

HOLLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBCOMMITTEE TO REVIEW A TEXT AMENDMENT CONCERNING FARM STANDS
March 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Community Development Director, John Said opened the meeting via Zoom video conference at 3:30 p.m.

Present: Vice-chair Jack VanderMeulen, Members Randy Kortering. Also present were Community Development Director John Said, Assistant Community Development Director Corey Broersma and Recording Secretary Tricia Kiekintveld.

Absent: Member Dennis Gebben.

Public Comment: Attorney William Sikkel indicated he was present and was available to answer any questions about his proposed text amendment application concerning the Farm Stand definition or associated regulations.

Mr. Sikkel began the meeting by giving an update on the farm stand that was operational in Park Township in 2020. He indicated that he was not able to get a response directly from Park Township but through doing some research he found that they allowed the farm stand through a Peddlers License that was issued for a couple of months for a single vendor. Park Township then found them in violation of the Peddlers License because the owners of the property had allowed multiple vendors on the property. They then applied for a special land use but there were some problems with water, parking, etc. After obtaining some variances they were approved.

Mr. Sikkel stated that approving this type of use for just one property could be a problem in the future legally. He would suggest that it be approved for a specific zoning district with a special use.

It was asked if there were any other farmers that have asked for this type of thing in addition to Visser Farms. No one has received any requests. However, it was mentioned that if they know it is not allowed, they may not be asking but if it becomes available there may be more that would use it.

Staff pointed out that the situation that transpired at Park Township is a situation that would not be allowed under Holland Township's Zoning Ordinance as we do not have a catch-all special use like they do. Staff also noted that after a review of the Township Board meeting from August 20, 2020, it was found that they did not make a recommendation that these types of farm stands be allowed.

Staff is recommending that the subcommittee bring a recommendation to the Planning Commission at the March 16, 2021 meeting to let the Commissioners decide if this matter should proceed as a Zoning Ordinance text amendment.

Mr. Kortering asked why the requirements are different for farm stands on AG land versus C-2 land? Staff answered that the ordinance was written for a small farm stand that would be set up in front of a farmer's house or farm and there would be occasional stop-byes without the need for a parking lot, etc. The ordinance respects agricultural uses on agricultural land and C-2 areas have different uses and orientations for longer term businesses.

Mr. VanderMeulen pointed out some of his thoughts. He doesn't see this type of farm stand competing with a brick-and-mortar store like Meijer, Family Fare, etc. We need to think of how residents are best served. He said he saw something that West Ottawa schools has an arrangement with Michigan farmers to add local fresh produce to the school lunches. Mr. VanderMeulen also pointed out that 25-30% of the agricultural land is not located where people live and therefore is not easily accessible. He is intrigued by the Peddlers License that Park Township offers.

It was asked if Visser could use the inside of the building on Chicago Dr.? It was pointed out that it would be cost prohibitive for them to do that.

Staff brought up several questions that should be answered today. Does the township want this? Do we want to expand the Farmers Market description? Is there a need in the township at this time? Does it pass based on zoning criteria for text amendments? Should we bring this to the Planning Commission and let them decide if it meets the criteria? Is this just something that people wanted because of the COVID pandemic?

Mr. Kortering stated that he did some research and found that there are three terms used for these type of farm stands. 1) Farm Market – this is a stand on a famers property 2) Farmers Market – this would be like what the City of Holland does at the Civic Center 3) Roadside Stand – in accordance with Act #92 it states that this is where a farmer can transport their product to the public on un-platted land. He questioned if this wasn't what we are talking about here? Mr. Sikkel pointed out that this would be a good solution except for the fact that most of the township is platted. Mr. Said pointed out that un-platted land still tends to be rural so that wouldn't help in this situation.

Mr. Sikkel stated that people liked this option because it was open every day unlike the Holland Farmer's Market which is only open 2 days a week with limited hours. He said that he feels a special land use would be a possibility here and have it based on the individual property. He could work with the township attorney to write up wording that would stand up in court making sure to not allow for the sale of blankets, fireworks, etc. on street corners, as no one wants to see that. They could also add wording to allow for only products produced on the farm or products made from the products grown on the farm. He asked for clarity from the township on what parameters they would need to see in the wording.

Mr. Kortering and Mr. VanderMeulen would like to take this back to the Planning Commission and have them officially vote on the submitted proposal and provide conditions for Mr. Sikkel to use to be able to write up new wording. It was decided to have this item brought back up at the March 16, 2021, special meeting. Mr. Sikkel would prefer to amend the current submittal rather than submitting a whole new

proposal to avoid more filing fees. Mr. Sikkel will be at the March 16 meeting to address the Planning Commission and to answer any questions.

Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Kiekintveld
Clerk's Assistant