

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 8, 2019**

**PRESENT:** Blough, Batchelor, Simmonds, Clements, Edwards

**TOWNSHIP PLANNER:** Tim Johnson

**CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE:** 6

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 Regular Meeting of March 11, 2019 and the Findings of Fact for BMG Holdings Special Land Use & Site Plan Request for Maple Ridge Home for the Aged were presented for approval. Mr. Edwards moved to approve the Minutes and the Findings of Fact as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the Minutes of March 11, 2019 and the BMG Holdings Findings of Fact are approved.

**CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

There were no changes or additions to the Agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

Public comment was opened at 7:03 pm. Two people spoke. Public comment was closed at 7:20 pm.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Annual Review of Special Use Permits**

Mr. Blough recused himself from participation in the two annual reviews.

**Heidi's Farm Market**

Aaron Kaeb presented on behalf of Heidi's Farm Market. A written summary of information was presented, with a drawing and photographs. A porch was added to the front of the Market last year. Plans for next year include increasing retail space by using the porches for sales. Offering more early season fruits and vegetables is planned.

There being no further questions or comments from members of the Planning Commission, Mr. Batchelor 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 2020. Motion seconded by Mr. Edwards. All in favor and the motion is approved.

### **Heidi's Corn Maze**

Aaron Kaeb presented on behalf of Heidi's Corn Maze. A written summary of information was presented, with a drawing and photographs. The maze will be located North of Heidi's Farm Market this year. Parking will be unchanged. Some lighting will be added. Attendance at the corn maze was down last year, due to weather.

Chairperson Simmonds asked about their plan to have the maze open until later in the evening this year. He was advised that it is now open Friday and Saturday until 10:00 pm. If hours are to be extended for other nights of the week, Mr. Kaeb will return to the Planning Commission to get approval of those additional hours.

There being no further questions or comments from members of the Planning Commission, Mr. Edwards 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 2020. Motion seconded by Mr. Batchelor. All in favor and the motion is approved.

Mr. Blough rejoined the other members of the Planning Commission.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

There was no unfinished business.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **a. Request from RRR Lawn and Landscaping to amend the Special Land Use granted on November 12, 2018**

Applicants were not present. The request by Applicants was made by letter dated March 13, 2019. Also provided was a new drawing of that part of the property used by their home-based business, and topographical information. The requested amendment was to allow substitution of a row of screening spruce trees in place of a lean-to type structure.

Also reviewed was Planner Johnson's Memorandum of April 5, 2019 relating to the requested amendment.

Mr. Batchelor pointed out that in October 2018 Applicants has stated that spruce trees would not grow in the now-requested location. Mr. Blough felt that any tree screening would require two or three rows of trees rather than the single row proposed. It was also observed that the current pole barn is 18 feet tall, meaning the proposed trees would be six feet shorter than the lean-to

shed previously approved. The Planning Commission felt that the proposed spruce trees would not be a permanent solution.

A screening fence or wall was next discussed. These would be limited by Ordinance to six feet in height, which would not provide the necessary screening. Mr. Clements again raised the possibility of reversing the parking areas for cars and for equipment on either side of the current pole barn. He was advised that changes have been made which would now prevent acceptable screening from this reversal.

Planner Johnson stated that the Planning Commission needed to determine if the requested change is Major or Minor. A Major change would require another Public Hearing. Mr. Blough saw this as a Major change, and other members of the Planning Commission agreed.

There being no further questions or comments, Chairperson Simmonds moved that the Planning Commission advise RRR Lawn and Landscaping that the Plan presented with the letter of March 13, 2019 is not acceptable, and that if the Applicants wish to pursue their Amended Special Use Permit request, it would be considered a Major change. Motion seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the requested amendment is denied.

#### **b. Master Plan Update: Discuss Public input options**

Chairperson Simmonds proposed that the Planning Commission review the current Master Plan, make any changes under consideration, then put out the draft revised Master Plan for public comment. Holding an 'Open House' would be one way of encouraging public input. Mr. Blough suggested using the Township web site to solicit input, and it was decided to use that approach as well as the Open House. A third method to be used will be through the Township's mailing contact list.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Mr. Blough advised that the County Fair group had held a fundraiser and has enough money to construct a swine barn.

Mr. Clements asked about dirt currently piled at the front of the Fairground property. This has remained due to weather conditions, and will be addressed when weather permits.

Mr. Edwards noted that the Fair plans on using a lagoon style waste handling system due to permeability issues with the ground in that area.

Mr. Batchelor added that, up to this point, the Planning Commission has not been involved in development of the Fairgrounds. Only the Kent County Road Commission has been involved, regarding entrances onto Cascade Road.

There will be no workshop on April 22, 2019.

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**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Batchelor moved to adjourn. Motion seconded by Mr. Edwards. All in favor and the Regular Meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Submitted \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

Timothy Clements

Approved \_\_\_\_\_