

Vice-Chairperson VanDyke called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Other members present:

Duane Anderson, Troy Goodno, Paul Herremans. Zoning Administrator Julie Lovelace was also present as well as attorney Cliff Bloom.

Agenda Approval-

Motion by Goodno to approve the agenda. Second-Herremans, motion carries.

Public Comment- No public comment.

Approval of Minutes-

Motion by Herremans to adopt the minutes of November 22, 2021 with the following amendment. *Goodno did not attend the meeting remotely.* Second, Anderson, motion carries. Motion by Herremans to adopt the minutes of the Special Planning Commission of January 3, 2022 with the following amendments, *Goodno did not attend the meeting remotely, Motion to elect Denhof as Chairperson, Goodno-absent; Motion to elect VanDyke as Vice Chair, Goodno, absent.* Second by Anderson, motion carries.

Public Hearing-

Public Hearing-Farm Labor Housing Ordinance

Attorney Bloom gave a summary of the proposed ordinance and changes made since the previous draft. Attorney Bloom read through all of the standards in section F.

Motion by Goodno to open the public hearing, second by Herremans. Motion carries.

Callie Melton, 1340 Hoover. Explained that a resident asked for a decrease in his assessment because he lives across from a farm labor camp. She is in favor of H2A labor, thinks the ordinance is too restrictive. Better communication from the township is needed.

Lawrence Williams, 1100-18 mile Rd. Kent City. Presented an overview of the H2A program and the impact it has on the agriculture sector. Explained how his migrant labor camp was run. Stated that no restrictions are necessary.

Courtney VanOffelen, 1575 Hoover St. Questioned the reason for the ordinance. Should not base on numbers. The special use permit presents challenges. Farmers should not have to give up their land value with a deed restriction.

Ken Hubert, 2732 Crockery Shores. Would more camps be better when the labor is only needed for 30 days?

Dave Dolphin, 811 Coolidge. He did not know anything about the meeting. Has concerns about the number of farm laborers at the site. Considers it a commercial business.

Fred Rasch, 467 Coolidge. He has employed H2A workers since 2017. Would like to see the township put restrictions on the number of people in a camp.

Ron Rasch, 6001 Stage, Grand Rapids. He has farms in four counties. A larger camp is able to consolidate the need for multiple smaller camps. If Michigan has to pay overtime wages to agriculture workers there would be a need for 50% more employees.

Matt Rasch, 439 Coolidge. Only needs help 30 days/ year. The busses are taking people to work.

Ben Barkow, 19722 Conklin St. Why did the board put a moratorium on building migrant housing? This is a bad ordinance. There is no comprehension of the needs of the growers. This ordinance misses the mark. 150-200 is a better size limit.

Al Dietrich, 1567 Wilson. The deed restriction is an unreasonable request.

Bruce Rasch, 1380 Coolidge. Has a camp on Coolidge. He built the drain field to expand. The proposed ordinance would not allow him to do that.

Mike Dietrich, 1201 Wilson. There was no discussion of the 5 mile limit or deed restriction at the January 3rd meeting. He has one of the largest camps in the township and it is in his back yard. Mr. Bloom is the only one making money and the residents are paying for it.

Chuck Rasch, 452 Harding. This is a farming community. Agriculture is important. Something needs to be in place. Need to be neighborly.

Denise Kober, 8900 Peach Ridge. These restrictions are tying farmers hands. There is always going to be changes to the area. These are good people, and we are blessed to have them. The farmer would go out of business without H2A workers.

Dwight Sheridan, 23408-36th Ave. He is looking at the ordinance from a public safety perspective. He has been a firefighter for 40 years. There is no building permit required for construction. Larger camps can be a drain on public services. Township has no control and that is unfortunate.

Zoning Administrator explained why the public hearing process is important.

Motion by Herremans to Close Public Hearing, second by Goodno. Motion carries.

Board deliberated. Asked the attorney to revise the draft to set the limit to 175 allowed without a special use required. Remove the 5 mile limit and the deed restriction. Still conform to the setback. Drop 2 and 3 and all of H.

Motion by Herremans to postpone until the board receives the revised ordinance, second by Goodno. Motion carries.

New Business-

Planning Commission Annual Report- The Annual Report was presented to the board. Motion by Herremans to accept the report, second by Goodno. Motion carries.

Master Plan- Will have a report of the surveys and workshop data for the board next month.

Old Business-

Ponds (Scheidel & Brown) Zoning Administrator Lovelace reviewed the status of the nonconforming ponds. Still waiting on a survey.

Board Reports

Township Board-none

Zoning Board of Appeals-none

Planning Commission Discussion-None

Adjournment- Motion by Goodno, second by Herremans to adjourn at 9:26 p.m. Motion carries.

Next Meeting February 28, 2022

Helen Dietrich
Chester Township Clerk

(Any document referenced in these minutes is on file in the Clerk's office