

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 26, 2007**

PRESENT: Batchelor, Blough, Sanford, Simmonds

ABSENT: Clements

CITIZENS: 12

PUBLIC HEARING

The Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission Public Hearing for a Special Use Permit for Harmon Wood Products on Parcels 41-20-28-200-016 and 41-20-28-200-020 was called to order by Chairman Simmonds at 7:00 P.M.

The Notice of the Public Hearing was read by Vice-Chairman Batchelor.

The presentation for the applicant was made by Robert Harmon and Joel Huizenga (Stedfast Construction).

The Planning Commission received a revised site plan dated June 25, 2007 as well as a letter of response from Wilcox Professional Services dated June 25, 2007.

General information related to this proposed use at this location include the following:

- This is a wood cutting operation in which the applicant receives raw lumber and then cuts it into various lengths for the construction of pallets.
- The applicant does not build/construct any pallets on site. All cut lumber is trucked from this location for further processing.
- The proposed building will be 48X120 feet of a pole barn type construction.
- This business has been in operation for 13 years and employs approximately 6 employees.
- All work is done inside of the building although the raw lumber is unloaded and stored outside of the building.
- Sawdust and wood scraps go into sealed dumpsters, which are hauled away daily.
- They use horizontal band saws which have hood and exhaust fans to flow the sawdust into the dumpsters.
- They produce 15,000 board feet per day.
- They receive 2-3 semis of lumber per day.
- They haul the finished/cut wood on a 28 foot flat bed truck.
- The property is owned by Mark Velting. The applicant is in the process of purchasing the property.
- The applicant is considering repairing the existing barn that is on the property to use as storage.
- The applicant may use the existing house on the property as a residential rental property.
- The applicant is working with the Kent County Health Department related to soil perkability issues.

This concluded the applicant's presentation.

The Planning Commission then reviewed this matter based upon the MainStreet Planning report of June 20, 2007 and the V-TEC report of June 18, 2007 and The Wilcox Services response and revised Site Plan dated June 25, 2007.

This included the following issues and responses based upon the MainStreet (MS) planning report:

MS#2 – Outside storage needs screening

-Wilcox – The outside storage area will be screened. It is shown on the Site Plan.

MS#3 – There are landscape regulations requiring trees and shrubs.

-Wilcox – They have added trees/shrubs to the Site Plan.

*This may require further improvements.

MS#4 – Must address the material for the parking area.

-Wilcox – They will use recycled bituminous millings.

*The Planning Commission accepts this solution.

MS#5 – More parking spaces are required.

- Wilcox – They have added additional parking spaces to the Site Plan.

MS#6 – Will the house be an office?

- Wilcox – The house will not be used for an office. Restrooms have been added to the pole barn and are displayed on the Site Plan.

MS#7 – Need a lighting plan.

- Wilcox – They have provided outside lighting information to the Planning Commission.

MS#8 – Must show location of outside doors on the building.

- Wilcox – These are shown on the revised Site Plan.

MS#9 – Must address comments from the Township Engineer.

- Wilcox – They will address these in another section of the minutes.

MS#10 – Is this the appropriate location for this use?

- The Planning Commission feels that this use fits the Ordinance.

MS#11 – Consult Township Fire Official

- They have discussed with the Alto Fire Department. Not a concern. This building does not require sprinklers.

MS#12 – Issues of traffic/noise.

- Planning Commission considers these acceptable.

MS#13 – Bancroft is a gravel road.

- Planning Commission feels this is acceptable as long as the truck traffic does not increase.

MS#14 – Sawdust in the dumpsters.

- Planning Commission feels that the business should continue to monitor this situation.

MS#15 – Noise Issues

- Wilcox – The building has insulated six-inch walls and an insulated attic. The door is on the south side of the building. There will be hi-lows with the back up beepers. They are aware of Township Noise Ordinances. If they exceed the limits, they will be in violation of the Ordinance.

MS#16 – The barn must be addressed.

- Wilcox – They will repair the barn and make it usable. They will not use it for pallet storage.

MS#17 – The issue of the well and septic must be resolved.

- Planning Commission does not believe that this soil will perk. They do not believe that the Health Department will allow a “store and haul” solution for this location. This issue needs to be resolved.

The Planning Commission then reviewed the issues in the V-TEC (VT) report of June 18, 2007 and the responses from Wilcox and the applicant.

VT#2 – Need a minimum 2% grade and an under drain.

- Wilcox – They are complying and it is shown on the revised Site Plan.

VT#3 – Berm. This is acceptable.

VT#4 – Septic issues on this property.

- Wilcox – This is being addressed.
*It has not been resolved.

VT#5 – Use of the existing house/restrooms?

- Wilcox – The house will not be used. Restrooms are in the new building.

The hearing was then opened for public input. This included the following:

T. Yssekdyke – Cascade Road

-He has lived across from this parcel for 16 years. He is concerned with noise, dust and traffic. The property's entrance from Bancroft is across from him and is a bad location. This operation will lower the value of his house.

M. Anderson – Maple Run Road

-He is concerned with the septic situation. He believes that dust and noise will be a problem. They should do an actual landscape plan and plant the trees with 12-foot centers. The trees should be evergreens. Why not check the decibel levels at their existing operation. What are they going to do with the existing house and barn? What will they be used for?

T. LeBarre – Cascade Road

-He is concerned with the dust and noise that will be created by this operation. Will they have outside mechanicals? Will the wood leach and allow contaminants in the ground water? There are environmental issues to be considered.

There being no further public comment, the Public Hearing was closed at 8:30 P.M.

SPECIAL MEETING

The Special Meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order at 8:34 P.M. by Chairman Simmonds.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

Batchelor moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Sanford. All in favor and the agenda was approved.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:

Sanford moved to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2007 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting. Seconded by Blough. All in favor and the minutes were approved.

HARMON WOOD PRODUCTS:

The Planning Commission discussed items of concern related to this Special Use request. This included the following:

1. The entire issue of the septic system and well for this operation. Can the existing systems be used or are new systems needed. The Planning Commission requires documentation from the Kent County Health Department.

2. Although covering the parking lot with millings might be acceptable, the entire issue of dust must be kept under control.
3. The Planning Commission requires a complete landscaping plan, especially related to a sight barrier along Bancroft.
4. This operation must conform to the Township's Noise Ordinance.
5. The barn on this property must either be repaired to a safe status or destroyed.
6. Hours of operation will be limited to: 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Saturday.
7. The Special Use Permit must be reviewed annually by the Planning Commission.

After discussion the Planning Commission felt that there were too many open items to be able to consider granting a Special Use Permit at this time. Batchelor moved to table the request from Harmon Wood Products for a Special Use Permit until July 9, 2007. Seconded by Sanford. All in favor and the request was tabled.

ADJOURNMENT:

Batchelor moved to adjourn. Seconded by Blough. All in favor and the Special Meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was adjourned at 9:18 P.M.

Submitted by D. Simmonds, Chairman _____