

MINUTES
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, December 12, 2023 --- 7:00 p.m.

Big Rapids Township Hall, 14230 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, December 12, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Zach Cook, Mary Davis, Jerry Everett, Gordon Oliver, Jeff Oosterhouse, Mark Sweppenheiser and Amanda Wethington. The record shows there is a quorum. Also present: 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. Mr. Sweppenheiser and Mr. Everett indicated that a conflict of interest existed with the ARC special use permit.

IV. MINUTES:

Mrs. Wethington asked the Commission members to review the minutes of the October 10, 2023 meeting. Mr. Oliver made a motion to approve the October 10, 2023 minutes as submitted. Mrs. Davis supported the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with seven ayes.

V. PUBLIC HEARING SUP23-008 ARC:

Mr. Sweppenheiser and Mr. Everett reclused themselves from the meeting. SUP23-008 is an application by Animal Rescue Coalition to operate an animal shelter in the Agricultural and A-Residential zoning districts at the existing property at 19100 15 Mile Road, Big Rapids Township Parcel # 5405-014-002-000. Mrs. Wethington opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. Ms. Cate Arroe, director of the Animal Rescue Coalition of Mecosta County, introduced the request for special use by saying a lot of residents in the area do not know what to expect. There will not be wild animals making a lot of noise, at the current location a close neighbor said they were never bothered by noise. The ARC is looking to locate the facility close to the concrete plant, not by the river. Sounds from the facility would be no more than a typical neighborhood with pets. The building will face south with dog kennels on the north side of the building. They are planning to walk the dogs on the property and not on the road.

The following residents sent correspondence to the Township regarding this application: Tim Burns, Rosemary Kailing, Gregory and Diane Jones, Brian and Kathy Walch, David White, Bill Schoenlein, John McLane, Ormand and Teri Hook, Jerome and Rita Conrad, John Losey, Wayne Bailey, Ronald and Michelle Welch, Jon and Barbara Wiseman, Elizabeth Solis, Art and Peg Tetzlaff, David Chipman, James and Jan Fortino, William Bloomfield. Discussion during the public hearing focused on the same concerns written by residents including: noise of barking dogs, increased traffic, decreased property values, possibility people abandoning animals near the shelter, etc. It was also pointed out that there are many other locations within the county that would be better suited for the operation of an animal shelter. After discussion and questions regarding these concerns, Mr. Bill Schoenlein brought to light the fact that the permit application was not complete due to the fact that a Class B site plan required for commercial use was not provided and requested that the Planning Commission return or table action on the application. The public hearing was closed at 7:53 p.m.

VI. ACTION ON SUP23-008 ARC:

The Commission members reviewed SUP23-008 and the public discussion and recommendations. After discussion, Mr. Oosterhouse made a motion to table SUP23-008 request for Special Use Permit pending receipt of a complete Class B site plan from the ARC. Mrs. Davis supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comments included question regarding action on a special use application – does the Planning Commission forward the application to the Township Board of Trustees? Answer: No. Question: will a subsequent meeting of this application include a public hearing? Answer: No. Question: Does the Township have a noise ordinance? Answer: No. Also reiterated was that ARC has many other re-location properties within the county. Question regarding property taxes – Answer: ARC is non-profit and does not pay property taxes.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Wethington adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

APPROVAL: Action taken at the regular meeting of January 23, 2024: Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of December 12, 2023 by: Mr. Oliver. Supported by: Mr. Sweppenheiser. Motion carried with five ayes.

Timothy Kleinheksel,
Timothy Kleinheksel, Recording Secretary
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
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January 23, 2024
Date Approved

