

**Melrose Township Planning Commission Minutes
Melrose Township Hall
Regular Meeting of June 28, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Bart Wangeman called the meeting to order at 5:31PM.
- B. **Members present:** Bart Wangeman, Bob Bourassa, Dan Nowland, and Charley Zimmer.
- C. **Members absent:** Tim LaGasse.
- D. **Staff present:** Zoning Administrator Randy Frykberg and Recording Secretary Tom Mackie.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Following a review, the agenda was approved by consensus.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bob Bourassa motioned, Charley Zimmer seconded, to approve the April 26, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. All five members present voted Yes, motion carried.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Special Use Request for Commercial Storage Buildings at 02797 US-131 North (ID# 15-010-021-002-00):** Bart announced a potential conflict of interest developed after the last Planning Commission meeting as his company has been asked to bid on construction work for this project. Although he had no contact with the applicant that would affect earlier discussions, he will now recuse himself from all discussion and voting related to this application and will sit in the audience for the duration of the agenda item. Vice-Chair Bob Bourassa assumed the duty to preside over the meeting for the duration of this agenda item.

Bob opened the Public Hearing at 5:35 PM and Randy summarized the proposal to construct six 5-unit storage buildings at 02797 US-131 North. Randy identified and discussed the following six conditions required for a Commercial Storage Special Use Request in the FF District:

1. The commercial storage Buildings must be shielded from view along the access road and neighboring properties
2. The commercial storage buildings must be maintained and landscaped.
3. All storage shall be inside an enclosed building.
4. All parking, maneuvering and drive lane areas shall be provided with a paved or dust free surface.

5. The project shall meet the approval of the Township Fire Department.
6. There shall be a designated manager to provide a security function and to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. A sign (minimum size 11' X 17') indicating how to contact the manager shall be posted on the building and the contact information shall be provided, in writing, to the Township.

Randy indicated these conditions all appear to be met.

GENERAL FINDINGS OF FACT

General Findings of Fact proposed by Randy in his memo to the Planning Commission were discussed and approved by all 4 participating members:

1. The 10+ acre parcel is in the FF District.
2. A house and a storage building is on the parcel now.
3. The Zoning Ordinance lists 5 standards for the PC to consider prior to deciding to deny, approve, or approve with conditions the Special Use request (listed below under "Findings").
4. The Special Use Permit fee has been paid.
5. All submittals (the application for zoning action, the special use zoning application, the environmental impact statement, the storm water control plan, and the site plan) seem to meet the zoning requirements.
6. On June 10, 2021, all 6 property owners within 300' of this parcel, were mailed a notice of this request and hearing.
7. On June 11, 2021, a legal ad regarding this request, was published in the Petoskey News Review.
8. The Fire Chief has reviewed the proposal and has written that there are no Fire or Medical response issues with the plans as submitted.

Bob asked for any introductory comment from the petitioner. Project Engineer Carrie May suggested Randy had adequately addressed plan details but she would respond to any questions.

Bob asked for public comment in favor of the application. Randy noted the 300-foot letters and advertising have resulted in two letters both in favor. An email from another neighbor also expressed support. Audience member, and current property owner, Dave Korhase suggested storage units are a good use for the property as it is surrounded by state land and ease of access to the driveway is conducive to this purpose. Carrie noted an application to MDOT for the driveway has been submitted and a Soil Erosion permit has been issued. As a representative of family members to the north of this property, Debbie Mathews expressed her support for the project.

With no other comments in support, Bob asked for public comment opposed to the application. None were offered and Bob closed the Public Hearing at 5:46 PM.

The Plan was then evaluated against the 5 Special Use Standards on Section 10.2

- A) *Will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be harmonious with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that such a use will not change the essential character of the area in which it is proposed to be located. The surrounded area is rural and wooded. The use may be less intense than the current non-conforming use. Charley asked if any changes were made to the plan after it was submitted. Carrie explained how corrections were made to some elevation numbers. She also noted the MDOT driveway permit could potentially result in additional requirements being imposed on the project.*
- B) *The location and size of the proposed use, the nature and intensity of the principal use and all the accessory uses, the site layout and its relation to the streets giving access to it, shall be such that traffic to and from the use, the assemble of persons in connection therewith, will not be hazardous or otherwise detrimental to the neighborhood or its normal traffic. This project will create minimal, if any, additional traffic than as the parcel was previously used. Seems to meet this standard. Dan asked if a deceleration lane would be provided in the south-bound lane of US-131. Carrie responded it would not, but a planned angled entryway would provide a gradual transition into the driveway.*
- C) *Will be served adequately by essential public services and facilities or that the persons responsible for the establishment of the proposed use will provide adequately any such service or facility. No or minimal municipal services required. Dan noted no water, sewer, or bathrooms are included. The only utility provided is electricity.*
- D) *Will not create excessive additional public costs and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the Township. Minimal change.*
- E) *Will be consistent with the intent and purposes of the Ordinance. Yes.*

Charley Zimmer motioned to approve the Carlile and Korthase Special Use Application to allow commercial storage buildings on a 10+ acre parcel at 02797 US-131 N (ID #15-010-021-002-00) in accordance with the signed application dated June 4, 2021. Part of this decision was also based on the Planner/Zoning Administrator's June 18, 2021 memo regarding this request, and drawings number C1.0, C1.1 and C1.2 prepared by Carrie May, Boyne Engineering and Design, issued June 7, 2021. A second was offered by Bob Bourassa. The motion was approved with 4 voting Yes and 0 voting No.

Bart resumed responsibility as Chair of the meeting.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Further discussion regarding minimum square footage for a residential structure in the Farm and Forest (FF) District.

Randy noted this topic has come up several times in the past but never acted upon since the State Building Code did not allow for a permanent structure at the reduced sizes now being considered. With the recent building code amendment (Appendix Q) and recent increased interest in smaller residential units the Planning Commission has agreed to renew their discussion. Several area municipalities are now adjusting their Zoning Ordinances to allow smaller dwellings. Initially the Planning Commission has expressed interest in considering this for the FF (Farm and Forest) District only.

Bart asked for any public comment. Jeff Kuhn expressed his support for this concept. He owns several small pre-existing cabins near the Township Hall and noted high demand for this type of dwelling. He also supports the idea of starting this in the FF District. Carrie May asked if a concurrent reduction in minimum lot size was also under consideration. Randy responded a change in lot size has not been considered at this point in the discussion.

Dan suggested considering a 24 foot by 24 foot (576 square feet) minimum size. Randy noted this would be larger than most of the sample standard housing unit examples provided in the member packets at last month's meeting.

Bart suggested we research the maximum size prebuilt structure that can be delivered to a site. We may also consider allowing ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units) to be detached in the FF District as a way to provide for smaller homes. Bart also noted Appendix Q of the building code only addresses "Tiny homes" as defined as less than 400 square feet.

Dan suggested a permanent foundation be required for any smaller homes and Bart agreed. Bart also suggested we consider height regulations as current language establishes minimum size relative to the number of stories.

Jeff Kuhn suggested there will be many questions relative to allowing smaller homes so we may want to consider processing requests as a PUD (Planned unit development). Sue Gilmette noted it's good we're discussing this now before an application is submitted. She suggested we review language from other communities. Carrie May stated some communities have designed their size requirement language to preclude single-wide mobile homes.

VI. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS / REPORTS: - Randy reported the last 3 ZBA cases have all involved "Expansion of a non-conforming use in a conforming way." He suggested this trend will probably continue as smaller older homes on small lots are expanded.

VII. PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Following the announcement of Randy's retirement at the end of this month Bart thanked him for his years of service to the community.

VIII. **CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** Jeff Kuhn suggested a Planning Commission review of documentation requirements specified in the Zoning Ordinance, such as “An Engineered drainage plan.” We may need an amendment to clarify what these statements mean. He also suggested a lot of this is presently in the ordinance, but some sorting and organizing is necessary for clarification.

IX. **NEXT MEETING:** Scheduled for July 26th.

X. **ADJOURNMENT:** At 6:38 PM

Prepared by

Planning Commission Approval by:

Tom Mackie, Recording Secretary

Charley Zimmer, Secretary

Copies: Melrose Township Board, Planning Commission Members, www.melrosetwp.org