

BLAIR TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES

March 17, 2021

A. CALL TO ORDER

The Blair Township Planning Commission meeting of March 17, 2021 was called to order by Chairman Heim at 6:00 pm. The meeting was held both live in the Blair Township Hall Meeting Room and via Zoom.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

C. ROLL CALL

Present at roll call: Heim, Fitzpatrick, Lombard, Nickerson in person; Clous, Wagner via Zoom; absent and excused, Boeve.

Also present: Zoning Administrator Lisa Guerrieri, Recorder Susan Kase via Zoom, Tracie Campbell; Matt Jerome, Zoning Enforcement Officer. Ralph Kaufman and Bill Crain were present in the Blair Township Hall Meeting Room. Jami and Jeff Hirsch attended via Zoom.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

F. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None stated.

G. MINUTES

Commissioner Fitzpatrick noted that the word “was” was used in error twice in the same sentence on page 1, Letter “H”, Correspondence. **Motion by Lombard, seconded by Nickerson** to approve the minutes for the February 17, 2021 meeting with the one correction. **Yes:** Heim, Lombard, Nickerson, Clous, Wagner, Fitzpatrick **No:** None **Motion carried.**

H. CORRESPONDENCE

Zoning Administrator, Lisa Guerri stated there was a letter received from Haggard’s Plumbing in support of tonight’s applicants.

I. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Special Use/Site Plan Review #21-03-01: Applicant, Nature & Me RV, is requesting a Special Use/Site Plan review to establish a showroom and sales lot for airstream campers in existing building on property located at 3943 Rennie School Road, Traverse City MI 49685, parcel #28-02-630-002-00.

Chairman Heim stated that the Site Plan review will be guided by the Ordinance under Section 10.04, # 10. The Standards for Approval are under Section 22.04. Please see the complete Standards for Approval in the attached reference materials.

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

The applicant was represented by Ralph Kaufman, 3938 Rennie School Road, Traverse City, MI 49685. Mr. Kaufman stated that he was not prepared to present the site plan at this time.

Chairman Heim reviewed the application and summarized the details per Section 10.04, # 10 Uses permitted by Special Use for Salesrooms, rental facilities, and /or lots for new and/or used automobiles, recreation vehicles. The site is .68 acres, the building was completed in 2019, and is connected to both sewer and water. The Special Use Permit is necessary because the nature of the property is transitioning from storage to retail use.

Chairman Heim asked for Public Comment. There was none.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:19 p.m.

Chairman Heim asked for discussion by the Commissioners on this Special Use Application. Commissioners Lombard, Fitzpatrick and Nickerson agreed the application was acceptable; Commissioners Wagner and Clous had no comment.

Chairman Heim asked for action on the Special Use application with regards to the following Standards for Approval.

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 Fitzpatrick, seconded by Nickerson to recommend to the Blair Township Board of Trustees to **approve Case SU #21-03-01** 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 **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

The Site Plan Review for Case **SPR# 21-03-01** was next. Chairman Heim asked for feedback from the Commissioners on any Standards not met for the Site Plan Review, per the following:

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.

Chairman Heim asked for action on the Site Plan Review application.

Motion by Fitzpatrick, seconded by Lombard to approve Case SPR #21-03-01 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 **No:** None **Motion carried.**

2. **Special Use/Site Plan Review #21-03-02:** Applicant, Boat Craft, is requesting a Special Use/Site Plan Review to establish a showroom and sales lot for boats and trailers in existing buildings at property located at 2816 S M37, Traverse City MI 49685, parcel #28-02-017-0232-30.

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:28 p.m.

The applicants, Jami and Jeff Hirsch, 1707 N. South Long Lake Road, Traverse City, MI 49685, answered questions via Zoom about the Special Use/ Site Plan Review application. Bill Crain, Crain Engineering, represented the applicants in person at the meeting. The proposed development will consist of a main facility with an office and display room.

The existing access drive is on M37 South and is paved; additional landscaping is planned for the front area; the septic field has been installed along the south property line; there is a proposed future storage area to be developed when needed.

Commissioner Lombard inquired as to the existing trees behind the building in the wooded area; would they be taken out if additional storage area is needed? His concern was that the residential area behind the facility could be adversely affected. Mr. Crain responded that a ten-foot buffer for landscaping boundary would be left per zoning ordinance requirements. Jami Hirsch also stated that any boats taken in are always in good condition. This application for Special Use is guided by the Standards for Approval, Section 10.04, #10, Sales lots and Showrooms, et al. The Site Development Standards for Approval would be Section 18.38, Sales lots and Showrooms.

Questions arose as to the current surfaces on the property being gravel; they are required to be dust free. Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked how far the buildings are from M37? Mr. Crain answered that the front building is approximately 50 feet from the road, and the second building is roughly 450 feet away.

Chairman Heim asked for public comment. There was none. He then asked the applicants for additional comment. There was none.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:46 p.m.

Chairman Heim commented that the staff report indicates the entire area is to be paved, of a “durable, dust-free surface”. Mr. Crain added that the gravel is hard packed and has been there for many years. Chairman Heim stated that as an open-air business, all areas should be of a dust-free surface. Jami Hirsch said that they are waiting for six months for the tenant in the front building to vacate the property. At that time, the showroom would be moved to the front building. Lisa Guerrieri stated that per Standards 18.33 and 18.34, an eight-foot fence is required for any outdoor storage area. This will be discussed under the Site Plan Review.

Jami Hirsch said they are willing to apply a treatment to the gravel to reduce dust.

Chairman Heim asked that the Standards for Approval, Section 22.04 be applied to this Special use request:

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.

Chairman Heim asked for action regarding the Special Use application.

Motion by Fitzpatrick, seconded by Nickerson to recommend to the Blair Township Board of Trustees to **approve Case SU #21-03-02** 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 **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

The Site Plan Review was then discussed. The Site Plan Review Procedures applicable here are Section 21.01 Required Data, which were met per the Staff Report, and Section 21.03 Standards for Approval as listed below:

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.

Chairman Heim summarized the concerns with the Site Plan application: 1) the dustless service drive and 2) the fencing of an outdoor storage area. Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked if a preservative can be applied to gravel to reduce dust. Jami Hirsch inquired as to the time frame to require the fencing. She said the storage area will not be used initially upon opening of the business. Jami Hirsch also asked if the fencing was installed, would it need to be moved if the storage area expanded. She asked if the current tree line meets the screening requirement of an outdoor storage area. Lisa Guerrieri said per the current Site Plan fencing would be required on the North, South and West sides of the property where it abuts residential areas.

Mr. Crain asked that the Site Plan be amended to state that the fencing will be installed when the storage area is put into place. Chairman Heim asked if the Planning Commission can approve the Site Plan Review to reflect future outdoor storage area. The applicants, Jami and Jeff Hirsch, were agreeable to that amendment. Any motion on this application would include two conditions: 1) that the Special Use application is approved and 2) that the unpaved area be dust free.

Motion by Lombard, seconded by Fitzpatrick to approve Case SPR #21-03-02 with the following conditions: 1, that the Special Use Application is approved by the Blair Township Board of Trustees, and 2, that the unpaved areas be dust free. The site plan with the conditions 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 **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

3. Discussion of Proposed Ordinance Amendments

Matt Jerome, Ordinance Enforcement Officer, provided a brief summary of the proposed changes to the ordinances, and referenced the ordinance changes that were distributed with this month's meeting agenda. The discussion ranged from suggesting that the junk ordinance fines be staggered with \$200 for the initial infraction warning, to \$300 for the second warning and then a final \$500 fine for noncompliance to agreement on wording for several current ordinances including parking requirements, outdoor storage areas fencing requirements and the paving requirement. Could "well-maintained, dustless surface" replace the paving requirement? All proposed ordinance amendments will go to Public Hearing next month before any permanent changes are recognized.

K. Unfinished Business

None

L. Reports

- 1) Zoning Administrator – Lisa Guerrieri said that she is busy.
- 2) Town Board Representative – Dennis Fitzpatrick reported that the Board of Trustees approved the potato chip manufacturing application and the janitorial supplies facility application.
- 3) Zoning Board of Appeals Representative – there was no meeting.
- 4) Trails – still on hold.

M. Any Other Business

There was none.

N. Public Input

There was none.

O. Adjournment

Motion by Lombard, seconded by Nickerson to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. All Yeas.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Kase, Recorder

