

Minutes

Cascade Charter Township
Planning Commission
Monday, July 18, 2022
7:00 P.M.
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Noordyke called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.
Members Present: Noordhoek, Rowland, Rissi, Moxley, Noordyke, Korstange and Engel
Members Absent: Rapin and Deering (excused)
Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Zoning Administrator Madison Smith-Jacoby, and those listed on the sign-in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance

ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Member Rissi to approve the agenda. Supported by Member Moxley. Motion carried 7 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Disclose any Conflicts of Interest

There weren't any members with a conflict of interest to disclose.

ARTICLE 5. Accept the Minutes of the Process Recommendations Subcommittee Meetings

Motion made by Member Noordhoek to accept the Process Recommendation Subcommittee meeting minutes. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 7 to 0.

ARTICLE 6. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak on non-agenda items.

There weren't any visitors that wished to speak on non-agenda items.

ARTICLE 7. Case #22-3720/Ward

Requested Action: The applicant is requesting approval of a Type 1 special use permit to allow for a 6-foot-tall fence in the front yard and road right of way.

Zoning Administrator Smith-Jacoby presented the case and explained that previously, the applicants had a fence with wooden posts that the road commission asked them to take down. Their solution is a temporary 6-foot-tall fenced-in enclosure they are requesting to have up during the growing season to keep deer out. This fence is made of 6-foot-tall stakes wrapped with netting that also has a small gated entrance. Since they are only requesting the fence to be up during certain times of the year, the board was advised to determine a specific date range the fence would be utilized in that area. Staff also received letters of support.

Robin Ward (1896 Country Brook), the applicant, thanked the board for reviewing his case. Ward clarified that the gated entrance to the fence will also come down seasonally. The timing for gate removal is contingent on frost, but he estimated putting

the fence up no later than May 1st and taking it down no earlier than mid-October, due to tomatoes thriving later in the year. He explained that they started this garden during the Covid-19 pandemic to grow fresh vegetables and the only good spot in the yard was right up front. They started this project with permanent wooden posts, without receiving an ordinance, which the Road Commission asked them to take down. Planning Director Hilbrands clarified that the Road Commission previously had concerns about someone driving off the road and hitting the wooden posts.

Member Rowland suggested the applicant cut down trees to put the permanent fence somewhere else in his yard but Ward explained that his property is on a hill and other parts of his yard contain solid oak trees which would be expensive to remove. Additionally, he mentioned it would impact the neighborhood's forest feel.

Motion was made by Member Rissi to go to public hearing. Supported by Member Moxley. Motion carried 7 to 0.

Roger Rittenhouse (8157 Bolt Dr) stated that he had previously written ordinances for two cities. He does not think the fence is an obstruction of view and thinks the posts would cause very little damage if someone were to hit them in a vehicle. The garden is great in appearance and some of the surrounding trees are over 100 years old. He also stated that the current garden placement is the only sunlit spot in the yard.

Charlotte Steigenga (1824 Country Brook), a neighbor of the Wards, stated their garden has been a wonderful place for people to congregate and that there was so much positivity throughout the neighborhood. Decorative flowers are planted in the yard making it look like a piece of artwork.

Maria Roccu (1827 Country Brook) is a neighbor of the Wards and a retired real estate attorney. She commended the Wards for graciously working with the township to make everything legal. She was in full agreement that this garden is beautiful and a work of art. Neighbors gather, discuss, and gain advice around this garden. She explained that she also has a garden with a 4-foot fence and it does not keep the deer out.

Motion was made by Member Engel to close public hearing. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried 7 to 0.

Member Rowland thanked everyone who attended and said that the board needs to hear from neighbors and people within the community. He also thought it was a good idea to come up with specific dates the fence could be up but thought May 1st through October 31st was too long. Member Korstange shared her understanding of tomatoes growing later if there's a warm fall.

Member Rissi did not understand how this met the ordinance since it is a see-through net, doesn't seem like a "fence", and is temporary. Planning Director Hilbrands clarified that the ordinance also factors in enclosures, but the fact that it is transparent and temporary helps their case in asking for a special use permit.

Member Noordhoek stated that he had no issue with this specific case, but he would still like to consider these enclosures on a case-by-case basis.

Motion was made by Member Korstange to approve the special use permit to allow a 6-foot-tall fence in the front yard between the dates of May 1st and October 31st with a condition that the Road Commission has the right to remove any parts of the fence or garden within the right of way. Supported by Member Moxley. Motion carried 7 to 0.

ARTICLE 8. Case #22-3717/GDP Properties LLC, Douglas DeKock

Requested Action: Site Plan Review for a 55,000 sq ft addition and parking lot renovations.

Planning Director Hilbrands presented the case to the Planning Commission. The applicant is requesting a 55,000 sq ft addition to an existing industrial building. After the addition, the total building size will equal just over 100,000 sq ft. The site includes two wings connected by an enclosed walkway and the applicant and property owner received a variance to allow for a property split with the proposed property line located between the two wings. This would result in a setback that is less than the required 25ft, for which they received a variance. The new building addition meets the 25ft setback, height requirement, and parking requirements of the zoning district. Since the walkway will need to be removed, he is recommending the applicant provide a \$20,000 bond to ensure that the walkway is removed.

The Fire and Building Departments have reviewed this plan and have indicated that each new building must be served by separate utilities per fire and building codes. The Township Engineers have also reviewed and approved the plans. They noted that the applicant must record a stormwater maintenance agreement. Photometric plans that meet township requirements have been submitted and a comprehensive landscape plan has been submitted with the recommendation to provide a \$10,000 landscape bond.

Staff recommended site approval for the 55,000 sq ft addition with the five conditions listed in the packets.

Doug DeKock, representing GDP Properties LLC, offered to answer any questions the board may have. Member Rowland asked if this will be a new location for the tenets and DeKock answered that they are moving and expanding their operation to this location.

Member Rissi wanted clarification that demolition of the building would take place on the south side and the applicant stated this was correct.

Motion was made by Member Rissi to approve the site plan for the 55,000 sq ft addition with staff recommendations. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 7 to 0.

ARTICLE 9. Old Business

Members Moxley and Rowland presented the findings of the Process Recommendations Subcommittee at the previous Township Board meeting. Member Noordhoek thought it was well done and has requested the board add it to their next agenda as the board didn't make a motion regarding the recommendation after the presentation.

ARTICLE 10. Any Other Business

Member Rissi requested the site address for each case be included under its heading on the agenda. He thinks it's easier for the public to know where the property is located and makes it easier for the board and community purposes.

Planning Director Hilbrands stated that the next Planning Commission meeting will be held on August 8th where they will discuss an accessory building.

ARTICLE 11. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak

There weren't any visitors that wished to speak.

ARTICLE 12. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Diedre Deering, Secretary