the other Commissioners.

**K. Comments from Staff:** Staff also recommended the Citizen Planner courses.

**L. Public Comment:** None

**M. Adjourn: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROBERTS, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:14 PM. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**