

**Princeton Township  
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

**Planning Commission Meeting**

**Monday, March 1, 2021**

**Minutes**

**Public Hearing**

On March 1, 6:00 p.m., Planning Commission Chair Cyndi MacDonald opened the public hearing. Due to the Governor's COVID restrictions the meeting was conducted remotely via GoToMeeting.

Commission members present: Cyndi MacDonald, David Persing, Cheryl Schimming, Kathy Stoeckel, Carol Whitcomb

Commission member absent: Tari Zortman

Also attending: Township Board Liaison Dan Hiller, Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Township Clerk Doug Dahl

**100-Acre Homestead**

James and Sara Rutten, 6360 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue, have applied for a conditional use permit to allow an event venue referred to as the 100-Acre Homestead.

Zoning Administrator Scott Richards summarized the application.

James and Sara Rutten have made application for a Conditional Use Permit to allow for an event venue/agritourism at 6360 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Applicants have indicated that they are requesting the permit to operate a pumpkin patch, petting zoo, and farm experience for people who want to learn about organic farming and homesteading. The property is 16.03 acres where the house is located and is accessed from 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The adjacent property, also owned by the Ruttens, is 85.49 acres and is accessed from 60<sup>th</sup> Street. The homestead of the property is at PID #16-001-0702; the pumpkin patch and ticket area is at PID #16-001-0704.

The property is zoned AC – Agricultural Conservation, in which event venue is a recently added conditional use. Section 300:052 of the Agricultural Conservation District was amended to add event venues and agritourism and Section 300:146 was added to specify the criteria.

Ms. MacDonald read a letter from Jarvis and Bridget Anderson expressing concerns about how the plan might affect neighboring property values. Sara Rutten responded that the homestead would only be operating about 10 days per year, and would not be operating near any neighboring properties. In response to a question from Carol Whitcomb, Ms. Rutten assured everyone that they have no intention of trying to re-zone any of their property to commercial.

Neighbor Phil Rewakowski spoke in favor of the plan, saying it would be a good addition to the neighborhood. Bridget Anderson concluded that her questions had been answered, and spoke in favor of the plan.

**David Kepple Preliminary Plat Application**

David Kepple has submitted a preliminary plat application referred to as Kepple Addition at 2601 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Mr. Richards summarized the application.

David Kepple has made application for a Preliminary Plat located north of Highway 95 in Section 26 at 2601 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue. PID 16-026-0600. The proposed subdivision consists of three lots on 35.54 acres. The applicant has requested an administrative subdivision of six acres on a portion of the property that is not subject to the Preliminary Plat. The property to be administratively split is developed with a house. No structures are located on the property subject to the Preliminary Plat.

The 2019 Zoning Map indicates that the zoning for the property is RR—Rural Residential. On February 24, 2021, Township Clerk Doug Dahl researched re-zonings in the area and found that the property had been rezoned from RR—Rural Residential to AC—Agricultural Conservation in November of 2015. A 2015 Zoning Map indicates the area as zoned AC—Agricultural Conservation while the 2012 Zoning Map shows it as RR—Rural Residential. There was an error made in 2019 when the Zoning Map was updated.

Chair MacDonald closed the public hearing at 6:45 p.m.

### **Regular Meeting**

At 6:45 p.m., Planning Commission Chair Cyndi MacDonald called the regular monthly meeting to order. The meeting was conducted remotely via GoToMeeting.

Commission members present: Cyndi MacDonald, David Persing, Cheryl Schimming, Kathy Stoeckel, Carol Whitcomb

Commission member absent: Tari Zortman

Also attending: Township Board Liaison Dan Hiller, Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Township Clerk Doug Dahl

All participants recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approve Agenda**

Dave Persing moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Cheryl Schimming. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

### **Open Forum**

Carol Whitcomb cited a discrepancy in the Section 300:0672 of the Zoning Ordinance. The table of contents reads “300:0672 Planned Unit Developments.” The ordinance reads “300:0672 Planned Cluster Developments.” Mr. Richards responded that he will have to research the history of the ordinance to determine the correct wording. If there is an error in the ordinance wording it can be corrected in a future amendment.

### **Approve Minutes of February 1, 2021 Meeting**

Dave Persing moved to approve the February 1 meeting minutes. Seconded by Cheryl Schimming. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

### **Request from James and Sara Rutten for a Conditional Use Permit**

Mr. Richards summarized the application. Given the application's compliance with all zoning ordinances Mr. Richards recommended approving the application with the set of 18 conditions specified in his report.

Cheryl Schimming moved to recommend the application with its attendant conditions to the Town Board with the stipulation that 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue be specified as the primary access under condition number 4.

Seconded by Carol Whitcomb. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

### **Kepple Addition Preliminary Plat Application**

Mr. Richards reviewed the summary of the application. Members asked Mr. Richards about the process through which the 2015 rezoning was accomplished. Mr. Richards displayed a copy of the November 2015 Town Board meeting minutes, as well as the public hearing section of the October 2015 meeting minutes.

Mr. Kepple had purchased the property under the assumption that it was zoned Rural Residential based on the township's 2019 zoning map, confirmed by the zoning administrator. In view of that error Mr. Richards, after consultation with the township attorney, recommended that the Planning Commission continue the question to a future meeting while asking the Town Board to consider if the parcel should be zoned back to Rural Residential as it had been prior to 2015.

Mr. Persing moved to continue the public hearing on the Kepple Addition to the April meeting, to and ask the Town Board to consider the question of re-zoning the property back to Rural Residential, and to direct staff to review the maps and the 2015 rezoning actions to make sure the proper procedures were followed. Seconded by Ms. Schimming. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

### **Subcommittee to Research History of Residential Development**

Mr. Richards reviewed the subcommittee research. He recommended a motion to forward the subcommittee's findings to the Town Board.

Mr. Persing moved to accept the findings of the Residential Development Subcommittee and to forward to the Town Board the findings of the subcommittee related to the Planned Unit Development process and the reasons why developments were platted with lot sizes of one acre or less. Seconded by Ms. Whitcomb. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

## **Review of Home Occupation/Interim-Use Permits**

Mr. Richards noted that the Planning Commission has been discussing revisions to the ordinance governing home occupations for some months. He asked the Commission for a motion directing him to schedule a public hearing on the proposed amendment for the April Planning Commission meeting.

Cyndi MacDonald moved to authorize Mr. Richards to schedule a public hearing on the proposed ordinance amendment for the April Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Dave Persing. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

## **Zoning Ordinance Item: Electronic Signs**

Mr. Richards noted that Section 600:225 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates on-site commercial/industrial signage and does not specifically allow electronic signage. He offered a draft of an amended ordinance allowing and regulating election signage in the Township. His proposed amendments are based on his research into ordinances in similar jurisdictions, including the City of Princeton.

Members raised questions about signs being only partially electronic versus allowing signs to be all electronic. Also, Ms. Whitcomb raised a question about the allowance for off-site signage, expressing concern for signs being installed on farm property. Mr. Richards clarified that the provision for off-site signage is already part of the ordinance, but only in the commercial/industrial zone.

Mr. Richards posed two questions to the Commission:

- 1) Does the Planning Commission want him to look further into the off-site sign regulations?
- 2) Should the allowance for electronic signage be only a portion of a given sign, or can the sign be totally electronic?

Ms. Schimming moved to continue the question to the April meeting and direct staff to expand the review to include the existing ordinance language as well. Seconded by Cyndi MacDonald. Chair MacDonald called the roll:

Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried.

## **Adjournment**

Kathy Stoeckel moved to adjourn. Seconded by Cheryl Schimming. Chair MacDonald called the roll: Mr. Persing—Yes; Ms. Schimming—Yes; Ms. Stoeckel—Yes; Ms. Whitcomb—Yes; Ms. MacDonald—Yes. Motion carried. Meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl  
Clerk/Treasurer

Attendees: Kylie Gerth, David Halverson, Dennis Haubenschild, Bart Kendall, Marcia Kendall, Nancy Moan, Bonnie Nelson, Tyler Olson, Sara Rutten, Craig Wensmann, Jason Wolfsteller, plus unidentified callers.