

BLAIR TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES

September 15, 2021

A. CALL TO ORDER

The Blair Township Planning Commission meeting of September 15, 2021 was called to order by Chairman Heim at 6:00 pm. The meeting was held in the Blair Township Hall Meeting Room and there were three attendees from the public.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

C. ROLL CALL

Present at roll call: Heim, Fitzpatrick, Lombard, Nickerson, Boeve, Clous, Wagner. Also present: Zoning Administrator Lisa Guerrieri, Recorder Susan Kase, Township Supervisor Nicole Blonshine, EMS Director Eric Somsel, and Ordinance Enforcement Officer, Matt Jerome.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Wagner, seconded by Nickerson to approve the agenda. **Yes:** Nickerson, Heim, Wagner, Lombard, Fitzpatrick, Clous, Boeve. **No:** None **Motion carried.**

F. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None stated.

G. MINUTES

There were several corrections to the August 18, 2021 draft minutes; page one, under Public Input, the first sentence should read, “with other comparable Townships, including Grand Traverse **County...**”; page three, after the fifth paragraph the **Standards for Approval for Special Use** should be inserted; also on page three, Commissioner **Fitzpatrick**’s name is incorrectly spelled “Fitzgerald”; also on page three, the sentence “Chairman Heim stated that the Standards had been met by the applicant” is to be stricken and replaced with “**Chairman Heim asked the Commissioners to consider the Standards for Approval for Site Plans, 21.03 in determining any issues with this Site Plan Review application**” and the Standards for Approval for Site Plan should be inserted; at the top of page four, the first sentence should read, “David Rowe **suggested** that the verbiage of the amendment be changed to read:”; and finally on page six, the motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner **Clous** replacing the incorrect spelling “Cloud”. **Motion by Wagner, seconded by Fitzpatrick** to approve the minutes **with the corrections** for the August 18, 2021 meeting. **Yes:** Heim, Lombard, Nickerson, Clous, Wagner, Fitzpatrick, Boeve. **No:** None **Motion carried.**

H. CORRESPONDENCE

Zoning Administrator, Lisa Guerrieri stated there were two items of correspondence received: a letter from Haggard's Plumbing in support of the #SU/SPR 21-09-01 application and two emails from the Township Attorney, Karrie Zeits. The emails are attached to these minutes to provide context to the discussion of the issue.

I. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Special Use/Site Plan Review Case SU/SPR#21-09-01: Applicant, Alliance Beverage, is requesting a Special Use/Site Plan Review to establish a 70,000 SF beverage warehouse and distribution facility on vacant property, located at 525 W. Commerce Drive, Traverse City, MI 49685; Parcel # 28-02-005-020-20, North of US 31, West of Commerce Drive, Section T26N R11W.

Chairman Heim stated that the Special Use review will be guided by the Standards of the Ordinance under Section 22.04. The Special Use application will have final approval by the Blair Township Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Planning Commission to approve the Special Use.

Chairman Heim opened the Public Hearing at 6:08 p.m.

The applicant was represented by Douglas L. Mansfield, President, Mansfield Land Use Consultants, 800 Cottageview Drive, Suite 201, Traverse City MI 49685. Also present for the applicant were Jim Simon, Project Manager, Pioneer Construction, 550 Kirtland Street SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49507, and Shannon Gary, Vice President, Alliance Beverage Distributing, 4490 60th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512.

Mr. Mansfield summarized the proposed development as a 70,000 SF warehousing facility for beverage distribution, on approximately ten acres at 525 W. Commerce Drive. He added that the building site will require substantial fill to make the land level for construction. Mr. Mansfield pointed to the elevations on the plans and noted that it will complement Commerce Park nicely. Alliance currently owns a warehouse on Cass Road; this new warehouse will replace the older building. Mr. Mansfield acknowledged that in accordance with Blair Township zoning ordinances, the proposed development requires a more stringent review as it is over 11,000 SF.

Trucks will be coming and going consistently throughout the day; there will be approximately 15 employees per shift.

Lisa Guerrieri pointed out that the Plan as submitted shows 37 trees; 40 trees are required per zoning ordinance. It was agreed upon by Guerrieri and the applicants that three trees can be added to plan where required as there are ample trees on the site currently.

Chairman Heim opened the discussion to the Commissioners. Commissioner Boeve asked where the fill would be sourced. Mr. Mansfield responded that some of the fill will come from the property and some fill will be brought in.

Chairman Heim closed the Public Hearing at 6:20 p.m.

Chairman Heim asked the Commissioners to consider the Standards for Approval for the Special Use; they are referenced below.

Section 22.04 Standards for Approval

1. The Planning Commission shall review the particular circumstances and facts related to each proposed special use application in terms of the following standards and requirements and shall make a determination as to whether the use proposed to be developed on the subject parcel meets the following standards and requirements:

- a. Will be harmonious with and in accordance with the general objectives of the Master Plan.
- b. Will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in harmony with the existing and intended character of the general vicinity and the natural environment so that the use will not change the essential character of that area.
- c. Will not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future neighboring uses.
- d. Will represent a substantial improvement to property in the immediate vicinity and to the community as a whole.
- e. Will be served adequately by essential public services and facilities, such as highways, roads, drainage structures, police and fire protection, and refuse disposal; or the persons or agencies responsible for the establishment of the proposed special use shall be able to provide adequately for such services.
- f. Will not create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.
- g. Will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any persons, property, or the general welfare by reason of excessive smoke, fumes, glare, noise, vibration or odors.

Motion by Lombard, seconded by Clous to recommend to the Blair Township Board of Trustees to **approve Case SU #21-09-01** as **presented** because it has met the Standards for Approval as required in Section 22.04 A through G of the Blair Township Zoning Ordinance. **Yes:** Heim, Lombard, Nickerson, Wagner, Clous, Fitzpatrick, Boeve. **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

Chairman Heim moved on to the Site Plan Review, **#SPR 21-09-01**, for the same applicant. The Standards for Approval are 21.03.

Chairman Heim asked the Commissioners to review the Standards for Approval, listed below, before taking further action.

Section 21.03 Standards for Approval (Amendment 104-05-08-05, Effective January 29, 2009)
A site plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission upon finding that the following conditions are met:

1. That the proposed use will not be detrimental to the adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood, including properties located in adjacent municipalities.
2. For all roads governed under this Ordinance, there shall be a proper relationship between existing roads and highways and proposed deceleration lanes, service drives, ingress and egress drives, and parking areas to assure the safety and convenience of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Public roads are not governed by this Ordinance.
3. That buildings, structures, parking areas, utility areas, walls, and fences are so designed and located to minimize the adverse effects of such development on users of such development and occupants of adjacent properties.
4. That any adverse effects of the proposed development and activities which will impact adjoining occupants or owners shall be minimized by appropriate landscaping, fencing, or other screening.
5. That as many natural landscape features as possible are retained, particularly where they provide a barrier or buffer between the development and adjoining properties used for dissimilar purposes, and where they assist in preserving the general appearance of the neighborhood.
6. The proposed development provides for the proper development of public utilities and infrastructure.
7. All buildings or groups of buildings are arranged to permit emergency vehicle access.
8. Site plan approval may be conditioned upon the applicant providing evidence that the necessary permits have been applied for. A land use permit shall not be issued until the Zoning Administrator receives a copy of the required permit(s).
9. The Planning Commission may require additional landscaping, fences, and walls in pursuit of these objectives and same shall be provided and maintained as a condition of the use to which they are appurtenant.
10. The Planning Commission may recommend that escrow money be placed with the Township so as to provide for a marginal service drive equal in length to the frontage of the property involved.

Zoning compliance permits shall not be issued until the improvement is physically provided or monies having been deposited with the Township Clerk.

11. Where the Township has adopted a specific area or neighborhood improvement or redevelopment plans and recommendations involving, but not limited to, public rights-of-way, utilities, and storm drainage, parking facilities, building placement, access drives, floor space density allocations, building facade and architectural treatment, no site plan shall be approved unless there is general compliance with such Township Plan.

Motion by Fitzpatrick, seconded by Wagner to approve Case SPR #21-09-01 with the following condition: 1, that the Special Use Application is approved by the Blair Township Board of Trustees. The site plan with the condition will have met the Standards for Approval as required in Section 21.03 #1 through #11 and is a use permitted in the Commercial Zoning District of the Blair Township Zoning Ordinance. **Yes:** Heim, Lombard, Nickerson, Wagner, Clous, Fitzpatrick, Boeve. **No:** None **Motion carried.**

2. Election of Officers

It was noted that the Election of Officers should have been held at the July meeting, was missed at the August meeting and therefore is to be held at tonight's meeting. The past practice has been for a motion to be made in nominating a person and then a vote is taken. Offices held on the Planning Commission are Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. Current Vice Chairman Commissioner Lombard expressed his intention to be replaced as Vice Chairman.

Motion by Fitzpatrick, seconded by Boeve to nominate Jerry Heim for Chairman; all Yeas, Motion carried.

Motion by Boeve, seconded by Nickerson to nominate Travis Clous for Vice Chairman; all Yeas, Motion carried.

Motion by Boeve, seconded by Fitzpatrick to nominate Adam Wagner for Secretary; all Yeas, Motion carried.

K. Unfinished Business

None

L. Reports

1) Zoning Administrator – Lisa Guerrieri directed the Commissioners' attention to the two emails (attached at the end of these minutes) in the correspondence received from the Township Attorney, Karrie Zeits; at the August Planning Commission meeting there appeared to be a conflict of interest on the motion to amend the private road maintenance agreement

ordinance made by Commissioner Clous. The Township Attorney has suggested new wording of the amendment. The motion at last month's meeting was to take the proposed amendment to Public Hearing. Lisa Guerreri did not move forward with the Public Hearing notice as she was waiting the response from the Township Attorney regarding the wording of the amendment.

There was discussion as to the responsibility of the private road maintenance between Blair Township and a site condominium association. Commissioner Clous questioned the Township Attorney's knowledge of the Condominium Act. Supervisor Blonshine responded that Karrie Zeits has over 15 years' experience in municipal law ranging from representing the City of Traverse City to the Grand Traverse Road Commission. Commissioner Boeve stated that the language suggested by the Township Attorney in the email was confusing and needed clarification. Chairman Heim acknowledged that he was not familiar with the Condominium Act and asked if everyone was satisfied with leaving this issue until the next meeting when the Township Attorney will be invited to attend. It was agreed to move this item to "Old Business" on next month's agenda.

- 2) Town Board Representative – Dennis Fitzpatrick reported that the Ribbon Cutting ceremony was held for the Fitness Center last Friday. Several Blair Township residents will be trained as ambassadors to assist patrons wishing to use the new facility. Blair Township Clean Up Day is Saturday, September 18. Volunteers are needed. The Blair Township Board of Trustees approved the Muffler Man application.
- 3) Zoning Board of Appeals Representative – there was no meeting.
- 4) Trails – Commissioner Fitzpatrick foresees new developments in Trails coming soon.

M. Any Other Business

Commissioner Boeve updated his phone number.

N. Public Input

Commissioner Clous acknowledged that the letter from the Zoning/DPW department was received by the Commissioners; it was clear to him that the Zoning Department does a lot more than the Planning Commission duties. He noted that Garfield Township has a staff of six, while Blair Township operated with a staff of two. He asked what types of permits require an inspection. Lisa Guerrieri responded that all final permits require an inspection. In the event of a staking inspection, Matt Jerome, Ordinance Enforcement Officer, does a staking inspection if it is close to the property line. Land Use Permits require an inspection. A staking inspection is required for structures. A Certificate of Occupancy requires an inspection. The County sends these requests to Matt Jerome.

O. Adjournment

Motion by Lombard, seconded by Boeve to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m. **All Yeas.**

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Kase, Recorder