

Minutes of the Dodge County
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 2, 2008

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Galen Johnson at 1:00 PM on Wednesday, April 2, 2008. Present were Planning Commission members Galen Johnson, Jon Balzum, John Allen, Larry Schmeling, Harlan Buck, and Richard Wolf. Also present were County Commissioner Dave Erickson, Don Gray, Klaus Alberts, Dave Hanson and Compliance Officer Melissa DeVetter.

Motion by Jon Balzum, seconded by John Allen, to approve the agenda and the February 2008 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Richard & Lisa Wolf – CUP #08-10

The first public hearing is to consider an application for a Conditional Use Permit to establish a non-farm dwelling in the Agricultural District. The property is 44.64 acres located in the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Section 24, Claremont Township. Richard and Lisa Wolf are the applicants and property owners.

Richard Wolf was present to explain his plans for the proposed site. His son is getting married this summer and will be buying their house. Richard plans on building a new home to live in on the proposed site.

Kent Schmidt, Claremont Township has no objection to this proposal.

Melissa DeVetter addressed the county's requirements for a CUP for a non-farm dwelling.

Galen Johnson read Guy Kohlhofer comment; it's a township road. It is not expected to have a noticeable effect upon a county road.

Motion by Harlan Buck, seconded by Larry Schmeling, to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by John Allen seconded by Harlan Buck, to recommend approval of the Findings of Facts and Recommendations of the agenda report with the following conditions:

1. Dodge County Zoning Permit be obtained before construction.
2. The Agricultural Covenant shall be signed and recorded.
3. The septic system must meet the Dodge County's septic ordinance.
4. A driveway access and permits be obtained from the Township.
5. Address be obtained from Dodge County Highway Dept

The motion was passed unanimously.

Luke Scherger – CUP #08-11

The second public hearing is to consider an application for a Conditional Use Permit to expand an existing feedlot to a capacity of 3750 head of finishing hogs or 1500 animal units. The expansion will include a new confinement building approximately 102 x 192 feet with a beneath barn 8 foot concrete pit for manure storage for 2500 head of hogs. The property is 5 acres located in the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4, of Section 31, Wasioja Township. Luke Scherger is the applicant and the property owner.

Luke Scherger was present to explain his plans for the proposed site. An EAW has been completed and this feedlot expansion will be done in three phases. The building proposed for this CUP is the first phase and is twice as wide as the existing barn with 100 feet between the two barns. The existing barn has Odor Cell Technologies bio-filters on it and will continue with this kind of bio-filters for the new barn. Manure application is applied in the fall when the roads are most stable. If a spring application is needed they will contact the county to determine the best route to take.

Quentin Kleinwort, Wasioja Township has no objection but would ask the county to allow Luke Scherger to use this new technology for bio-filter on his barns.

Melissa DeVetter addressed the county requirement; with the EAW being done most of the issues have been already addressed.

Roger Treloar, General Manager of Odor Cell Technologies was present to answer any questions there may be on the odor cell technology.

A motion was made by Harlan Buck and second by Jon Balzum to include in the minutes the items as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Galen Johnson commented that the pigs at Luke Scherger farm are his pigs. He will be abstaining from the vote.

Duane Johnson commented about the EAW and that the odor modeling was required by the MPCA as part of the EAW. The modeling predicted that the air quality standards will be met at the property line.

Galen Johnson inquired if the results of the odor modeling were based on the assumption that bio-filters were installed on the pit fans.

Luke Scherger indicated that the results of the odor modeling were predicted with assuming bio-filters were not installed.

Galen Johnson inquired what is so unique about these bio-filters.

Roger Treloar stated this type of bio-filter is above the ground with Redwood bark as the medium. A study was performed on the performance of the odor cell system. The results of the study dictated the retention time in the odor cell bio-filters.

Galen Johnson inquired if there was a failure with the bio-filters what would cause it.

Roger Treloar stated that proper maintenance and hydration are crucial. Cells are maintained at an optimum moisture level for the bacteria, between 30% - 50%. If the moisture level in the cell drops below 30% continuously, the bacteria becomes dormant.

Jon Balzum had a concern about freezing in the winter time.

Roger Treloar addressed this issue stating the inside barn temperature will keep the bacteria alive. Moisture is not applied thought the winter months. Moisture is only applied between the months of May to September. Winter is when the bio-filters do well.

Ken Folie addressed issues of the installation of bio-filters as per the #7 condition in the Feedlot Advisory Report.

Jon Balzum had a concern on what the bio-filters were made out of.

Roger Treloar stated the bio-filters consist of a 4' X 4' stainless steel frame with 10" of Redwood bark as the medium. PVC pipes with 4 nozzles on top and 1 nozzle in the interior supply water for the cells. Three inches of washed rock is used for the base to discourage rodents and other burrowing animals.

Duane Johnson had a concern about bark settling and gaps between the bio-filter and pit fans.

Roger Treloar indicated that the cell has a "sliding back" which can easily be adjusted to ensure contact with the fans if settling occurs following construction. The bark that is used is stable and large, providing 60-62% porosity. There would have to be a 6" gap before there is a void. The pine bark, which comes from Idaho, is the best product for this type of bio-filter. On an annual basis, only 10% of the media typically settles or deteriorates. Routine maintenance would consist of topping off the bio-filters in the spring and fall. Every two years the bottom would need to be checked for deterioration.

Richard Wolf had a concern if the existing incinerator would be able to handle the increased volume of mortalities.

Luke Scherger stated he does incinerate now and hope he will be able to handle the volume.

Melissa DeVetter commented on the site; she visited it yesterday and walked around the barn and observed that the odor cells appeared to be working.

Galen Johnson inquired on the county role with an EAW study.

Melissa DeVetter stated that as the EAW process is complete, the county can proceed with the permitting process.

Galen Johnson commented we now have another choice in bio-filter other than what the State of Minnesota recommends.

Duane Johnson commented we also have odor modeling to provide additional information due to the requirements of the EAW.

Motion by Larry Schmeling, seconded by Jon Balzum, to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Jon Balzum, seconded by John Allen, to recommend approval of the Findings of Facts and Recommendations of the agenda report with the following conditions:

1. Dodge County Zoning Permit be obtained before building.
2. Update County Animal Feedlot Registration Form.
3. The Feedlot Advisory Report dated March 25, 2008.

The motion was passed 5 ayes (John Allen, Harlan Buck, Richard Wolf, Larry Schmeling, and Jon Balzum) and 1 abstaining (Galen Johnson).

Other Business

Melissa DeVetter informed the Planning Commission that Mr. Rex Edge has requested to add a permanent building to his site. Mr. Edge was granted CUP #06-03 for his outdoor wedding business in 2006. A condition on the CUP states that the Planning Commission must review any permanent building built for the wedding ceremonies.

Jon Balzum commented it's not that big of a building. It does not change his business.

Motion by John Allen, second by Harlan Buck to recommend approval. Motion was passed unanimously.

A time change for the meetings was discussed. Starting May 7th the time will be changed from 1:00pm to 7:00pm.

Adjourn

Motion by Jon Balzum, seconded by Larry Schmeling, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.