

MINUTES
Blue Earth County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Wednesday March 2, 2011
7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Kurt Anderson. Planning Commission members present were Kurt Anderson, Kip Bruender, Bill Anderson, and Chuck Grams. Planning and Zoning staff present were Sara Isebrand and George Leary.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Grams made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2011 Regular Planning Commission Meeting. Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

4. NEW BUSINESS

Midwest Contracting LLC and Leona Seys Family Trust– Request for a conditional use permit to remove an estimated 36,000 cubic yards of fill for the reconstruction of State Hwy 83 located Agricultural Zoned District in the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 30, LeRay Township.

Mr. Leary presented the staff report.

Dennis Anderson was present on behalf of the applicants.

There was no public comment regarding the request.

There was little discussion by the Planning Commission regarding the request.

Mr. Bruender made a motion to recommend approval of the request to the County Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grams and unanimously approved.

PC 05-11

Greg and Robin Strobel - Request to for a conditional use permit to construct two total confinement swine buildings creating a new feedlot of 4,800 finishing pigs or 1,920 animal units. The site is located in the Agricultural Zoned District in the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 34 McPherson Township.

Ms. Isebrand presented the staff report.

Mr. Leary commented on the process the applicant went through to obtain a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The process included preparation of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet by the MPCA based upon information submitted by the applicants and agencies they had contracted. The MPCA review process included detailed review of manure management, air/odor emissions, livestock mortality disposal, and surface water runoff. Based upon their findings, the MPCA has issued a negative declaration on the need for further review by an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Based upon this negative declaration, the MPCA has issued an NPDES permit for this site and the site proposed in Section 36 of McPherson Township.

The applicant was present and had nothing to add.

There was no public comment.

There was little discussion by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Bill Anderson made a motion to recommend approval of the request to the County Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grams and unanimously approved.

PC 06-11

Greg Strobel - Request to for a conditional use permit to construct two total confinement swine buildings creating a new feedlot of 4,800 finishing pigs or 1,920 animal units. The site is located in the Agricultural Zoned District in the NW ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 36 McPherson Township.

Ms. Isebrand presented the staff report and advised the Commission of a letter from Ron Beckman, a neighboring property owner, and one from the City of Pemberton.

The applicant was present.

Ron Beckman read a prepared statement to the Planning Commission. His statement addressed his concerns with odor emissions and referenced an Iowa State University study and an article published by a group of individuals, the USDA, and Iowa State University titled Vegetative Buffers for Swine Odor Mitigation – Wind Tunnel Evaluation of Air Flow Dynamics. Mr. Beckman indicated he was not opposed to the proposal. He requested that a vegetative buffer along the north side of the site be included as a requirement of the conditional use permit.

Cindy Beckwith asked if the applicant included any odor control measures as part of the proposal. Mr. Leary said none had been included.

Ms. Beckwith asked if the county has an annoyance free setback policy. Mr. Leary responded no.

Ms. Beckwith provided the Commission with information on a program called Odor From Feedlots Setback Estimation Tool commonly referred to as OFFSET. She indicated that the model is used to estimate the level and effect of odor generated from a feedlot site and that it was developed by the University of Minnesota.

Mr. Leary indicated that the OFFSET model was included with the information submitted to the MPCA as part of the NPDES Permit application. Mr. Leary stated that the model provided indicates a 94% annoyance free rating at a distance of 1589 feet from the feedlot buildings.

Mr. Bill Anderson asked Mr. Beckman about the Iowa State Study and the legal action taken against an Iowa farmer that he referenced in his letter. Mr. Anderson asked if Mr. Beckman recalled the type of manure storage structure at issue with that legal action.

Although Mr. Beckman did not specifically recall the type of manure storage structure, he did acknowledge that was likely an open air “lagoon” type structure.

Mr. Anderson stated his opinion that there is a considerable difference in the odors generated by an open-air facility vs. those produced at a facility with a confined manure storage pit.

There was no further public comment

Mr. Grams made a motion to recommend approval of the request to the County Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bill Anderson and unanimously approved.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Leary advised the Commission that the county had been awarded a grant application for the County Shoreland Buffer Initiative. If a resolution of acceptance of the grant is approved by the County Board, the Environmental Services office will work in cooperation with the local SWCD office. The SWCD will provide technical assistance to landowners to address areas of shoreland that are not meeting the required vegetative buffer requirements.

6. AJOURNMENT

There being no additional business, Mr. Bill Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Grams and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date