

MINUTES

Blue Earth County Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

Wednesday March 7, 2018

7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Femrite. Planning Commission members present were Bill Anderson, Kurt Anderson, Kip Bruender, Lyle Femrite, Barry Jacques and Michael Riley. County staff members Garrett Rohlfing, Aaron Stubbs, George Leary, and Jaclyn Essandoh were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bill Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 7th, 2018 regular Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Leary indicated there was no change to the agenda.

4. NEW BUSINESS

PC 06-18

Schweer's Sunnyslope Pork Inc - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the conversion of an existing swine farrowing operation to a wean/finish operation. The applicant is proposing to convert one total confinement swine barn from farrow to wean/finish. If approved the applicant intends to stock the existing barn with 1000 head of swine between 55 and 300 pounds and 2,000 head of swine under 55 pounds. All manure will be stored in an existing 8-foot below barn concrete pit. The property is zoned Agricultural and is located in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 1, Danville Township.

Mr. Rohlfing presented the staff report.

The applicant, Mr. Scott Schweer was present and mentioned that the conversion has become necessary because of the worn-out equipment and the fact that the building needs to be modernized to meet current industry standards.

During the public comment session, Mr. Larry Attenberger, a neighbor to the applicant mentioned that, the said County Ditch JD3 is his private ditch and that, he is currently in a legal battle to close of the ditch. He added that, a couple of years ago, the Schweer's were spreading manure next to the County road ditch and wanted to know about spreading setbacks. Mr. Attenberger again mentioned that a tile had also been put in that discharges into his ditch.

Mr. Femrite commented that the planning commission was only to act on the conditional use permit even though there were other issues regarding the ditch. He however thanked Mr. Attenberger for his comments. Mr. Scott Schweer commented that Mr. Attenberger's accusation of him directly dumping manure into the ditch was categorically false. He added that Mr. Attenberger had called a feedlot representative to his property who found nothing wrong with how he was applying manure.

Mr. Kurt Anderson asked the applicant about the occupant of the residential dwelling to the south. Mr. Schweer answered by stating that he was the occupant of the dwelling and that he together with a brother owned 156.62 acres of farmland on the property.

Mr. Bruender continued with a motion to approve the request with the findings proposed by staff. Mr. Kurt Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 07-18

Triple R Pork LLC - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the conversion of an existing swine farrow to finish operation to a finishing operation. The applicant is proposing to convert 7 total confinement barns from farrow to finish. The existing operation consists of 1950 head of swine over 300 pounds, and 3600 head of swine between 55 and 300 pounds. If approved the facility will house a total of 8750 head of swine between 55 and 300 pounds. All manure is stored in existing 8-foot below barn concrete pits. The property is zoned Agricultural and is located in the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 9, Vernon Center Township.

Mr. Rohlfiing presented the staff report.

The applicant, Mr. Bob Roelof was present and mentioned that the reason for the conversion to a finishing operation was due to the fact that things are changing in the swine industry and it will not be sustainable to continue as a farrowing operation. There was no public comment.

Mr. Femrite complimented County staff on a very thorough report. He also asked the applicant about the approximate age of the buildings on the site. Mr. Roelof answered by stating that the buildings were constructed in 1979, 1984, 1987, 2001, 2002 and 2008 and that some of them have been remodeled over the years.

Mr. Jacques also asked the applicant if the quantity of manure or fertilizer value increases when an operation is switched from farrowing to finishing. Mr. Roelof answered by stating that fertilizer value increases while manure volume decreases because more water is used in the farrowing/gestation environment.

Mr. Bill Anderson continued with a motion to approve the request with the findings proposed by staff. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Essandoh introduced Mr. Espirit Omoyemi, a student from the Minnesota State University, Mankato, who was at the meeting to fulfill the requirements of his 'Introduction to the City' course.

Mr. Stubbs informed the Planning Commission about the progress of work on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan update. He added that, after reviewing the draft plan which was received by staff in December 2017, and working with the consultants through January and February 2018, staff had concluded that, the draft plan did not have enough input and so some additional research had to be done. Staff has therefore set a target date of September 2018 for the adoption of the plan.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jacques made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Riley seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date