

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 11, 2016**

PRESENT: Blough, Batchelor, Simmonds, Clements, Edwards
TOWNSHIP PLANNER: Tim Johnson
CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE: 17

The regular meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Simmonds at 7:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Public Hearings and Regular Meeting of March 14, 2016 were presented for approval. Mr. Edwards moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the Minutes of March 14, 2016 are approved.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

There were no changes to the Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The meeting was opened to public comment at 7:02 pm. Ten people spoke. Public comment was closed at 8:04 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Review of Heidi's Special Use Permits

Mr. Blough excused himself from participation in the Annual Review.

A. Farm Market

Aaron Caeb presented on behalf of Heidi's Farm Market. A written update was distributed to members of the Planning Commission. He indicated that farm products are the biggest sales and growth category for them. Greenhouses give them an early start on producing some vegetables for sale. They also offer hanging baskets and flowers now. As funds permit, they will be shifting the Cascade Avenue drive further West.

There being no further comments or questions, Mr. Edwards moved to confirm that the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission has reviewed the Heidi's Farm Market Special Use Permit and finds that it is in compliance with the Special Use Permit and its conditions granted in September 2007 and that the next annual review will be held in April 2017. Motion seconded by Mr. Batchelor. All in favor and the Special Use Permit is approved for another year.

B. Corn Maze

A written update and a map showing the location of the pumpkin patch and corn maze in 2016 were distributed to members of the Planning Commission. Mr. Caeb indicated that more parking for the corn maze has been added, and that there had been no parking overflow last year. A wider grass strip is now maintained to better separate the corn maze from the adjacent roadway.

There being no further comments or questions, Mr. Batchelor moved to confirm that the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission has reviewed the Heidi's Corn Maze Special Use Permit and finds that it is in compliance with the Special Use Permit and its conditions granted in August 2007 and that the next annual review will be held in April 2017. Motion seconded by Mr. Clements. All in favor and the Special Use Permit is approved for another year.

Mr. Blough rejoined the rest of the Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Amendments to Sign Ordinance

Tim Johnson reviewed his Proposed Amendments to the Lowell Township Zoning Ordinance with respect to the current Sign Ordinance, dated April 11, 2016. With respect to the distinction between “portable” and “temporary” signs in the current Ordinance, after discussion it was decided to instead address signs as being either “permanent” or “non-permanent”. Some proposed items will require further consideration. This matter will be reviewed in greater detail at a future meeting.

Discussion of Home Based Business Ordinance

Tim Johnson reviewed his Discussion Paper on Home Based Business Regulations dated November 23, 2015. Mr. Simmonds noted that the current Ordinance language is short and significantly limits business activities in non-business districts. In addressing a new ordinance, a distinction may be drawn between “home occupation” and “home based business”.

Discussed were possible distinctions between single owner businesses, family businesses where all employees reside in the same home, and the use of outside employees or independent contractors. There was a preference expressed for managing these businesses through licensing rather than through a requirement for a Special Use Permit. It was decided that discussion should continue at the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission, after members have had a chance to review an Ordinance enacted by the City of Saline in Washtenaw County, Michigan, and another one from Howell Township, Livingston County, Michigan.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

It was determined that there was no need for a Workshop Meeting on April 25th.

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ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Edwards moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the Regular Meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Submitted _____ Secretary
Timothy Clements

Approved _____