

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
February 8, 2021**

Held by Teleconference

PRESENT: Blough, Simmonds, Clements, Edwards

ABSENT: Batchelor

TOWNSHIP PLANNER: Tim Johnson

CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE: 3

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2021 REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING:

Mr. Edwards moved that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of January 11, 2021 be approved as submitted. Motion seconded by Chairperson Simmonds. All in favor and the Minutes of the Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of January 11, 2021 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:

The meeting was opened to public comment at 7:02 pm. No one spoke. Public comment was closed at 7:02 pm.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Findings of Fact for Lowell Retail Management

Mr. Clements moved to approve the Findings of Fact for Lowell Retail Management as submitted, for incorporation into the Minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting of January 11, 2021. Motion seconded by Mr. Edwards. All in favor and the Findings of Fact as submitted are approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Red Creek Waste Services-Site Plan Review for a waste transfer facility

Steve Witte presented with Eric Schelhaas also in attendance. The property is currently being used for trash collection by Red Creek Waste Services. The request is for construction of a 4800 square foot building and related parking on the same property, which will be used to move trash

from the smaller trucks used for trash collection, to larger trucks which will transport that trash to a landfill off the property. This building was shown on the original site plan of 2015 as a future Phase 2 development on the land.

Tim Johnson presented his report of February 1, 2021 regarding the Site Plan Approval Request. The Special Land Use previously approved included the waste transfer facility but the building shown on the original Site Plan was not approved at that time, as Applicants were not ready to construct it in 2015.

Four issues were addressed. First, Applicant has requested relief from the requirement to provide a photometric plan. Two building-mounted lights are proposed. If the same fixtures as were used in 2015 are also used here, the need for a photometric plan would not seem to be needed.

Second, Applicant has requested relief from the requirement to provide a building elevation drawing. The building is 1000 feet from the roadway, and will generally match the current building on the property. In this case the building elevation drawing would not seem to be needed. Mr. Blough commented on the visibility of the new building from the road. Both the leaves on existing trees and the old building on the property screen this new building from Alden Nash.

Third, no evergreen trees have been planted on the North property line, nor two trees required in the truck parking area. After discussion it was determined that a berm on the North side of the property was used instead of trees, due to the detrimental impact the originally proposed trees would have on the neighboring property. No trees on the berm will be required. The two trees shown on the Site Plan by the parking area need to be installed.

Finally, while the storm water management provisions were approved for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 in 2015, the Planning Commission could require an 'as built' review. As this would be an unusual requirement, and there did not appear to be any significant change impacting on the original provisions, this will not be required.

Chairperson Simmonds asked about any complaints received from neighbors, and was advised by Mr. Hale and Mr. Blough that there were no complaints.

Mr. Johnson also recommended that the Applicant provide copies of any approvals required by the State of Michigan and Kent County prior to issuance of a building permit, and that Applicant should provide two copies of the site plan for the signature of the Planning Commission Chairman and a digital copy of the final site plan to the Zoning Administrator.

There being no further questions or comments by members of the Planning Commission, Chairperson Simmonds moved to approve the Red Creek Waste Services Site Plan dated January 11, 2021 for the proposed waste transfer facility as presented, subject to the following conditions:

1. A cut sheet for the shielded lighting fixtures on the transfer building shall be provided.
2. Applicant must install the two trees shown on the 2015 Site Plan.

3. Copies of all required State of Michigan and Kent County permits must be submitted before a building permit will be issued.

4. Two copies of the January 11, 2021 Site Plan shall be submitted for signing by the Planning Commission Chairman, and a digital copy of the final Site Plan shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator.

Motion seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the Site Plan of January 11, 2021 is approved subject to the conditions stated.

My Storage Great Lakes-Preliminary review of Site Plan and Special Use Permit for storage facility

Rick Postema presented on behalf of David Dean doing business as My Storage Great Lakes LLC. Applicant is requesting permission to install 107 pre-manufactured storage units along the North line of the property located at 13595 Grand River Avenue, which is on the northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Jackson Street. Drives would be crushed rock, which will reduce current runoff amounts. Paved surfaces would require a rainwater management plan, which would not be cost effective for Applicant.

Applicant requests the setback distance on the North side of the property be reduced to seventeen feet. There is an abandoned railroad line abutting the North side of the property, which will be used as a bike trail by the Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA). LARA would not object to the reduced setback distance if an eight-foot wood board fence is installed along the property line.

The drive on the East side of the property will be widened to 24 feet wide with two-way traffic. Storage units will be accessed by seventeen-foot one-way drives. Landscaping can be adjusted to three trees for every 50 feet of road frontage. Tim Johnson has indicated that lighting looks fine but lumens on the property will need to be verified. Mr. Johnson would also like more clarification of the uses being made of the property currently, which will be done. The survey will be redone to correct some small errors and also to include bearings and lengths for the perimeter of the property.

Chairperson Simmonds confirmed that driveway changes will be shown on the revised site plan. He also advised Applicant that a variance for the setback on the North side of the property could be very hard to get from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that the property is zoned for Light Industrial and that storage was allowed as a Special Land Use. He indicated that at this time the question for the Planning Commission is when should a public hearing be held.

There will be two sizes of storage units, with access through a gate controlled by access cards. The storage units will be located on 'rail' or 'ribbon' foundations made of concrete. Mr. Postema indicated that even with the addition of the storage units water runoff from the property will be reduced.

There are two existing buildings on the property. One is being partly used by Noon Tire for on-site sales and service. The other is being used by Addix Sportwear for manufacturing and wholesale only sales. There would be unified parking and signage for all businesses. The west side of the building currently used by Noon Tire is currently vacant, and would be used to assemble portable storage units for use on other properties.

Mr. Edwards raised Section 4.06 of the Zoning Ordinance, addressing one building for the main use and other buildings being normal accessory buildings for that business. Mr. Johnson also expressed concern about being able to split the use of a single business.

Chairperson Simmonds noted that Applicant is entitled to make the greatest use of his property, if he can make it work within the terms of the Ordinance. Mr. Johnson has concerns about access by delivery trucks and employee parking. Any outside storage would need to be removed. Current buildings may be legal non-confirming uses, but otherwise they may need to be brought up to current code requirements.

An eight foot fence is allowed in a Light Industrial zone. Questions remain as to traffic congestion, the drives, lighting, and facade requirements on buildings. Parking calculations may contain an error. Striping of parking spaces on crushed rock would need to be addressed; Applicant suggested use of parking bumpers to delineate spaces. Clear sight issues remain to be resolved.

Applicant reiterated that requiring paved drives would render the proposed project unfeasible financially. This was discussed at length, including the impact of only portions of the drive being paved, and under what conditions the need for a water retention plan might be triggered. It was decided that all crushed rock drives could be acceptable if parking designation could be worked out.

Chairperson Simmonds reiterated that a zoning variance could be the most important issue at this point, unless Applicant can reduce the number of storage units to comply with setback requirements. Mr. Postema stated that an exchange of the storage and parking locations might be feasible if that would resolve the setback issue.

Chairperson Simmonds advised Applicant that much needs to be done before a public hearing could be set. He would like to see a revised Site Plan, a narrative on the plans of the owner and how these various activities will fit together. Mr. Johnson suggested that any planned zoning variance request be made before revising the Site Plan. Applicant will either need to obtain a variance or reconfigure the Site Plan, then bring that back for further review. Other members of the Planning Commission agreed.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Blough has sent out the Fire and Emergency Charges Plan to members of the Planning Commission for comment.

Chairperson Simmonds indicated that there would be no workshop meeting on February 22, 2021.

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Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Edwards. Motion seconded by Mr. Blough. All in favor and the Regular Meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Submitted _____ Secretary

Timothy Clements

Approved _____