

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Planning Commission
Composting-Use Sub-Committee
Friday April 29, 2022
3:30 P.M.
5920 Tahoe Dr.

- ARTICLE 1.** Member Rissi called the meeting to order at 3:33 P.M.
Members Present: Rissi, Rapin, Korstange, Deering
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Management Office Administrative Assistant Jessica Stine, and Leslie Abdoo (F&S)
- ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**
Motion was made by Member Deering to approve the current Agenda. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- ARTICLE 3. Disclose any Conflicts of Interest**
There weren't any conflicts of interest disclosed.
- ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak on non-agenda items.**
There weren't any visitors who wished to speak.
- ARTICLE 5. Responsibilities, who will take minutes?**
Administrative Assistant Stine will take meeting minutes.
- ARTICLE 6. Future Sub-Committee Meetings Schedule**
The next meeting will take place at the Township Office at 7:30 AM on Tuesday, May 3, 2022.
- ARTICLE 7. Title of the Sub-Committee**
The committee decided on the name 'Composting-Use Sub-Committee'.
- ARTICLE 8. Discussion on what zoning is recommended for use**
Looking into how neighboring municipalities are regulating vermiculture/worm composting, staff from neighboring municipalities, other than Kentwood, indicated that they would place vermiculture in ARC designated properties. Kentwood staff indicated that they would allow it in areas zoned for industrial. The committee discussed allowing vermiculture in ARC zoning as a special use and then, dependent on the garbage intake volume and product output volume, requiring the operation be run in Industrial zoned parcels instead.

The members requested Planning Director Hilbrands check with Aaron Hiday of EGLE to see if there are other composting facilities like this that are completely enclosed. There was also discussion as to if the applicant from Wormies is still operating under the same scope as when his use of the ARC zoned land was approved for this type of vermiculture use by previous Community Development Director Peterson.

ARTICLE 9. Discussion of Special Use Conditions, setbacks, parcel size, etc.

Member Rissi proposed a list of conditions to consider setting when allowing vermiculture and other composting. His suggestions included:

- ARC zoning on 12+ acres as a special use if it is deemed a low traffic area and the impact of the operation is negligible after a review of site plan operations, Industrial zoning with special use and site plan approval.
- Setback of 150'
- Berm of 6' against residential properties, variable dependent on site plan approval, Forest or landscape-buffer along all other sides of the property
- Must register with EGLE
- Composting can occur on no more than 20% of the parcel; 50% of the parcel must remain natural or landscaped (this area may include a house).
- Equipment operations occur 7am-9pm
- Lighting must meet township ordinances
- The site must be kept neat and clean
- Neighbors should have no complaints regarding operations such as foul odors or garbage blowing.
- Submit to a one year annual review of the special use permit to determine if the use is still a good fit for the township.
- Impervious surface runoff must be collected and released into a pond overflow structure that is maintained and routed so as to not harm neighbors.

Member Rapin had some similar suggestions as well as a few extras, including:

- Regulating the volume of intake/output by cubic yards, acres, or percentage of land used.
- Require registration with EGLE
- Require a downward filtration carbon system, like the one Wormies intends to use, to cut down on the smell of the input material.

Member Korstange suggested Planning Director Hilbrands speak with EGLE to see if the property is far enough from the airport, both horizontally and vertically as well as what kind of worms are generally used (and which worms are being used by Wormies) to verify that they are not an invasive species. She also suggested they define the different types of intakes currently being used, such as yard waste/leaves, food scraps, and others. Wormies uses woodchips rather than yard waste which means they aren't required to register with the state.

Member Rapin proposed requiring the sorting out of inorganic material to take place in an enclosed space to cut down on odor effecting other residents. Leslie Abdoo stated that processing could be required to be indoors, in an industrial zoned area, and the

other processes could be in ARC zoned areas. She said that the committee may need to include general requirements that are different for each step of the process including sorting, processing, etc.

Another suggestion was to allow vermiculture in ARC until it reaches a certain size and then it is only permitted in industrial zoned areas. A different option would be to allow outdoor sorting of materials in ARC zoned areas if it is only the sorting of organic materials, but if the sorting begins to require the removal of inorganic materials, it must be done indoors or in an industrial zoned area.

Liquid fertilizer and the fertilizer enhancement experimentation lab were viewed as more industrial than ARC by Member Korstange due to safety reasons.

Member Rissi requested Planning Director Hilbrands ask EGLE what they see happening or what do they think should be allowed for size of property requirements based on input and output, but also what would be appropriate as based on physical space and percentage of active use. He also suggested 10 acres be the minimum size of the property for this kind of special use.

ARTICLE 10. Goals of Next Meeting

The goal for the next meeting is for Planning Director Hilbrands to compile the conditions and regulations discussed at this meeting so that they can be reviewed and refined. Eventually, a draft ordinance will be created which will be sent to the whole Planning Commission and eventually the Township Board for approval. It was mentioned that the final ordinance would have to be enforceable by the Township because EGLE doesn't currently have the capacity to monitor and enforce this type of ordinance.

ARTICLE 11. Any Other Business

There was not any other business to discuss.

ARTICLE 12. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There were not any visitors who wished to speak.

ARTICLE 13. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Korstange to adjourn. Supported by Member Deering. Motion carried 4 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Stine, Management Office Administrative Assistant