

BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Bridgewater Township Government Center
Thursday, August 27, 2020
Official Minutes

- ❖ John Klockeman called the meeting to order at 7:00
- ❖ Members present were Larry Alderks, Frances Boehning, Bruce Morlan, Jeff Johnson, Kurt Schrader, John Klockeman, and Jim Braun. Supervisors present were Kathleen Kopseng and Andy Ebling.
- ❖ Guests present were Henry Bull, Djea and David Young, Sharon Kilanowski and guest, Mr. Breckenridge, and Nate Watters and Tracy Jonkman.
- ❖ Bruce Morlan made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of “tax solar”, and “second living quarters on property” to Miscellaneous, Larry Alderks seconded, all approved.
- ❖ Larry Alderks made a motion to approve the minutes of July 30, 2020, Bruce Morlan seconded, all approved.
- ❖ The Open Forum was opened and closed at 7:05 pm.

- ❖ Public Hearing for a conditional use permit for an agricultural related business and a conditional use permit for an agricultural tourism business at 4609 135th Street E., Dundas was opened at 7:06 pm.
 - Jim Braun reviewed the staff report and information provided by Keepsake Cidery. The parking plan was not able to be reviewed as the expert on the subject was not available.
 - Mr. Breckenridge stated that he had built the home next to Keepsake Cidery years ago. It was his understanding that 135th street was a cartway. Mr. Bull corrected this and stated that 135th was a road, but the portion that turns right and leads to Keepsake was a cartway.
 - Mr. Braun reviewed that two C.U.Ps were needed.
 - The business of making cider, selling cider, and holding tastings were considered an agricultural related business, while having vendors and events would be considered an agricultural tourism business.
 - Nate Watters, owner of Keepsake Cidery, spoke about his business
 - The history of the business was reviewed.
 - It was noted that the process of getting a C.U.P was very difficult and frustrating.
 - Their original plans from 2014 have changed and they would like to continue to grow and change.
 - There has only been one event that resulted in 100 cars at the cidery at one time. They would like to limit event capacity to cars, not people.
 - It is their desire that a maximum capacity on people, if required, would be 300.
 - They need the space to adapt and change as the business changes.

- Currently, Keepsake Cidery is open 15% of traditional business hours. Most of their business occurs during summer and fall, Thursday through Sunday.
 - They would like the option to be open between the hours of 9:00 am and 10:00 pm.
 - In the future they would like to offer “farm stays” which is similar to a bed & breakfast. They would also like to offer camping.
 - John Klockeman noted that per the Bridgewater Township ordinance, camping is not allowed.
 - Keepsake Cidery mentioned that they will notify neighbors of upcoming events.
- Sharon Kilanowski, owner of the house next to Keepsake Cidery, spoke against the proposed Conditional Use Permits.
 - Sharon Kilanowski had attended the meeting in 2017 for the revised permit and reviewed her discussions with Keepsake following this.
 - She stated that the original permit allowed for 50 cars and that they have exceeded this a number of times.
 - Since 2017, the Cidery has grown.
 - Discussions in 2014 and 2017 included plans for a barrier between the two properties. She does not feel this has been accomplished. There have been instances of Keepsake customers coming on to her property and pulling into her driveway. She no longer feels able to walk down the driveway safely.
 - She would like the Cidery to stay, but limited to the size stipulated in 2017.
- Djea Young, homeowner on the corner of Dahl Ave. and 135th Street.
 - Djea Young was impressed with Nate Watters and Tracy Jonkman willingness to talk to all neighbors and keep them informed of events and changes to the Cidery. She felt that Nate and Tracy have tried to engage the neighbors to solve problems.
- Mike Breckenridge, original owner of house next to Keepsake Cidery.
 - Mr. Breckenridge sees the Cidery as a positive asset to the community, but can see problems with increased traffic and negative impact on quality of life for next door residents.

❖ The Public Hearing was closed at 7:46 pm.

- The Commissioners noted that there seemed to be confusion regarding the number of parking places shown on the site drawing.
- Per Jim Braun, if the parking area is not paved an increase of 20% needs to be added, this means that each parking place should be 300 sq. ft.
- Jim Braun noted that there were pictures of cars parked horizontal which would result in less parking places.
- John Klockeman felt that the site plan showed 75 parking places available as the lot is not paved.
- Kurt Schrader asked if there were issues with people wandering into the neighboring property?
 - Tracy Jonkman stated that the customers were not there to get drunk. She was not aware of anyone walking into the neighboring property.
 - Nate Watters stated that plans were to plant trees along the property edge. Signs had been put up, but were taken down later.
 - Kurt Schrader noted that the neighbor was clearly upset and something should be done to address this issue.

- Sharon Kilanowski stated that she did not feel that communication was occurring.
 - Larry Alderks stated that he did not believe a Conditional Use Permit was appropriate and that it should be kept to an Interim Use Permit.
 - Jim Braun noted that the C.U.P would allow them to sell the business as there has been significant investment in the property.
 - Larry Alderks suggested that if the available parking is 75, then attendance at any one time is capped at 150 people.
 - The Planning Commission agreed that maximum attendance at any one time will be 150 people/75 cars.
 - The Planning Commission agreed, following consultation with Keepsake Cidery and Sharon Kilanowski, that the operating hours would be 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, four days a week.
 - Bruce Morlan noted that events that do not generate revenue would not be counted as one of the open days.
 - There will be no amplified music after 7:00 pm.
 - Temporary signage would be encouraged.
 - Barrier between Keepsake Cidery and the neighbor was discussed. Sharon Kilanowski requested a visual barrier between her house and the parking lot. Nate Watters agreed to work with Sharon Kilanowski regarding this.
 - The Planning Commission requested that the following condition be added to the C.U.P. The owner will work with the neighbor to construct a headlight barrier to be maintained by the owner to establish a lot line.
 - The Planning Commission stated that parking will not be allowed on the shared driveway.
 - Bruce Morlan made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit for an Agricultural Related Business for Keepsake Cidery, Frances Boehning seconded. The motion was approved by Bruce Morlan, Frances Boehning, John Klockeman, Jeff Johnson, and Kurt Schrader. Larry Alderk disapproved.
- ❖ The discussion regarding the Conditional Use Permit for an Agricultural Tourism Business for Keepsake Cidery was opened.
 - Jim Braun reviewed that the Rice County Sheriff would provide a review of the storm shelter proposal from Keepsake Cidery.
 - Tracy Jonkman reviewed that she had not known that they would need two Conditional Use Permits. They had never referred to Keepsake Cidery as an event center.
 - There were no plans currently to expand beyond small events.
 - There had been one large event in the past, the Solstice Market.
 - John Klockeman asked how many large events did they envision for the business.
 - Tracy Jonkman did not provide a definite number as they had not planned for this type of C.U.P.
 - The question was asked if they could work with a maximum attendance of 250 people (at one time) for large events. Keepsake Cidery responded that this number would be acceptable.
 - A discussion of operating hours for events was held.
 - It was agreed that the operating hours for events would be 8:00 am to 9:00 pm.
 - Tracy Jonkman stated that Keepsake Cidery would like to have the option to hold 20 2-day events per year.

- Henry Bull (4319 135th Street E.) questioned if vendors would be included in the total attendance numbers? John Klockeman responded that vendors would be included in the total attendance.
 - Mr. Bull recommended that the Planning Commission not approve the C.U.P as Keepsake did not have set plans.
- Sharon Kilanowski asked how it would be determined if something were an “event”. The response is an “event” is something that would be advertised as such. She also asked what would happen if attendance at these events exceeded the maximum number of people. John Klockeman responded that if the attendance number was exceeded on a regular basis, the C.U.P would come back before the Planning Commission.
 - John Klockeman stated that if neighbors are notified, then it is considered an “event”. Also, if the event lasts two days, then it is automatically an “event”.
 - Sharon Kilanowski asked that events be limited to 3-4 a year.
- David Young (4236 135th Street), asked if events would add to the normal operating days which could result in Keepsake Cidery being open 6 days a week. The Commission responded that “events” must be within the four days allowed each week.
 - Also questioned if there are only 100 people, but the hours are extended or spread over two day, does this qualify as an “event”?
 - John Klockeman responded that the scenario described would be an “event”.
- Mike Breckenridge noted that 20 events (as requested by Keepsake) would be every weekend all summer and this could cause problems in the future.
- Andy Ebling (Supervisor) asked how the events would be monitored and attendance tracked.
- Jim Braun suggested that Keepsake Cidery come before the Board of Supervisors prior to large events.
- Bruce Morlan noted that the land is not accessible in the event of an emergency during large events.
- Tracy Jonkman replied that for some large events, they have used bussing from a remote parking area. She also requested that they be allowed to be open from June to December and weekends in the winter.
- Following discussion, the Planning Commission determined that Keepsake Cidery would be allowed 6 events per year and that they would count as part of the four days allowed during the week.
- Sharon Kilanowski noted that the operating hours of 8 am to 9 pm would be acceptable.
- Tracy Jonkman suggested that for certain events, that later hours be allowed.
- John Klockeman suggested that weddings be limited to 2 per year with extended hours until 11 pm.
- Bruce Morlan made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit for an Agricultural Tourism Business for Keepsake Cidery with the following conditions:
 - 6 events per year with the operating hours of 8:00 am to 9:00 pm (includes 2 weddings with operating hours of 8:00 am to 11:00 pm)
 - Attendance of 250 maximum at one time
 - Events will count as part of the four-day week
 - Amplified music until 9:00 pm for regular events
 - Amplified music until 10:00 pm for wedding events
 - Storm shelter plans to be reviewed by Sheriff
 - Neighbors will be notified a minimum of two weeks in advance of the event.

- Jeff Johnson seconded the motion made by Bruce Morlan, all Planning Commissioner approved.

- ❖ Miscellaneous
 - Jim Braun reviewed the need for on-site living quarters for parents as a result of some reluctance to use nursing homes due to pandemic conditions. Questions from residents have been received asking if trailer homes/small homes could be added to a residential property to house family members in need of care.
 - John Klockeman asked that this be added to next month's agenda.
 - Solar tax – Jim Braun noted that a solar tax is collected by the county and 20% passed on to the township. As the Praver site was slow to come online, money should be coming in next year. John Klockeman asked if we can petition to raise the amount given to townships.

- ❖ Adjourn - Bruce Morlan made a motion to adjourn at 10:05, Jeff Johnson seconded, all approved.