

**Highland Township Planning Commission
Record of the 1382nd Meeting
March 3, 2022**

Roll Call:

Scott Green, Chairperson
Eugene H. Beach, Jr.
Grant Charlick
Kevin Curtis
Chris Heyn
Beth Lewis (absent)
Roscoe Smith
Scott Temple (absent)
Russ Tierney

Also Present:

Elizabeth J. Corwin, Planning Director

Visitors: 7

Chairman Scott Green called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Work Session

Agenda Item #1:

Parcel #	11-27-126-001
Zoning:	IM, Industrial Manufacturing
Address:	182 E Livingston
File#:	SPR 22-02
Request:	Site Plan Review for accessory structure
Applicant:	William DeHaan
Owner:	Haan Dawg Holdings, LLC

Mr. Beach introduced the application for to amend the site plan for Sniffer Station, 182 E. Livingston, to allow for an accessory structure. The parcel is zoned IM, Industrial Manufacturing. The land use is a dog daycare facility operating under an existing Special Use Permit. The applicant and owner is Bill DeHaan of Haan Dawg Holdings, LLC. The property was once a railroad stop and has since been used as an archery store and as the offices of a plumbing contractor until the dog daycare facility was established. This business is well known and appreciated within the community.

Mr. Beach noted that the application is in order, and that the accessory building meets the required setbacks. He noted that Road Commission for Oakland County permission must be sought for new onstreet parking at St. John Street and that it was appropriate to defer the sidewalk

along St John Street to the future. He noted that any new building lighting must comply with zoning ordinance, being fully shielded and downward directed. Mr. Beach asked for clarification of the traffic patterns, noting that the existing dropoff/pickup procedures seemed to work well.

Ms. Taylor DeHaan explained that the proposal is not intended to increase capacity, but rather to provide an indoor play area for the dogs. There is no need to alter the traffic patterns, and the displaced parking spaces would be for staff. There will be no new public entrance from St. John Street.

Mr. Beach moved to recommend approval for the site plan amendment for an accessory structure for the Sniffer Station, 182 E. Livingston. Parcel 11-27-126-001 subject to final staff review including lighting and other technical issues. Mr. Smith supported the motion. Roll Call vote: Tierney-yes; Curtis-yes; Smith-yes; Charlick-yes; Green-yes; Heyn-yes; Beach-yes; Motion passes (7 aye, 0 nay).

Agenda Item #2

Parcel #	11-28-100-006
Zoning:	R-1.5; Single Family Residential
Address:	136 Inverness
File#:	SPR 22-04
Request:	Site Plan Review for Cart Shelter
Applicant:	Shane Pringle, Manager; Prestwick Village Golf Club

Mr. Green introduced the request for an accessory structure for golf cart storage for Prestwick Village Golf Club, parcel 11-28-100-006. The applicant is Shane Pringle on behalf of the property owner Prestwick Village Golf Club. Ms. Corwin explained that the applicant was not present, but requested that the Planning Commission complete at least an initial review, since this was a relatively straightforward request that had been briefly introduced previously with a different project.

Mr. Beach noted that this was a rather large structure, about 70 feet by 30 feet and was concerned that the neighbors to the north face only a blank brick wall. He asked staff to communicate to the applicant that the façade should be interrupted in some way such as an ornamental bump out, false windows or other fenestrations. Ms. Corwin noted that there is a row of evergreens along the right-of-way; and was confident the Golf Club would renew/refresh the landscaping as part of the project.

Mr. Charlick noted that the bulk and scale of the building surprised him given the intended use of golf cart storage. Mr. Beach noted that the roof line was consistent with established patterns within the subdivision. It was also noted that the man door shown on the southeast wall doesn't appear in the façade drawings.

Mr. Beach moved to approved the proposed site plan for a golf cart storage structure subject to final staff review with required modifications to the east façade as discussed. Mr. Green supported the motion. Roll Call vote: Tierney-yes; Curtis-yes; Smith-yes; Green-yes; Heyn-yes; Beach-yes; Charlick-yes. Motion passes (7 aye, 0 nay).

Agenda Item #3: Text Amendments for wedding venue

Ms. Corwin explained that the consultant had submitted a memorandum to help start the conversation. Mrs. Burkhart has also identified some other resources such as the Washington Township ordinance and a Michigan State University Extension Services white paper which were included as links in the Planning Commission packet. Ms. Corwin noted the first order of business is to determine what the intent and purpose of regulations would be. For instance, some communities limit such venues to sites with existing large facilities such as existing historic barns. This is not necessarily consistent with the types of inquiries received by staff. But there is also a concern that if new facilities are constructed to house wedding events, then we are merely permitting a commercial activity in an agricultural or residential zone.

Mr. Beach believed the purpose and intent of such regulations would be to allow a reasonable use of large acreage parcels to allow for an economic return that would help property owners retain and maintain open space. He noted that we are not required to accommodate every possible land use in the Township, but wedding venues outside of churches and existing social halls are a popular land use.

Mr. Beach believed the regulatory framework should address setbacks, noise, traffic concerns, and lighting. He noted that outdoor venues should be buffered by trees or topography that would limit noise and light trespass to neighbors. 150 to 200 foot buffer would be reasonable.

Mr. Beach noted that to limit the activity, it would be important that food be brought in from offsite rather than to allow full blown commercial kitchens. He also cautioned that we should not try to couple this land use with agricultural tourism.

The Planning Commission discussed other known examples of event venues such as the Lazy J Ranch and Broadview Tree Farm which are both legally non-conforming uses, or the Bonadeo facility at White Lake Road, which operates under a special land use permit. These each operate with infrequent or no complaints from neighbors. Ms. Corwin explained that Ron Bonadeo would like permission to expand his business model to allow for rental of his existing barn for parties.

Mr. Green noted that the biggest issue would be noise trespass, and that this is more challenging for outdoor facilities. Lazy J activities are primarily within the barn.

Mr. Charlick was concerned about limiting the small venues so that they do not grow into full fledged commercial operations, and questioned how we could limit attendance.

Mr. Beach believed it was important to ensure that these venues are operated only on owner-occupied properties with no absentee landlords, since one would not want to poison relationships with neighbors. The best an ordinance can hope is to anticipate noise and nuisance issues and attenuate them in advance of the event.

The Planning Commission discussed physical improvements on the site—it would be best to limit pavements and hard surfacing. Mr. Beach noted there is some charm to undefined parking areas, limited by landscape timbers or small mowed/graveled paths.

Wendy and Tim Hiebert discussed their proposal to first erect a tent at their property at 893 N. Hickory Ridge Rd, with a future pavilion to be constructed if the concept proves feasible. They were hoping to begin operations in the coming wedding season.

Ms. Corwin explained that while the consultant had identified the Outdoor Gathering ordinance as an instance of existing regulations on our books, these regulations were specifically written to authorize specific “events” and not to authorize an ongoing “land use”. Allowing a business model for frequent events throughout a season is tantamount to creating a quasi “use variance.” There may be an overlap of what the future wedding event venue regulations might be and the existing outdoor gathering ordinance.

Ms. Corwin agreed to communicate the results of this discussion with the consultant and that a draft ordinance would be presented in a future meeting for further action. In general, she noted that there seems to be a consensus that the “zoning district” is not as essential as the size and characteristics of the parcel, that there could be a sliding scale of setbacks based on maximum attendance (similar to the Williamstown Township approach) and that we should encourage a more informal setting and minimal hardscape improvements.

Agenda Item #4:

- Committee Updates
- Zoning Board of Appeals:
- Township Board:
- Highland Downtown Development Authority:
- Planning Director’s Update

Committee updates were discussed.

Agenda Item #5:

Mr. Beach moved to approve the minutes of January 20, 2022 as presented. Mr. Charlick supported the motion which passed by voice vote.

Mr. Beach moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m. The motion was supported by Mr. Charlick and passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A.Roscoe Smith, Secretary
ARS/ejc