

PORTER COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2018

The regular meeting of the Porter County Plan Commission was held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 25, 2018 in the Porter County Administrative Center, 155 Indiana Avenue, Suite 205, Valparaiso, Indiana. Bob Poparad presided.

Members present were: Kevin Breitzke, Ken Williams, Luther Williams, Mike Jessen, Laura Blaney and Bob Poparad. Also present were Kristy Marasco, Attorney Scott McClure, Bob Thompson, Helene Pierce, citizens, and representatives of the press.

MINUTES:

Kevin Breitzke made a motion to approve the February 28, 2018 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Ken Williams seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried 6-0.

COORESPONDENCE:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

08-P-3 – Timberland Farms, LLC, east side of Meridian Road between U.S. Highway 6 and C.R. 900 North in the R1, Low Density Single-family Residential District. The petitioner requests an extension of Primary Plat approval of Timerberland Farms Subdivision. Attorney Bill Ferngren presented. Timerberland Farms currently has 38 lots under construction and 60 lots undeveloped. There are no changes to the Primary Plat we simply request an extension.

Q: This Board may only give 3-year extensions, is that agreeable to the petitioner?

A: Yes.

Motion: Laura Blaney made a motion to approve 08-P-3 until June 25, 2021. Mike Jessen seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

ZO-18-0015 – Bennett’s Storage Inc, c/o Todd A. Leeth, 768 North 400 West in Portage Township in the R2, Medium Density Single-family Residential District. The petitioner is seeking an approval for a proposed amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance to rezone a parcel of land from (R2), Medium Density Single-family Residential District to (CH), High Intensity Commercial District, to allow for a proposed indoor storage facility. Attorney Todd Leeth presented. The property is on the west side of McCool Road adjacent to South Haven subdivision. There is 132 feet of frontage on McCool Road. The parcel to the south is owned by the petitioner and is their current facility for self-storage units and have another site to the north. Currently there is an existing single-family home on the parcel that is 1,300 square-foot in size and will be razed in conjunction with the property redevelopment. The area has a number of

non-residential zones within it. The petitioner would like to extend their current (CH) High Intensity Commercial District to allow for additional storage units. The parcel is 2 acres in size and is 132 feet wide. It is long and deep. The Duneland Group prepared a site plan to include landscaping buffer, street trees, lot plantings, etc. We are meeting and/or exceeding the necessary requirements. We went through an informal review on April 11, 2018 and there were no significant concerns. We will have to continue through the process which will require a detailed site plan. Variances will be requested if anything comes to light.

Public Hearing:

Bob Poparad asked if any of the public would like to speak in favor of or in opposition of this case. Mr. Poparad also asked that the public address their questions to the Plan Commission while at the same time the petitioner will take notes and respond at one time.

Butch Stidham, 772 N. McCool Road, Valparaiso, questioned if there is going to be a fence to buffer the residential areas from this parcel. If so, what kind, privacy? This parcel floods all the time what are they doing to render that issue? Who will be responsible for cleaning out and/or maintaining the retention area? How tall will the building be?

Nina Douglas, 774 N. McCool Road, Valparaiso, states the residents have had a lot of grief with the current property and flooding. Metal roof and pavement will make things worse.

Todd Leeth's rebuttal:

- We have a very detailed landscape plan that includes street trees and lot plantings. Because this area abuts a residential area, perimeter landscaping is also required. Our perimeter landscaping calls for 26 evergreens, 15 trees, and 75 shrubs along the northern property line.
- Mr. Bennett (petitioner) will have a new detention pond and a larger pipe metered out the opposite direction of Mr. Stidham. The development will go before the Drainage Review Commission before anything can be done also.
- The north building is narrower than the south building because there is no access from the north side. The entire building will create a wall buffer between the property and the neighboring residents. We will extend a standard chain link fence out from the end of the building to the existing fencing. There will be a 20-foot wide building and a 40-foot wide building. The north side will be a solid wall. That will act as our privacy fence. There is no access from that side of the building and no units on that side of the building. We will be providing extensive landscaping as well.
- The buildings will have a shed type roof. The south building will be 14 feet high and the north building will be 10 feet high. Both will have a regular 10-foot wall.

The public hearing was closed and questions/comments were heard from the Members.

Q: Is a privacy fence an option that would be considered?

A: Possibly, but we would have to check the site lines.

Q: What will the wall material be?

A: Probably metal, but that will need to be verified. It is a split face block at the other sites so it can vary.

C: The roadway has had an issue with flooding. The southern part ponds behind these properties and this project is on track to divert the water in a controlled manner. This area has had drainage issues for quite some time and this addition requires them to capture the water and release it in a controlled manner. The parcel to the south was developed well before the drainage codes so this will make it better. A dedicated easement to the pond will be required.

Q: Is there an existing pond on the property?

A: Yes, a small one. We will be making upgrades to the pond and installing a larger pipe metered across the road.

Q: Will it be a tile drain?

A: Yes.

Q: Who will maintain this pond?

A: The property owner.

Motion: Kevin Breitzke made a motion to favorably recommend ZO-18-0015 to the County Commissioners with the condition that a privacy fence is installed from the corner of the building as long as it does not block any site lines. Mike Jessen seconded the motion. A ballot vote was taken and unanimously carried 6-0.

ZO-18-0017 – Porter County Redevelopment Commission, 326 West 700 North, in Portage Township in the P2, Parks and Recreation District. Seeking approval for a proposed amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance to rezone a parcel of land from (P2), Parks and Recreation District, to (IN), Institutional District, to allow for a proposed substation for Porter County Highway/Storm Water Department. Mr. Robert Thompson, County Planner, and staff member to the Redevelopment Commission presented. The Redevelopment Commission is proposing a rezone from P2 to IN for a substation facility for the Porter County Highway Department and Storm Water Management Board. The single-family home was demolished and the additional land was secured from the Portage Township Trustee to make the parcel 1.5 acres in total. We are rehabilitating the storm sewer system in this area and this building will house the bridge crew. It is not meant to be a fully functional highway department facility; it will only be used during the winter to better serve the community.

Public Hearing:

Bob Poparad asked if any of the public would like to speak in favor of or in opposition of this case. Mr. Poparad also asked that the public address their questions to the Plan Commission while at the same time the petitioner will take notes and respond at one time.

Mr. Alan Vaclavik, 703 Fox River Road, Valparaiso, asked what is being built exactly and will there be vehicles here, night operations, will it be lit up, and will the access be different?

Mr. William Pearson, 320 W. 700 N., Valparaiso, states he is against the proposal. The cost of this proposed facility is excessive. What will the ditch be used for? Are you considering solar building initiatives? What kind of pavement? Have you taken into consideration all impacts on Salt Creek? Will there be tax benefits for adjacent Salt Creek landowners?

Ms. Kim Tolliver, 325 W. 700 N, Valparaiso, questioned the changes in pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns, diminished land values, what will be stored there, what will the hours of operation be, will there be lights, what is the timeline for development, and how would future zone changes be prevented?

Mr. Thompson's rebuttal:

- There are two entrances now and the proposed site plan has two entrances as well.
- There will not be street lights, but there may be building lights that would have to meet code of the dark sky initiative.
- The ditch to the west is currently used to drain South Haven community. We are making this a green project. We will clean the water before it goes off. There is no detention now but we are trying to make things better.
- We are including cool water and bank stabilization for our site, but we do not have land in old South Haven to be able to do that.
- We will be holding public information meetings in the future for old South Haven's storm sewer system but it is not part of this petition.
- There will be vehicular changes because the building is vacant now. It will not be staffed all the time, but would have staff during construction.
- The Highway Department's intent is not to stage highway crews at this site full-time, but during the winter it may be a break stop for highway crews and will have snow plows there for faster service to the area.
- There will not be any negative affect to land owners. There is an old building there now that will be torn down and a new building will be put up.
- The \$16 million dollars people have heard about is to rehabilitate the entire area not just this parcel.
- There are two projects happening. One will use \$15-\$16 million for an entire storm water project in South Haven that will take 5-7 years to complete. As part of that initiative that is already funded, we are proposing a rezone at this parcel for a substation to be able to help the effort of the storm water construction happening. In the winter it will also be used to stage trucks for quicker plow response time.
- Tonight's request is only for the rezone of this one parcel.
- As far as chemical storage, there will be diesel trucks in the winter. All Federal requirements will be met and a Pollution Prevention Plan through IDEM will be met.

The public hearing was closed and questions/comments were heard from the Members.

Q: The bay doors to the facility will not be facing the road?

A: They will not. Bay doors will be in the rear due to site constraints.

Motion: Kevin Breitzke made a motion to favorably recommend ZO-18-0017 to the County Commissioners as presented. Ken Williams seconded the motion. A ballot vote was taken and unanimously carried 6-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the April 25, 2018 Porter County Plan Commission meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Bob Poparad, President

Attest: Robert W. Thompson, Jr. AICP
Director