

**MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK
MEETING MINUTES**

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2024 @ 7:30 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
BETHEL PARK MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

Chairman Mark Viehman called to order the February 14, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Bethel Park Planning and Zoning Commission at 7:30 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Members in attendance: Mr. Adam Foote, Mr. Rick Raeder, Mr. Tom Riley, Ms. Kerry Ann Stare, Mr. Justin Tiano, Mr. Mark Viehman and Ms. Katelyn Walsh.

Council Liaison in attendance: Jim Jenkins

Staff in attendance: Gerald J. Harbison, Municipal Planner

B. COMMUNICATIONS – None.

C. MINUTES – Approval of the January 10, 2024 meeting minutes.

Mr. Raeder made a motion to approve the January 10, 2024 minutes as submitted. Mr. Tiano seconded the motion and it passed 7-0.

D. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS (Non-Agenda) – None.

E. OLD BUSINESS

1. Acceptance of 2023 PZC Annual Report

Mr. Viehman noted that the 2023 Annual Report was distributed at last month’s meeting for review. Mr. Raeder made a motion to approve the report as submitted. Mr. Tiano seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Bethel Park School District Concession Stand @ High School
Minor Land Development Application #2024-0077
Request for Preliminary/Final Approval

Mr. Viehman asked if there was anyone in the audience other than the developer interested in the BPSD application to construct a concessions and restroom building on the high school campus located at 309 Church Road. Mr. Timothy Mowery, 108 Heather Drive, acknowledged his interest of the project but offered no comment.

Bethel Park School District Superintendent James Walsh, EdD and Assistant Superintendent Mark Korcinsky, EdD and School Board member Kim Walsh-Turner were present to explain the project. Dr. Walsh reported that the concessions and restroom building was originally included in the high school rebuilt 12 years ago but was cut from the budget, however, the underground utilities were installed at that time in anticipation of it being eventually constructed. Dr. Walsh informed the commission that the surveys from the Bethel Park 2021 Strategic Plan confirmed strong public support for this project to address a dire need at this location.

Dr. Korcinsky noted that the building will be a modular unit attached to a permanent foundation to be constructed between the practice field and the softball field by the parking lot. Water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer lines would be tied into existing facilities, he noted. The temporary port-a-johns would no longer be needed.

Mr. Viehman noted the plan was not reviewed at their workshop meeting and asked for staff comments. Mr. Harbison explained that the municipality learned of the project after recently being invited to a preconstruction meeting, coinciding with the workshop date. The school district was advised of the planning approval at that time, he noted. He added that the staff has been working with Dr. Korcinsky to submit a minor land development application for tonight's meeting. Mr. Harbison reported that the plans passed engineering review with remaining comments being "housekeeping" items to be addressed for a recordable plan.

As such, he recommended preliminary / final approval subject to the applicant satisfactorily addressing the Municipal Planner's comments dated February 6, 2024 and that a Declaration of Covenants and Easement for Maintenance of Stormwater Management Facilities be executed for the maintenance of the on-site stormwater management facilities.

Mr. Viehman opened the discussion with commission comments.

Mr. Raeder asked if construction started as he saw the construction site was disturbed. Dr. Korcinsky responded that the earth disturbance was not related to building construction but rather was from their engineer probing the ground to locate the underground utilities. He noted that all work stopped once he learned that site plan approval was needed for the project.

Mr. Foote asked if there were any notable differences between a modular building and constructing a building. Dr. Walsh indicated the modular building comes with a 25-year construction warranty and was unaware of any lesser building quality issues with the modular unit.

Mr. Foote asked about the School District's relationship with the Bethel Park Recreation Department in using this facility. Dr. Walsh noted school staffing would be on campus from 6 AM to 10 PM on weekdays and will continue the shared staffing arrangement with the Recreation Department on weekends and sporting events. He confirmed that the Recreation Department would have access to the building for their sporting events.

The commission inquired about the project timeline and whether tabling the plan would impact it. Dr. Korcinsky responded that they would like to have the building ready for the spring sporting season and didn't see a one-month delay as problematic. Mr. Harbison noted that the County Planning Department comments are pending, and the building permit can't be issued until that review is received. He further added that he didn't expect any substantial planning comments from the County due to the minor nature of the plan. Mr. Harbison noted that if there are, the plan will be brought back to commission for further discussion.

At the end of discussion Mr. Raeder made a motion to approve the plan subject the two conditions recommended by the Community Development Department and a third that no construction permits be issued until the County Planning review comments have been received and vetted. Mr. Tiano seconded the motion, and it passed on a majority vote of 6 to 1 with Mr. Raeder dissenting.

G. OTHER ITEMS

1. Review and discuss Article III (District Regulations) of the draft Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update

Mr. Harbison referred to his February 9, 2024 memo in continuing the discussion on Article III (District Regulations) regarding trailers and recreational vehicles, setbacks for Accessory Uses and Structures, height of carports, and Kennels.

ITEM 1 – TRAILERS and RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Mr. Harbison continued the discussion on trailers and recreational vehicles by reporting findings on RV length and results of a code enforcement study. He found the consumer's preferred length for an RV motor home to be 32 - 33', the maximum RV length on state roads to be 45', and special licensing requirements for RVs at 36' in length due to the weight. He reported that code enforcement complaints for RV's are on the decline with about a dozen reported on average over the past three years with most violations involving parking in front of the house on a driveway. Mr. Harbison suggested the 30-foot maximum length for Recreational Vehicles and trailers remain unchanged as the staff has a pretty good handle on RV complaints and permitting larger RVs may introduce more issues. He further suggested that should the PZC be desirous of increasing the maximum length permitted, a modest increase to the 32 - 33' to capture the preferred length by RV owners.

The consensus of the PZC was to leave the maximum length of RV's and trailers at 30'.

ITEM 2 – SETBACKS FOR PATIOS AND FENCES

Mr. Harbison continued the discussion from the previous meeting wherein the general exceptions from the default 5' side and rear yard setback for accessory uses was considered. He reminded the commission that the exceptions would allow certain features such as decks, patios, and ornamental features to be no closer than 2' to a side property line and no closer to a neighboring building than 12' and that they asked for additional clarification and examples from staff.

After further comparing the current and proposed ordinances, Mr. Harbison suggested that the default rear yard setback proposed Article III Section 69.3.19.D.3 for Accessory Uses be changed from 5' to 10' to match the current default setbacks in effect and further suggested that RVs be added to the list of allowing a lesser side yard setback to 5 ft.

Mr. Harbison shared a listing of items eligible for a lesser setback that are referenced in the "Supplemental Regulations Article" - an Article the PZC has not yet reviewed. He further clarified the types of patios, terraces, and ornamental features that would be exempted.

It was the consensus of the PZC to carry forward the current default setbacks of 5' side and 10' rear in the proposed ordinance. The PZC had no further comments on the features and structures exempted from the default setback to a lesser setback.

ITEM 3 – CARPORT HEIGHT

Mr. Harbison reported that the ordinance has been amended to the PZC's preference to reduce the maximum height for carports on lots less than 1 acre 12' and to 15' for lots greater than an acre. The PZC concurred with the change.

ITEM 4 - KENNELS

In continuing the discussion from the previous meeting wherein the PZC generally agreed that Kennels shouldn't be permitted in the residential zones, however, Mr. Grandillo suggested allowing kennels as an accessory use requiring special exception or conditional use approval in residential zones for the limited activity of training four or more pets for the purpose of exhibiting in dog shows, performance events or field and obedience trials.

Mr. Harbison reported that the staff is indifferent to Mr. Grandillo's suggestion, however, should the PZC decide to recommend Boarding Kennel/Pet Boarding/Animal Daycare as a Conditional Accessory Use in the Residential R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 Zones he suggested keeping consistency with **Bethel Park Municipal Ordinance Chapter 30 – Dogs, Cats and Other Pets** and limit the number of dogs to six (6).

The members were not entirely supportive of the suggestion and decided to continue the discussion at another meeting.

OTHER ITEMS – TINY HOMES

Mr. Raeder brought up the topic of Tiny Homes. Mr. Harbison recalled the commission agreeing to take a wait and see approach with Tiny Homes and revisit at the next Comprehensive Plan update or if a need for them arises. He noted that the commission agreed, however, to address housing alternatives for the elderly and college aged children via an Accessory Family Dwelling Unit by allowing for in-law and family member suites in the primary residence or detached garage.

Mr. Harbison added that the commission can revisit this issue when the Supplemental Regulations Article is discussed with the PZC.

H. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The commission noted the next workshop meeting to be February 28th and the next regular meeting to be March 13th. After it was reported that no new applications were received, Mr. Viehman informed the members that he would contact them after consulting with staff next week on whether the February 28th workshop meeting will be held.

I. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.