

Meeting Minutes

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission

Farmland Preservation Sub-Committee

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

7:30 am

ARTICLE 1: Call the meeting to order

Chairman Rissi called the meeting to order at 7:35 am. In attendance were sub-committee members Joe Engel, Ryan Bruneau and Ralph Moxley.

Also in attendance was Zoning Director Madison Smith-Jacoby, who joined us at 8:00 am.

ARTICLE 2: Approve the Agenda

Member Engel moved to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by member Moxley.

Motion approved.

ARTICLE 3: Approve minutes from the November 2 meeting

Member Bruneau noted that in Article 5, need to correct spelling of **Parks Director Manion**.

Member Bruneau also noted in Article 6, 3rd paragraph, second sentence to be revised: "Sub-committee members want to support Agricultural tourism."

With those changes, member Engel moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 2. Member Bruneau supported the motion. Motion approved by all.

Member Moxley noted his appreciation for the careful review of meeting minutes by the sub-committee members. He also noted that the meeting notes are reviewed by Chair Rissi before they are published and distributed.

ARTICLE 4: Disclose any conflict of interest

No members noted a conflict of interest.

ARTICLE 5: Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak

There were no visitors at this meeting.

ARTICLE 6: Review and discussion of Agri-business/tourism

Review of Agricultural Uses document developed by Zoning Director Smith-Jacoby. The column labeled “By Right” are proposed new uses to consider adding.

Existing Uses in AG/FP Districts are on the bottom and proposed Agricultural Uses are on the top. We need to focus on Proposed Uses, and whether they should be “By Right” or “Special Land Use”.

Christmas Tree Farm should be “By Right” in a Farmland zoning district. Member Engel concerned that this may be a waste of good soil on Agricultural land. We need more information before moving ahead with this in the By Right category.

Community Supported Agriculture needs to be defined. This could be community garden plots in urban neighborhoods. Place in “Special Use” column.

Cooking Demonstrations to be removed from “By Right” category. If someone wants to add that under **Events**, they should come in and discuss it with the sub-committee.

Covered Picnic Area: What does that mean? Remove this item from the “By Right” category. This should be considered an **Accessory Building**. If the owner wants to rent the covered picnic area out, he will need to come in for Special Land Use approval. Many questions related to this use: Is parking needed? Will there be a band? What happens with waste? Are there restrooms?

Cut flower wholesale: Remove from list.

Farm Market: Leave in “By Right” category.

Fishing Pond: Remove from list.

Hunting Reserve: Remove from list.

Hay Ride: Should be listed under **Events** in the “Special Land Use” category. Events should have a listing of possible activities under the sub-title “Such As:”

Nature Trails: List as a sub-item under **Events** in “Special Land Use” category. If land is purchased with Trust Fund money, within 90 days the public must be allowed to use that land for hiking.

Orchard: Remove from list.

Riding Stables: Already included in ARC under Uses Permitted by Special Use, Section 7.0. Remove from “By Right” category.

U-pick Operation: Leave in “By Right” category.

Corn Maze: Should be listed under **Events** in “Special Land Use” category.

Pumpkin Patches: Leave in “By Right” category.

Single Family Dwelling: Leave in “By Right” category.

Earth Sheltered and Mobile Home Dwellings: Has to be in ARC. Leave in “By Right” category. Mobile home is not a recreational vehicle. See Chapter 15 of Zoning Ordinance. Must have public utilities (water and sewer) and meet minimum area standards. Must meet land area and setback requirements. Allowed in ARC zones only. If not listed, it could be placed in an R-1 district.

Agriculture Uses and Farming Operations (defined in Chapter 3): Leave in “By Right” category.

Public Stables and Equestrian Activities: In “Special Land Use” category. Define Equestrian.

Private Stables and Equestrian Activities: In “By Right” category. We will need to define Equestrian.

Home Occupations: Leave in “By Right” category. Cannot put vendor sign in front of house listing the private service.

Accessory Buildings: 832 SF maximum is a two-stall garage size. On record that you cannot use for a business, and need to control lighting. Ordinance should be changed to tie the size of the structure to the size of the lot (a sliding scale approach). Change the Ordinance so it is based on lot size or house size. Develop a formula for the future. We should not ask what is going to be stored in the building! Building should be sized proportionately to the size of the lot. We should require a detailed site plan before building permit is granted. Scott Rissi recommends a separate sub-committee to study the Accessory Building requirements.

Recreation Playground: Remove from “By Right” category. Move to “Special Land Use” category. Note: School playgrounds are public.

Greenhouses: Move to “Special Land Use” category.

Keeping Domestic Animals: Does not count dogs and cats. Need to define “domestic animals”. Must have a minimum of three acres for one animal. This ordinance rule applies to chickens.

ARTICLE 7: Goals of Sub-Committee for next meeting

Continue our discussion on Special Land Use.

ARTICLE 8: Any other business

Next meeting of the sub-committee will be Thursday, **November 16**, at 7:30 am. Member Engel will not be able to attend.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, **November 29**, at 7:30 am.

Next meeting will be Thursday, **December 7**, at 8:30 am. Following that meeting there will be Kent County Agricultural event at Wisner Center at 10 am., and 10 am on December 12th.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, **December 13**, at 7:30 am.

Members agreed that the front conference room was a better location for our sub-committee meetings in the future.

We need more time to complete this study before the **Master Plan** comes out.

Attorney should review our proposed changes. We just need a letter with their comments.

ARTICLE 9: Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak

There were no visitors at this meeting.

ARTICLE 10: Adjournment

Motion made by member Moxley to adjourn. Motion seconded by member Rissi. Motion approved by all members. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am.