

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Planning Commission
Composting-Use Sub-Committee
Tuesday May 3, 2022
7:30 A.M.
5920 Tahoe Dr.

ARTICLE 1. Member Rissi called the meeting to order at 7:30 A.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 Rapin. 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. Brief Discussion on Information Staff Collected
Planning Director Hilbrands worked with Foster & Swift to prepare a list of possible conditions and regulations that could be included as part of a special land use requirement for vermiculture/composting in the ARC zoning district, based on the discussion held at the April 29 subcommittee meeting.
Member Rapin liked that the draft conditions didn't allow for the stockpiling of waste.
Member Korstange suggested using the state's limit of 5,000 cubic yards per acre or 2,000 cubic yards of waste as the maximum amount of waste being processed at any one time. Wormies' proposal used the state's definition of a 'small operation' being 3,000 cubic yards with a maximum of 2,500 cubic yards on thirteen acres with up to 1,000 cubic yards of food waste. On page nine of the Wormies proposal they listed the maximum height of the piles allowed and stated that they were targeting a maximum of 2,400 cubic yards per year. The same section also mentioned farms that Wormies believed had much higher and larger waste piles that what they intended to utilize. The subcommittee wondered which farms those were and if they are solely manure piles. They suspected that those may be in Bowling Township or Lowell. Lawyer Abdoo explained that those type of piles fall under the 'Right to Farm' designation. Member Rissi suggested requesting a list of these locations from Wormies and reaching out to a few of them.

Member Rissi reminded the committee that they may want to set a minimum amount to be considered a vermiculture facility in the amendment so that residents that have it in their back yard for personal use aren't required to follow the same rules as corporations.

The subcommittee went through the conditions and regulations Planning Director Hilbrands had prepared and agreed on the stipulations of distance of the active vermiculture area to the property line and neighboring building but suggested that if the distance is less than 400ft, berming or screening would be required with the absolute minimum allowed (even with berming, screening, or fencing) as 250 ft. Member Rissi asked if that would apply to the distance from the resident's own home, if they had built on the property and Lawyer Abdo said that it would only relate to adjoining parcels.

The potential to have a house on the property with the vermiculture site brought about the question as to what would be considered the principal use. Member Rissi said that he believed they should be able to live on the property as a primary residence because that would give them a better hold on the operations of the business. The suggestions were to allow two principal uses for the land or list one as a primary and one as a secondary use. Lawyer Abdo mentioned that they could distinguish vermiculture as an accessory land use with specific requirements rather than calling it the principal use. Member Korstange suggested splitting the parcel and using one of the resultant pieces of property as a principal residence and the other as commercial.

Member Korstange recommended requiring applicants to register their facility with the state within one year of their SUP being approved. Member Rissi also suggested limiting the active composting area to 20% (including the composting rows and bins) and requiring at least 50% be left to natural or other (non-composting) uses; this would leave the other 30% for areas such as driveways, lawns, and some of the setback area. There was discussion as to if composting that occurs in a building should be included in the 20%. Some thought that, if the active composting area were to include buildings where composting is occurring, the percentage available for active composting should be increased to 25-30%. There was discussion as to if the term they should be using is 'composting activity' or 'active use'. Member Rapin suggested phrasing it as to suggest they can use 30% of the property for operational use.

The committee considered limiting the hours of operation from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. but then talked about requiring them to meet stricter lighting and sound restrictions outside of the aforementioned time frame. This would still allow them to operate outside of those hours because it would not affect the neighbors if they were doing quiet and/or inside work at night if it didn't violate sound and lighting ordinances.

Another priority of the committee was to make sure that unpleasant odors and trash wouldn't end up on the neighbor's property. They thought one way to prevent this would be to require an annual review of the SUP for one to three years. The neighbors would be notified the date of the review so they could come to the meeting and tell the commission if they don't believe the neighbor is following the commission's requirements. Members Rapin and Deering recommended requiring the company to

keep a log of all material coming in and out of the facility. The company would then need to submit that log at their review each year one is held. They suggested performing the reviews for a minimum of two years and then at the discretion of the Planning Commission. Lawyer Abdo clarified that, if they are including a provision for reviews, the reviews can start again, even years later, as long as the company is given adequate notice.

“Impervious runoff” was changed to “Meets the stormwater ordinance”. There was discussion as to who controls the soil/compost leaving the site and it was determined that depends on if it’s just soil leaving the site or if the soil is leaving the site via stormwater runoff. Member Rapin requested the addition of a statement that said this is not an exhaustive list of all possible ordinances to be met.

ARTICLE 6. Next Sub-Committee Meetings Schedule

The next meeting was planned for Thursday, May 12 at 7:30 A.M.

Member Rapin left at 8:38am.

Conversation returned to the conditions and regulations. The committee contemplated regulating volume by the percentage of land used with an annual number of cubic yards that may not be exceeded. For example, not exceeding 3,000 cubic yards annually for a 20,000-acre parcel. Parcels larger than 20,000 cubic yards would require approval on a case-by-case basis. This would allow small to mid-sized vermiculture units to form in Cascade but would require additional approval and information for large facilities to open. There was conversation to consider requiring negative aeration systems like the one Wormies intends on installing to minimize unpleasant odors.

There were questions as to which breeds of worms can be used for vermiculture and if they are native to the area; Planning Director Hilbrands will ask EGLE about this.

The subcommittee talked about limiting what types of intakes are allowed in the different zoning areas such as organic and inorganic. Organic waste is the type vermiculture utilizes but there is generally some amount of inorganic waste that comes in with it. One suggestion was to require facilities that generate more than one cubic yard of inorganic waste per month, from sorting, to be located in the industrial zoning district. This would only require their sorting portion of the process to move into the industrial district; the other steps of the vermiculture process could still take place in the agricultural zoning district.

Hours of operation for the retail part of the process were to fit into what are generally considered normal business hours for a store. There was discussion as to if incoming waste should be required to be covered or enclosed.

ARTICLE 7. Any Other Business

There was not any other business to discuss.

ARTICLE 8. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There were not any visitors who wished to speak.

ARTICLE 9. Adjournment

**Motion was made by Member Korstange to adjourn. Supported by Member Deering.
Motion carried 3 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 A.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Stine, Management Office Administrative Assistant