

Approved April 17th

Casco Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

March 20th 2024

6:00 PM

Casco Township Hall

Members Present: Andy **Litts**, Dian **Liepe**, Dan **Fleming**, Kelly **Hecker** Greg **Knisley**, Ryan **Brush**, Irene **Wood**

Members Absent:

Audience: Brian DeBest, Basel Aquel

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman **Litts** 6:00PM
2. Review and approve agenda: Discussions Re: the Michigan Farm Bureau memo backing a petition to repeal state's energy siting overreach, the South Haven Community 2023 Housing Analysis, the City of South Haven Master Plan Update, and an Allegan County Groundwater Symposium were added to the Agenda. A motion was made by **Hecker** to approve the agenda, supported by **Fleming**. All in favor. Motion carried.
3. Public comment: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by **Fleming** to approve the January 14, 2024 minutes, supported by **Hecker**. All in favor. Motion carried.
6. Public Hearing: None
7. New Business:

a. Brian DeBest Discussion Re: possible text amendment to allow storage/office in AG zone or conditional rezone to C-2 for storage office; 107-72nd St 02-031-006-01.

DeBest has a vacant lot adjacent to his landscaping business that he would initially like to build a 10-20,000 square foot building on and rent out storage and office space. Ultimately, there could be 3 buildings with 3-4 units in each building. The storage could be an open area for large vehicles like boats or partitioned off for a private area. All of the storage would be indoors. The office rental could be anything from an Insurance office to a contractor that would utilize both the office and the storage space. He would like to start construction June or July of this year.

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DeBest would prefer to rezone both of these properties to bring the landscaping business into compliance. Smalley stated that it could be possible to approve a text amendment or a conditional rezoning within 2-3 months' time. Knisley remarked that the use had been going on for years, without complaint. DeBest commented that Spencer Manufacturing had been there for years and the property is located very close to the US 31 / I96 Expressway off ramps.

Litts asked if DeBest had support from the neighbors. DeBest responded that he did. Fleming commented that not allowing this kind of change is a taking and just slows down the economy.

Hecker stated that she struggles with preserving the rural character and losing the AG land. Liepe remarked that allowing storage use would not hurt the farms. Smalley agreed that this kind of use is one of the least intense of the commercial uses.

"Mini-storage" is already allowed in AG. Smalley commented that offices require bathrooms and there are sometimes problems with the ability to install commercial septic systems in the area. Further discussion Re: Home businesses and occupations, mixed-uses, lack of municipal facilities, additional traffic and architectural aesthetics/screening were all brought up as concerns.

Litts suggested a Public Hearing to allow Commercial Storage with Office Use in the AG District with a Special Land Use (SLU). Woods asked what would be quicker; the conditional rezoning or the text amendment. Smalley responded that the conditional rezoning would probably be the faster route. Liepe would like both to happen.

Liepe made a motion to have DeBest pursue the conditional rezoning to C2 and have Smalley work on a term for the mixed-use SLU language. Litts seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried. Fleming remarked that community character that they should be trying to protect is the use not the aesthetics.

b. Basel Aquel final Private Road Sun Bluff Court approval.

03-02-063-005-10 v/1 700 Blue Star Hwy

Smalley confirmed that the Private Road (PR) has been constructed accordingly to Section 3.26E and that the survey and maintenance agreement have been sent to be recorded with Allegan County and that the appropriate signage has been installed. Knisley asked if the lots having 3 fronts would still allow for enough of a building envelope to construct a home. Smalley assured him that they would.

Fleming made a motion to give final approval of Sun Bluff Court. Hecker seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

c. Master plan exercise –

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Kyle Mucha a senior planner from McKenna Associates will be attending the Master Plan (MP) workshop meeting scheduled for March 27th 2024. He is requesting input from the PC members to aid the development process. Mucha would like the PC to review the following items prior to this first working session.

- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Goals and objectives
- What elements should be carried over, updated or disregarded from the existing MP into the 2024 update

Litts requested that the PC members that would not be in attendance of this workshop please submit their notes so they can be discussed. Woods expressed her desire to support more commerce and industry. Woods would like to provide the farmers with affordable alternative uses for their property to help preserve the farmland. Fleming reiterated that Zoning runs contrary to the Constitution and is a taking of property rights.

d. Any other Business –

Litts reported that the Township supervisor has requested that 2 of the PC members attend the April 23rd Groundwater Workshop. Liepe and Fleming Gregory Volunteered.

Litts reported that he would be attending the South Haven Reasonable Housing meeting on March 21st. Fleming commented that allowing more than one dwelling per lot and would help. Smalley remarked that reducing the minimum dwelling requirements would also help.

Brush presented the Michigan Farm Bureau memo, looking for signatures and a recommendation to the Board members to look into the petition.

8. Old Business:

a. Signs, txt discussion –

Fleming, jokingly, made a motion to remove the sign ordinance. *Motion died for lack of Second.* Liepe commented that it is hard to police. Litts just wants to regulate Billboards or anything that would be a distraction or obstruction. Litts dislikes offsite signs as well. Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) regulates Billboards on their Highways.

The PC would like keep the Ordinance simple and just regulate clear vision at road intersections with setback rules (not in the ROW) and not allow signs with flashing lights. The size and the number of signs allowed should also be kept in the Ordinance.

b. Cisco Sand Mine Water Table Monitoring process

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Smalley presented a report that explained how Cisco measures the depth of the Water Table from the ground grade to the top of the water.

c. Any other Business –

Litts would like to discuss Home based businesses and occupations that are allowed at the next regular meeting.

9. Administrative reports:

Zoning Administrator – **Smalley** presented her itemized January 2024 Zoning Report. **Smalley** would also like to have a discussion about tiny homes and accessory dwelling units, but not till after the MP update.

Township Board Representative – **Fleming** reported that the Board had voted to re-zone the pool property - 7203 Lakeview that was in litigation back to its original zoning because of the court decision. The board also discussed a special assessment district to finance rock revetment and erosion control measures along Lake Michigan.

ZBA Representative – **Liepe** had nothing to report.

10. Public comment: None

11. Adjourn at 9:12 pm

Attachments: available upon request

Minutes prepared by:

Jennifer Goodrich, Recording Secretary