

Barry County Planning Commission
Special Meeting
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Clyde Morgan in the Community Room of the Tyden Center located at 121 South Church Street in Hastings. The Planning Commission members in attendance included: Morgan, John LaForge, Jack Miner, Joyce Snow, Ben Geiger and Robert Vanderboegh. Jack Nadwornik was absent. Those also in attendance included Barry County Planning Director James McManus, Julie Fox and other interested people.

Motion by Miner to approve the agenda as written. Support by LaForge. All ayes - motion carried.

Motion by LaForge to approve the Minutes of June 22, 2020 as printed. Support by Miner. All ayes - motion carried.

BUSINESS

Site Plan Review

Case No. PR-6-2020

Julie LaJoye Fox/Jim Fox
Apple/Bridge Park Real Estate LLC
(Property Owner)

Morgan asked Fox to present her request.

Fox said she owns U-Rent-Em Canoe Livery on Apple Street. She said when the business started, there was very little development in the area, but today, there is a lot of development, and they have outgrown the area. She noted the tube rental on the river is well-known in the region and helps economic development in the area.

Fox said she has bought property on Center Road, and she has cleaned up the property and removed lots of junk. She said she wants to use the property for parking and tube-launching. She said she is planning on having 42 parking spaces.

Miner questioned what emergency canoe and kayaks meant. Fox said she typically launches from Charlton Park, which is a 3 1/2-hour float, but she needs a take-out point in the event of a storm or medical emergency.

Fox noted she will only launch the tubes from the site.

Miner asked if she uses McKeown Park. Fox said no.

Miner asked if this was an issue of enforcement. McManus said no.

Miner asked if the property was in a floodplain. Fox said yes, but she noted they do not launch tubes during flooding.

Miner asked if there would be any tree removal. Fox said no.

Miner asked about the building rehab. Fox said they are fixing some of the blocks and the roof.

Miner asked if the drive would be gravel. Fox said yes.

Miner asked if the use would be considered commercial. Fox said yes.

Snow asked if the zoning was Rural Residential (RR). McManus said yes.

Snow asked if the request was for a boat launch. McManus said it was for a Place of Public Assembly – Small.

Vanderboegh asked if the request was a special use. McManus said no, it is a site plan review because the use is allowed by right.

Vanderboegh questioned if the use was a water access lot. McManus said no, the use is not keyholing.

Vanderboegh asked about the parking. Fox said the customers would get off at Apple Street and be shuttled back. She noted they have parking on Apple Street, this site, and another property on Center Road.

Vanderboegh asked if they launch there. Fox said only tubes would launch there.

Vanderboegh asked how many spaces were at the other property on Center Road. Fox said 24 or 32. Fox noted the parking would likely only be needed on weekends.

Morgan asked if Fox owned any other businesses. Fox said yes. She noted she started upgrading the business 11 years ago.

Morgan noted the cap is 100 people on site.

LaForge asked how long a float was. Fox said around three hours.

Morgan asked to clarify emergency. Fox said people sometimes have to get off the river.

Morgan asked if Fox would live in the building. Fox said no; it would be an office.
Morgan asked if they would sell drinks or other things. Fox said they will only have ten items for sale and no alcohol sales.
Morgan asked if the parking area would be paved. Fox said no, the parking would be grass and gravel.
Morgan asked if there were any concerns about wet ground. Fox noted the river will not be used in floods or rain events.
Morgan asked about traffic control. Fox said there will be an attendant on site.

Snow asked if there would be any runoff issues. Fox said no.
McManus noted the property had been an enforcement issue for many years.

LaForge verified this location would likely be used on weekends. Fox agreed.

Morgan asked what the charge was to tube. Fox said \$12/person.

Geiger asked if people could bring their own tubes. Fox said no.

Geiger asked if it would improve emergency access. Fox said yes.
Geiger asked what types of trouble would require an emergency landing. Fox cited a popped tube, or a medical issue. She noted people get confused and lost on the river. She noted no one has ever floated past the collection site.

Geiger asked how deep the river is. Fox said 2-3 feet.

Miner asked why the ropes were on the lot. Fox said to limit the use of space.
Miner asked how parking and traffic was controlled. Fox said with an attendant on site.
Miner noted there would be pedestrian traffic between the two parking areas on Center Road and he was concerned about the safety. He also noted the bridge on Center Road can obstruct the view on the drive.
Fox said when the lot is in use, there will be an attendant there.

Vanderboegh noted business can be sporadic and people are getting shuttled. He asked what the hours of operation would be. Fox said 11-5.
Vanderboegh asked what percentage of parking would the lot alleviate. Fox said the lot will be used for overflow parking.

Vanderboegh asked if the use is commercial. McManus agreed.
Vanderboegh asked if the use was grandfathered. McManus said the assembly was new. He noted all places of public assembly are commercial in nature.

Snow asked about growth potential. Fox said she is at her limit and noted the river is a limited resource.

Motion by Geiger to approve Case No. PR-6-2020 as presented. Support by LaForge.

Roll call vote taken: 4 ayes - Geiger, LaForge, Morgan, and Snow -- 1 nay -- Miner -- Vanderboegh abstained. Motion carried. Site Plan Approved.

Public Comment

Neva Fish said there is chaos in the parking lot and lots of people walking in the road. She noted safety has to be a primary concern. She said Fox is not a good neighbor, and there are too many people in the area. She questioned who will pick up the trash on the river.

Robert Taylor questioned if the fill was permitted since the property is in a floodplain. He said the area floods every year. He said noise is an issue. He noted a study should be done on the impact on the river from the vessels.

Fox commented they do a river clean-up five days a week and at the beginning and end of the season.

Motion by LaForge to adjourn. Support by Geiger. All ayes - motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joyce Snow, Secretary