

**MINUTES  
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, August 8, 2023 --- 7:00 p.m.**

**Big Rapids Township Hall, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307**

**I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson Amanda Wethington called the regular meeting of the Big Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission to order at the township hall on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Carman Bean, Zach Cook, Mary Davis, Gordon Oliver, Jeff Oosterhouse, Mark Sweppenheiser and Amanda Wethington. The record shows there is a quorum. Also present: William Stanek, Supervisor and Timothy Kleinheksel, Zoning Administrator and Recording Secretary.

**III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

Mrs. Wethington asked if any of the Commission members had known conflicts of interest with any of the items on the agenda for this meeting. Mrs. Davis indicated that a conflict of interest existed with the Johnson special use permit.

**IV. MINUTES:**

Mrs. Wethington asked the Commission members to review the minutes of the June 13, 2023 meeting. Mrs. Davis made a motion to approve the June 13, 2023 minutes as submitted. Mr. Oliver supported the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with seven ayes.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING SUP23-004 MICHELLE JOHNSON:**

SUP23-004 is an application by Michelle and Jeremiah Johnson for a special use permit to allow an outdoor drone course in the agricultural zoning district, as well as expanding hours to 24/7. The location of the property is 12185 Northland Drive, Big Rapids Township. Being a property owner adjacent to the property, Mrs. Davis was excused from the meeting. Mrs. Wethington called the public hearing to order at 7:01 pm. Mr. Johnson presented the application to fly small drones outside and to expand hours to 24/7. Mr. James Davis, homeowner adjacent to the Johnson property, expressed several concerns on the proposed permit. Included in his concerns were the affect it could have on hunting nearby – drones emit a high pitch that could keep wildlife away from the area; general noise concerns if property owners would be having an outdoor event; if a net or other barrier were erected it could be an eyesore; if a drone crashed into a tree, it may be a fire hazard; prospective property buyers could be swayed against purchase of nearby land. Mr. Davis stated that he was opposed to the indoor permit that was issued in 2018, but he abides by the commission's approval.

Hearing no additional public input, Mrs. Wethington closed the public hearing at 7:11 p.m.

**VI. ACTION ON SUP23-004 MICHELLE JOHNSON:**

Mr. Johnson presented the details of flying recreational drones outdoors and stated that the expanded hours were being requested to be able to work on drones at the facility after normal public hours. He stated that in the past there was a letter sent from the Township regarding occupation of the building after hours. Mr. Bean asked if the infraction was due to someone residing at the premises. Mr. Kleinheksel stated that there were vehicles parked overnight and when approached in the early morning, Mr. Johnson claimed they were working late on drywall and decided to sleep there. Mr. Sweppenheiser suggested the request for extended hours would be just so they could be there overnight. Mrs. Wethington stated that it appeared that someone was living there because she often observed vehicles at the property late at night and early in the morning. Mr. Sweppenheiser stated that there was no site plan presented with the application. An extended discussion by Commission members followed. After this discussion, Mr. Sweppenheiser made a motion to table the application until a site plan is presented. Mr. Bean supported the motion adding that the site plan should include the fly zone for the course. The motion passed unanimously with seven ayes via roll call vote.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Patti Downey brought the subject of the Routley Septic Service application to EGLE – stated that she asked the Township for copies of the application and received only a copy of a letter addressed to whom it may concern along with a general document. These were the only documents that were presented to the Township. Stating this is a commercial operation in an agricultural zoning district, she asked if she may file a complaint. Mr. Bean stated that she could file a complaint and that he will look at the application and follow up with her. An adjacent property owner expressed concern of her adjacent property value – Mr. Bean stated he would find an answer for her.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Hearing no further business for the Planning Commission, Mrs. Wethington adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

**APPROVAL:** Action taken at the regular meeting of September 12, 2023: Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of August 8, 2023 by: Mrs. Davis. Supported by: Mr. Cook. Motion carried with seven ayes.

Timothy Kleinheksel,  
Timothy Kleinheksel, Recording Secretary  
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION

September 12, 2023  
Date Approved