



**OTSEGO TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2014
Monday at 7:00 PM**

*Planning Commission Members;
Chair Andy Webb, Vice Chair Bill Rohr, Secretary Jeff Polonowski,
Scott Reising, Karen Burns, Mike Bosch, Tammy Hoppe, Ron Cade & Roger Rumble*

Chairman Andy Webb called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jeff Polonowski, Roger Rumble, Tammy Hoppe, Bill Rohr, Ron Cade, Scott Reising, Andy Webb, Karen Burns, Mike Bosch

Members Absent: None

Approval / Correction of Minutes:

Motion made by Tammy Hoppe, support by Bill Rohr to postpone approval/correction of the December 1, 2014 Planning Commission meeting minutes until next Planning Commission meeting.
9 - Yes, 0 - No, 0 - Absent. Motion carried.

Special Use – Konos, LLC – Case 14-07

Chairman Webb opened the meeting and made some general remarks regarding the procedures followed by the Planning Commission. He indicated this likely will not be the only meeting required to come to a decision regarding this case, there is further information required from the applicant before a final decision could be made. He asked during the public hearing portion of the meeting that people feel free to speak but to try to avoid repetitious commentary as there were a large number of people present in the audience and he wanted to ensure that everyone had a chance to be heard.

Chairman Webb introduced Rob Knecht from Konos, LLC and asked him to present his information. He also indicated that all the information presented at this meeting would be made available to the public. Mr. Knecht indicated his business was producing eggs at a conventional facility in Martin Township and they were looking to expand their business to producing eggs in a new, organic facility. His company had been engaged in discussion with various agencies to come to a final version of a site plan for the proposed location of four layer barns and two pullet raising barns. Mr. Knecht presented information regarding the facilities which will house 500,000 birds. He indicated there would be 20 to 25 jobs created, that they would be pursuing bringing natural gas lines from M-89 to the property and he reviewed property tax implications for the Township. He then asked if there were specific questions the Planning Commission would like addressed.

Chairman Webb responded that there were issues raised by the Township Planner, Janis Johnson of Wade Trim, that would need to be addressed and he noted there were deficiencies on the site plan that made it difficult to know what questions to ask. Roger Rumble thanked the members of the audience for their attendance and he questioned why Konos was choosing to move into Otsego Township when it appeared there was sufficient room at their Martin Township facility to accommodate expansion. Mr. Knecht indicated to be designated as “organic” required different treatment of the hens and their current facility would not meet those requirements. He also indicated Otsego Township had land which was currently zoned appropriately for their request and that the Township had a good, reliable workforce. Roger also asked what the impact would be on the Township roads and how traffic would be handled as the roads to be used were gravel and not in excellent shape. Mr. Knecht indicated he had spoken with the Allegan County Road Commission regarding the roads and was told it would cost approximately \$1,000,000 per mile to pave the roads in that area so that would not be something the company could address in the immediate future but because the operation would be organic the

volume of truck traffic would be lower than a conventional egg operation. Scott Reising asked if there were plans to expand the operation. Mr. Knecht responded the number of hens the original plan indicated was thought to be the optimum number of hens to sustain an organic operation. His company is looking for brand expansion by providing an organic product because the demand for this type of product has increased dramatically over the years. Scott questioned whether the operation could be converted in the future to a traditional operation if it did not work out and Mr. Knecht indicated he did not think it would be economically feasible.

Chairman Webb opened the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Sidney Walters, 944 22nd St, was concerned with the magnitude of changes from the original plan to the final version submitted and the impact this will have on the value of his property.

Stephen Westin, 560 Lincoln Road, had concerns with the potential use of pesticides and herbicides, with the potential for contamination of the ground water in the area, with the control of odors, with the spread of avian diseases by workers and questioned how the culls would be handled.

Amy Grauman for Reva Pearson, 2120 112th Ave, had concerns about the impact of the seasonal flooding by Schnable Creek in that area, with traffic volumes, impacts on hunting and feels the quality of life in the area will be negatively impacted. Matt Grauman felt there would be a negative impact on certain species of wildlife due to the new construction.

Stacia Dortch, 2084 108th Ave, questioned if this operation should be considered an industrial use instead of agricultural because of the size of the operation and questioned how long the manure would be left in the barns.

Lonnie Hampton, 868 20th Street, asked how and where the manure was going to be disposed of.

Steven Pettit, 1141 22nd Street, had concerns about contaminated water flowing onto adjacent properties.

Wayne Kline, 1020 22nd Street, asked if there had been complaints against the operation in Martin, Chairman Webb responded that he had spoken to the Martin Township Supervisor who indicated complaints they had in the past had been addressed and there had been no complaints recently. Mr. Kline also felt that allowing this type of operation opened the door to other, large scale operations coming into the Township.

Brandy Jankowiak, 880 21st Street, had concerns with the increase in the traffic and wondered if this operation would be allowed to spread their manure on land in the same vicinity.

John Watson, 1137 22nd Street, felt the granting of the special use permit would reduce the neighboring property values and encourage other special uses to be allowed.

Mare Westin, 560 Lincoln Road, asked if there had been an environmental impact study done or if one could be requested, Mr. Knecht indicated that there was no requirement by the State of Michigan to obtain such a study for this type of operation.

Lori Bartz, 1106 North 20th Street, asked when there would be a final plan, Chairman Webb indicated this was a normal part of the process of review and input and issues raised tonight would need to be addressed as part of a final plan and approval process.

Cheryl Khanfar, 2005 108th Avenue, asked if Konos would reconsider the choice of location if it was clear the neighbors did not want them in their chosen location.

Kelly Cronkhite, 563 Lincoln Road, indicated the large turnout at the meeting showed the residents are not happy about the operation locating in their neighborhood and she would like more specifics about the plan and operation.

Deborah Pettit, 1141 22nd Street, had concerns about odor management.

Dawn Gillentine, 1025 20th Street, indicated that homes are our biggest asset and she feels this operation will have a negative impact on her home value, she also questioned how close the owners lived to their own operations.

Darwin Lampen, 1035 20th Street, indicated he had a friend who lived near the Martin Township operation and his major concern was not only the odor but with the increase in flies and other pests because of the operation.

Chairman Webb asked if Konos or VandeBunte had complaints brought to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Mr. Knecht indicated there had been no problems and that they had been proactive on wastewater management with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). There were general questions from the audience asking if surrounding residents opinions matter and if the application could be denied based on the residents' request for a denial. Chairman Webb stated neighbors' concerns and opinions do matter, but Otsego Township has a Future Land Use Map and Master Plan in place, the proposed use does fit within those guidelines and the Township had to have a sound legal basis for issuing a denial.

Matt Ralph, 1910 Sheen Hollow, felt there would be a greater burden on police resources forcing them to spend more time in the country rather than on M-89.

Chairman Webb closed the public hearing at 8:05 and asked for comments from Otsego Township Zoning Administrator, Kirk Scharphorn and Otsego Township Planning Consultant, Janis Johnson.

Mr. Scharphorn spoke about the process of applying for a special use. If the applicant meets the criteria set in the ordinances, as well as satisfying requirements of MDARD, MDEQ and other required permits there is no legal basis for a denial of the application request. Ms. Johnson spoke about her role as a professional planner. She indicated there must be a review of the zoning ordinance and master plan to see if the site plan conforms. This particular operation will be required to obtain a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Permit and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit from the MDEQ. She addressed the question of requiring an environmental impact study by stating the Township could ask for information above and beyond the requirements of the State. She also indicated a thorough review by the Township Engineer would be advisable when sufficient information had been submitted by the applicants. Mr. Scharphorn indicated the Planning Commission could put as many conditions on their approval as they felt necessary to insure the operation did not have too significant an impact of the surrounding property owners.

Discussion was opened to the Planning Commission members.

Jeff Polonowski opened the discussion by detailing his concerns with the lack of detail on the site plan and the need for more specific information about how Konos intended to mitigate odors and other nuisance elements created by the operation. He also expressed concern with the lack of access to water and the difficult soil conditions in this particular area of the Township and questioned how and where the wastewater was going to be disposed of. Mr. Knecht responded that the MDEQ monitors the impact on groundwater carefully and he indicated Konos has worked with extensively with the MDEQ regarding their standards for waste and storm water discharges. Jeff also questioned what the plan was for the management of manure and odors. Mr. James Young responded the majority of the manure would be removed weekly which helped mitigate some of the issues with the odors. Mr. Knecht explained the difference between the operation in Martin and the proposed Otsego

Township operation. He indicated the operation in Martin Township is considered a “high rise” house in which manure is allowed to fall to a lower level floor in the barn and is left for the whole 84 week turn. In comparison, the Otsego Township operation would have the manure removed from the barns weekly at a minimum. Chairman Webb asked where the manure would be removed to and Mr. Knecht responded that the manure would be hauled to the Martin Township facility which has sufficient capacity as allowed by their permit to store the manure produced by both facilities. Tammy Hoppe asked about a plan to mitigate any nuisance caused by flies. Mr. Knecht reiterated the difference between the two operations and stated that because the manure will be removed on a regular basis, the incidence of fly production is greatly reduced. He also indicated there is a pest management plan in place at the Martin Township facility. Paul VandeBunte stated the new manure handling system which would be used in the Otsego Township facility helped to speed the drying of the manure which was crucial to reducing the odor and fly production. Bill Rohr asked if there was a similar facility nearby that the planning commission members could visit. Mr. Knecht indicated he would be open to having members tour the newer barns at the Martin Township facility. Mike Bosch raised concerns regarding the hours of operations and the traffic flow and what the impact would be during various times of the day with truck traffic. There was some general discussion about the Michigan Right to Farm Act and its implications for property owners in the vicinity of a farming operation.

Motion made by Bill Rohr, support by Ron Cade to recommend postponing further discussion of the special use application until the February 2nd meeting of the Planning Commission pending submission of further information by the applicants.

9 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Absent. Motion carried.

Motion made by Tammy Hoppe, support by Ron Cade to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

9– Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Absent. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Polonowski/js Date
Planning Commission Secretary