

OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

Agenda

**STEENSMA BROTHERS - SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE AMENDMENT AND SITE
PLAN REVIEW - 7561 STADIUM DRIVE - (PARCEL NO. 3905-34-185-036)**

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, September 25, 2008, commencing at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Schley, Chairman
Deborah Everett
Bob Anderson
Kitty Gelling
Carl Benson
Fred Gould

MEMBER ABSENT: Lee Larson

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; Mary Lynn Bugge, Senior Planner; James Porter, Township Attorney, and four other interested persons.

Call to Order

At approximately 7:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order. The "Pledge of Allegiance" was recited by the Commissioners.

Agenda

The Chairman asked if the Agenda was satisfactory or whether modifications were needed. Ms. Gelling made a motion to approve the Agenda, as submitted, and Ms. Everett seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

The Chairman asked if there were any modifications to the minutes of September 11, 2008. Ms. Gelling made a motion to approve the minutes, as submitted. Mr. Gould seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

STEENSMA BROTHERS - SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE AMENDMENT AND SITE PLAN REVIEW - 7561 STADIUM DRIVE - (PARCEL NO. 3905-34-185-036)

The Chairman indicated the next item on the Agenda was consideration of a special exception use amendment and site plan review for Steensma Brothers for proposed changes to the outdoor display and storage areas and other site changes at 7561 Stadium Drive. He said the subject property is located in the "I-1" District, Parcel No. 3905-34-185-036. The Chairman asked to hear from the Planning Department. Ms. Bugge submitted her report to the Planning Commission dated September 25, 2008, and the same is incorporated herein by reference.

Ms. Bugge took the Planning Commission through a review of the subject property. She noted that Steensma was looking to make the following improvements:

1. Improve circulation by establishing a one-way drive around the back of the warehouse, which will allow customers, often using vehicles equipped with trailers, to drop off and pick up equipment at the rear of the main building.
2. Expand the outdoor storage area behind the main building to approximately 7,500 square feet to accommodate a staging area for equipment awaiting service and storage of new equipment.
3. Create 600 square feet of outdoor storage for crated equipment along the east side of the warehouse to accommodate new equipment when the building was full.
4. Expand the parking lot to accommodate parking for both Steensma trailers and customer vehicles with trailers.
5. Reconfigure and expand the outdoor display area to 3,000 square feet of which about 1,500 square feet would be within the building setback area.
6. The relocation of existing dumpster and gas tank facilities, provisions for pallet recycling, additional site lighting and fencing.

Ms. Bugge then proceeded to take the Commission through a review of Section 60.100 involving special exception uses and Section 41.401 dealing with vehicle sales lots. In

addition, she reviewed Section 82.800, being the site plan review criteria of the Township Zoning Ordinance, as more fully set forth in her report.

The Chairman opened the floor to questions. He began by asking to what degree the display area within the setback was being expanded. Ms. Bugge said it was proposed to go from approximately 700 square feet to approximately 1,500 square feet. She noted placement of any display within the building setback was based on a variance granted on September 11, 2000. The Chairman noted that the expansion would approximately double the display area.

Hearing no more questions from the Planning Commission, the Chairman opened the floor to the applicant, Steensma Brothers. Mr. Jamie Dyer of the engineering firm, Wightman Ward, Inc., on behalf of Steensma Brothers, introduced himself to the Planning Commission. He said that either he or the applicants in attendance, Kurt Steensma, Brian Steensma or Tim Steensma would be happy to answer any questions. The Chairman noted for the record that there was no public in attendance so there would be no public comment. There being no questions for those representing the applicant, the Chairman called for Planning Commissioner discussion.

The Chairman said that the Commission has two items before it, the first being consideration of an expansion to the special exception use permit previously issued, and second, the amended site plan.

Ms. Bugge stated that the thing which she was most concerned about, from the Planning Commission's perspective, was whether the Commissioners were comfortable with the proposed outdoor storage on the east side of the storage building.

Mr. Brian Steensma asked if he could address that concern. Mr. Steensma said, in the past, they had stored crated equipment in the outdoor storage area, but by creating the one-way drive, they would be losing some of the area behind the warehouse building. He said, that was why they were asking to stack it on the east side of the building. He said all of the equipment would be crated. The Chairman asked how high the crates would be. Brian Steensma said approximately 12 to 15 feet high. Ms. Everett asked if it would be under the overhang of the building. Brian Steensma indicated that it would. He also indicated that crates were designed to be stacked and were quite safe stacked three high.

The Chairman asked the Planning Department if it was concerned about the outdoor storage being too high or whether it was concerned over visual blight. Ms. Bugge said she was not concerned about the visual aspects but thought that the Planning Commission might have a concern regarding safety, given the fact that the drive goes right by the proposed outdoor storage.

The Chairman asked the Township Attorney if he thought that the Township could be responsible for an individual's safety by approving the site plan. Attorney Porter said

the Township would not be responsible for on-site injuries simply by approving the site plan. He further stated that the Township was no guarantor of safety, and that the Township was approving the site plan based upon the representations of Mr. Steensma who said that the crates could be safely stacked three high. The Chairman stated he did not think this outdoor storage was unlike other outdoor storage which had been previously approved for similar sites, provided it is safely stacked.

Ms. Gelling asked how many trees might be lost on the east side of the property (due to construction). Kurt Steensma said that very few trees would be lost. Ms. Gelling then asked if they would be willing to replace some of the trees lost. Kurt Steensma said that they would be willing to take a look at it, but again, did not think they would lose too many trees, particularly on the north side of the property. He said that, if any trees were lost, they would be on the south side of the property. He said if the Planning Commission thought it was necessary, they could add some trees in the northeast corner of the property.

Mr. Gould asked if they had maxed out their outdoor storage and should **they** be asking for more. Brian Steensma said he thought they would have adequate outdoor storage under the current proposal, and he did not believe they would need to ask for more in the future.

Ms. Gelling asked what percentage of lot coverage would be established under the new site plan. Ms. Bugge said they would be at 54% coverage, based on the information provided on the site plan.

The Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing nothing further, he asked for a motion on the special exception use amendment. Ms. Gelling made a motion to approve the amendment of the special exception use, for the reasons set forth in the Staff report. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chairman next asked for consideration of the site plan. Ms. Gelling made a motion to approve the site plan, as submitted, with the following provisions:

- (1) All parking shall comply with the criteria of Section 68. Drive aisle connecting the parking lot to the rear drive shall be clearly marked on both sides.
- (2) Outdoor storage for items awaiting service and new equipment is approved as proposed. No outdoor storage of damaged or inoperable vehicles or equipment is permitted.
- (3) Outdoor light fixtures shall comply with the requirements of Section 78.700, and fixture details shall be submitted to Staff for review and approval.

- (4) Landscaping shall comply with Section 75. Trees on the east side of the driveway in front of the outdoor display shall be preserved in as far as possible and replaced when necessary, as determined by Staff.
- (5) Outdoor display is approved as proposed east of the parking lot. All other outdoor display shall be in accordance with prior approvals.
- (6) Site plan approval shall be subject to the applicant satisfying the requirements of the Fire Department, pursuant to the adopted codes
- (7) Site plan approval shall be subject to Township Engineer review and a finding that stormwater management is adequate.
- (8) Relocation of the previously approved gasoline tanks is subject to obtaining all necessary permits under the adopted codes, including electrical permits.

Mr. Gould seconded the motion. The Chairman called for discussion. Mr. Benson asked how they would know whether the equipment being stored outdoors was damaged or inoperable. Ms. Bugge explained that there is a clear difference between equipment waiting to be worked on and equipment that is permanently inoperable. She said inoperable equipment would not constitute storage and would not be permitted.

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions. Hearing none, he called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Work Item: Master Land Use Plan Discussion

The Chairman said the next item on the Agenda was consideration of the Master Land Use Plan Discussion. Ms. Stefforia indicated that there were two public input events coming up, namely the Visioning Workshop and a community opinion survey, which could either be mailed or available on the Internet. It was suggested that the survey be mailed but also available on the Township's Web Page for downloading. Results from the two methods would be kept separate to maintain the statistical integrity of the results of the mailed survey.

The Planning Department thanked the Commission for its input.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

The Chairman dispensed with public comment as there was no public in the audience.

Any Other Business

Ms. Gelling suggested that the Board restructure its agenda to call for public comment ahead of work items in order to accommodate those who might not want to sit through the entire agenda but who wished to address the Planning Commission. There was a consensus by the Planning Commission members to make that change in upcoming meetings.

Planning Commissioner Comments

There were no Planning Commissioner comments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Minutes Prepared:
September 30, 2008

Minutes Approved:
October 9, 2008