

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Georgetown Township Planning Commission, held Wednesday, March 01, 2023.

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Samy at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Tom Healy, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Kelly Kuiper, Jessica Ulberg, Gary Veldink

Absent: Michael Moores

Also present: Kevin Austin, Zoning Administrator

#230301-01 – Planning Commission Agenda for March 01, 2023

Moved by Gary Veldink, seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to approve the agenda as submitted.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#230301-02 – Minutes of the [January 18, 2023](#) Planning Commission Meeting

Moved by Gary Veldink, seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to approve the minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#230301-03 – (SUP2301) Best Bark and Stone, 2594 Port Sheldon, is requesting to have an open air business, under Sec 15.3(A), on a parcel of land described as P.P. #70-14-21-400-080, located at 2556 Port Sheldon St., in Community Service Commercial (CS) district. Best Bark and Stone currently operates their business on the adjacent parcel at 2594 Port Sheldon, which has an approved special land use for an open air business (**SUP0804**). If approved, they intend to complete the purchase of this parcel, demolish the structures currently on the parcel, and expand their operations on to this site. ([staff report](#), [application](#), [site plan](#), [narrative](#))

The Zoning Administrator presented the Staff Report.

Tom Healey asked whether or not the eastern driveway depicted on the site plan, is intended to be used as a driveway.

The Zoning Administrator stated that the applicant didn't specifically mention whether or not they would utilize that drive but that current plans have it remaining functional to reach part of the new display area.

Jeanine Bolhouse asked why all the parking spaces had been deferred.

The Zoning Administrator stated that the two previous site plan approvals had gradually deferred all of the required spaces due to the layout and the nature of the business being short term pick up of landscaping merchandise and that a deferment appeared to be warranted again.

Josiah Samy stated that he was concerned over how the second entrance may be used by patrons and could cause dangerous egress on to Port Sheldon when the space didn't provide adequate turn around. He stated that a possible condition of approval could be to make a loop for patrons to ensure no vehicle backing out on to Port Sheldon.

Kelly Kuiper stated that a loop would be a good choice for this space to improve access management.

Gary Veldink stated that the County Road Commission likely would not allow 2 curb-cuts for the business.

Kelly Kuiper stated that the eastern drive is not depicted accurately in the site plan because the actual drive is much narrower than depicted. She questioned where the employees park and stated that some functions of this business do require some parking. Establishing a traffic pattern on the site is for safety and that includes some parking.

Jessica Ulberg remarked that she agrees with the idea of requiring a loop from the entrances to increase safety and efficiency. She asked if there had been any complaints received by the township about parking on the site.

The Zoning Administrator stated that he does not know of any.

Gary Veldink agreed that the second driveway cut is concerning to him in regards to traffic in and out of the site on to Port Sheldon. In regards to screening for the site, he stated that the concrete wall proposed in the plan, would be better for the site than a 6' fence.

Tom Healey stated that the ordinance allows the commission to require a fence or a wall and questioned if the wall would be attractive for future users of the land.

Matt Hubbard, owner of Best Bark and Stone, addressed the commission and answered questions. He stated that because many of his patrons bring trailers on to the site to transport merchandise, he had asked that established parking spaces were not required so that patrons were not obligated to try and navigate the trailer and vehicle into the spot. With multiple patrons required parking with their equipment creates more chaos and congestion. He mentioned that he assigns 2 employees to help direct traffic flow on the lot during the weekend when business is at its peak. The large concrete blocks for the screening are currently in use on other portions of the lot and are very effective for screening and shielding adjacent lots from activities on the parcel.

Tom Healey asked Matt Hubbard what his intention for the second driveway is.

Matt Hubbard stated that he intended to leave the curb cut and driveway, however not use it for ingress and egress as the area it leads to would be entirely used for open air display.

Gary Veldink inquired if he intended to leave the curb-cut. He believes its presence increases danger in that area.

Tom Healey asked the applicant what his preference would be for the curb-cut. Would he like to have it so that the commission could request a looped traffic pattern on the lot or if he would like it removed altogether?

Matt Hubbard stated that he would like it removed and no access to be allowed there.

Moved by Tom Healey and seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to open the public comment.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Matt Hubbard asked whether or not he was permitted to have lighting on the lot for his open air displays as he would like to help prevent theft.

Kevin Austin stated that he is permitted to have lighting on his open air displays although it must conform to the ordinance and nearby residential uses must be shielded from the light.

Motion by Jessica Ulberg and seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to close public comment.

The Zoning Administrator presented options for a motion.

Moved by **Kelly Kuiper**, seconded by **Tom Healey**, to adopt the staff report as finding of facts and to approve Special Land Use (SUP2301) for Best Bark and Stone to have an open air business, under Sec 15.3(A), on a parcel of land described as P.P. #70-14-21-400-080, located at 2556 Port Sheldon St., in Community Service Commercial (CS) district, Georgetown Township, Michigan, based on the findings that all applicable standards of the ordinance have been met including the special land use standards in Sec 20.3 and the specific special land use standards in Sec. 20.4(Z), and with the following conditions:

- 1) A Demolition Permit Application and Fee must be received by the township prior to any demolition work being conducted on the site as per Sec. 3.13 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- 2) A Storm Water Drain Permit (written permission from the Drain Commissioner's office) shall be submitted to the Township prior to the submission of a building permit application.
- 3) The applicant must combine the parcels by supplying the township assessor with a letter requesting the parcel combination.
- 4) The activities of displaying items related to the open air business must be conducted only in the areas designated for display and no items shall be displayed in the front yard setback.
- 5) The deferred parking spaces shall be striped if in the future a need for the defined spaces arises.
- 6) **The curb-cut on the eastern part of the site shall be eliminated.**

Discussion continued.

Tom Healey stated that there should be additional conditions that the screening can be concrete or fencing and that we do not require a performance bond for the demolition work. He believes eliminating the curb cut is appropriate.

Jeanine Bolhouse stated that the proposed 6' concrete wall will be adequate for screening and that the site plan already proposes it be there, so approving the site plan would confirm the wall.

Josiah Samy stated that he is in agreement for the curb-cut elimination and the proposed screening.

Kelly Kuiper stated that condition 7 could be the wall or screening is required. She questioned whether there should be a parking agreement for the employees to park on the adjacent lot, which is owned by Matt Hubbard but leased by a different business. She struggles to accept zero parking on this site and states that other businesses would find it very desirable to have no parking on their site as well.

Tom Healey asked if the wording in the condition stating, "The deferred parking spaces shall be striped if in the future a need for the defined spaces arises," appeases her need for parking on the site.

Kelly Kuiper remarked that at least 2 spaces are needed.

Jeanine Bolhouse stated that she doesn't believe specific striped spaces are needed due to the operations of the business, and that the condition that they can be constructed if needed is enough for her.

Kelly stated that lot on most days will have multiple moving components including employees on skid steers, delivery trucks moving materials, and patrons navigating the site with their trucks. To increase the safety on the lot and improve the flow of people through the site, parking should be required.

Josiah Samy stated that he doesn't believe striped spaces are needed if the site plan depicts the deferred ones.

Tom Healey asked Matt Hubbard if there can be a provision in the lease for the use of the adjacent lot to the west, to allow Best Bark employees to park on the lot.

Matt Hubbard stated that Charlie, the leasee of the parcel, would have no problem drafting an agreement for parking. Matt showed on the map where his employees currently park.

Jessica Ulberg stated that an agreement should be enacted to record specific parking allotments for the Best Bark and Stone Staff on the adjacent parcel.

Tom Healey proposed that there be an amended lease drawn up which provides for a specific number of parking spots on the adjacent parcel.

Matt Hubbard stated that he could do that with Charlie the leasee.

Tom asked where and how much parking would work for him.

Matt Hubbard stated that roughly 10 spots in the lot would be adequate.

Kelly Kuiper stated that this deliberation indicates that parking is indeed needed to service the site.

Jeanine Bolhouse asked the Zoning Administrator if the required parking spots must be striped and if they were required, where would Matt Hubbard want them.

The Zoning Administrator replied that they would be required to be striped if they were not deferred.

Matt Hubbard indicated a line of spots along the eastern side of the building on the adjacent parcel to the west.

Kelly Kuiper stated that she would be fine with a typed parking agreement between the two parties that specified spaces for the Best Bark and Stone staff.

Josiah Samy stated that he would also support a signed agreement between the two parties and does not believe that striped parking is necessary.

Moved by **Kelly Kuiper**, seconded by **Gary Veldink**, to amend the motion to add a **7th condition** that screening will be provided via a 6 foot wall, and an **8th condition** that a

parking agreement will be signed between the two parties to specify parking allotments for Best Bark and Stone Staff.

MOTION TO AMEND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The amended motion now reads:

Moved by Kelly Kuiper, seconded by Gary Veldink, to adopt the staff report as finding of facts and to approve Special Land Use (SUP2301) for Best Bark and Stone to have an open air business, under Sec 15.3(A), on a parcel of land described as P.P. #70-14-21-400-080, located at 2556 Port Sheldon St., in Community Service Commercial (CS) district, Georgetown Township, Michigan, based on the findings that all applicable standards of the ordinance have been met including the special land use standards in Sec 20.3 and the specific special land use standards in Sec. 20.4(Z), and with the following conditions:

- 1) A Demolition Permit Application and Fee must be received by the township prior to any demolition work being conducted on the site as per Sec. 3.13 of the Zoning Ordinance.**
- 2) A Storm Water Drain Permit (written permission from the Drain Commissioner’s office) shall be submitted to the Township prior to the submission of a building permit application.**
- 3) The applicant must combine the parcels by supplying the township assessor with a letter requesting the parcel combination.**
- 4) The activities of displaying items related to the open air business must be conducted only in the areas designated for display and no items shall be displayed in the front yard setback.**
- 5) The deferred parking spaces shall be striped if in the future a need for the defined spaces arises.**
- 6) The curb-cut on the eastern part of the site shall be eliminated.**
- 7) Screening will be provided via a 6’ concrete wall pursuant to the approved site plan.**
- 8) The applicant will enter a signed parking agreement with the leasee at 2614 Port Sheldon specifying the number of parking spots to be used by Best Bark and Stone Employees.**

Yeas: Tom Healey, Gary Veldink, Kelly Kuiper, Jeanine Bolhouse, Jessica Ulberg, Josiah Samy

Nays: None

MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved by Jeanine Bolhouse, seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to adopt the staff report as finding of fact and to approve the site plan labeled Best and Stone Site Layout Plan Sheet NO: C-205, dated 1/18/23, as presented based on the findings that the applicable standards of the ordinance have been met, and with the following conditions:

- 1) All signs require permits and shall meet ordinance standards.**
- 2) Sidewalks shall be provided unless waived by the Township Board.**
- 3) All Landscaping shall comply with ordinance requirements as per Sec 3.11.**
- 4) The display areas shall be provided with a permanent, durable, and dustless surface, and shall be graded and drained to dispose of all surface water.**
- 5) A Demolition Permit Application and Fee must be received by the township prior to any demolition work being conducted on the site as per Sec. 3.13 of the Zoning Ordinance.**
- 6) A Storm Water Drain Permit (written permission from the Drain Commissioner’s office) shall be submitted to the Township prior to the submission of a building permit application.**
- 7) Screening will be provided via a 6’ concrete wall pursuant to the approved site plan.**

8) The applicant will enter a signed parking agreement with the leasee at 2614 Port Sheldon specifying the number of parking spots to be used by Best Bark and Stone Employees.

Yeas: Tom Healey, Gary Veldink, Kelly Kuiper, Jeanine Bolhouse, Jessica Ulberg, Josiah Samy

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

#230301-04 – Initiate Zoning ordinance amendment of Chapter 24, District Regulations for the Rural Residential (RR) District. This request is to revise **Chapter 24, District Regulations**, relative to **width and area of parcels in the (RR) Rural Residential district**, by adding footnote (Y) which would permit a minimum lot width of 150' if the lot area was a minimum of 40,000 square feet. Currently, parcels in the RR district with no public water and sanitary sewer are required to have a minimum width of 200 feet. If the parcel is serviced by public water and sanitary sewer, the lot width may be reduced to 110 feet and lot area may be reduced to 15,000 square feet. The installation of dry sewer does not fulfill the requirement of sanitary sewer.

Kelly Kuiper stated that she would rather just see the minimum required lot width reduced to 150' without the increase in area. Therefore, there would be no need for another footnote in the district regulations table and the new Rural Residential minimum dimensions would be 150' wide and 30,000 square feet in area.

Tom Healey stated that he does agree that Kelly's proposal could simplify the regulations and accomplish the desired effect.

Kelly Kuiper asked what the reasoning for the area increase is, given the last discussion by the Planning Commission discussed no increase being necessary.

The Zoning Administrator stated that part of the intent of the review was to compare our Rural Residential dimensions with adjacent townships and assess if our parcel dimensions should be more in line with the contemporary practice of the area. Almost all of the townships assessed had 1 acre (43,560 sqft) in area with a roughly 150' width for their Rural Residential or Agriculture equivalent.

Kelly Kuiper stated that the township is noticeably more of a bedroom community than other nearby townships, and continues to trend in that direction. Having a 30,000 sqft area with a width that is similar to nearby townships is appropriate for Georgetown. Many of the surrounding townships are more sparsely populated and have much more agricultural land.

Jeanine Bolhouse stated that she does not believe an increase in area is needed with the width reduction.

Moved by Jeanine Bolhouse, seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to initiate a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to reduce the minimum required lot width in the Rural Residential Zoning District to 150', and for the public notices and public hearing to be held simultaneously with another application.

Yeas: Tom Healey, Gary Veldink, Kelly Kuiper, Jeanine Bolhouse, Jessica Ulberg, Josiah Samy

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

#230301-05 – Communications, Letters and Reports

#230301-06 – Public Comments

No one from the public was present to make comments at this time.

#230301-07 – Other Business

The Zoning Administrator opened a discussion with the Planning Commission to clarify the ordinance requiring the installation of greenbelts specifically for daycares. He stated that a developer had contacted him inquiring about site specific standards for a potential day-care center in an LDR district, which is a permitted special land use. In an effort to relocate the outdoor recreation area away from the street, he intended to position it in the rear yard which abuts a residential district. Sec 20.4 (K) of the Special Land Use Site Design standards requires any outdoor recreation area of a day-care center to be fenced and screened from any abutting residential district by a greenbelt in accordance with Sec 3.11. The Zoning Administrator asked the commission whether or not a fenced-in recreation area should abide by the setbacks required of the district in which it exists. The greenbelt ordinance does not specify a width/depth but specifies what shall compose the greenbelt. In this scenario the fenced-in play area would not require a setback from the lot line.

Jeanine Bolhouse stated that the fenced-in play area is a primary use for the day care and should have an added setback.

Kelly Kuiper stated that the play area of a day care center should not have to abide by the setbacks the ordinance enforces for buildings. That would be extremely limiting for the use of the land.

Josiah Samy stated that the Greenbelt is a buffer between the two uses but some added distance should be required.

Kelly Kuiper reiterated once again that a playground in LDR shouldn't have to have the rear or side yard setback that a building is required to have, however, she does believe there should be an added setback due to the presence of the daycare within a residential district. She believes the ordinance on Special Land Use approval allows the Planning Commission to add conditions which could create the necessary setback and buffer for the play area and the abutting residences. She instructed the Zoning Administrator to check if there is a section in the ordinance which supports that claim. She stated that language could be added to the ordinance to ensure a 25-foot setback coincides with the greenbelt requirement within LDR.

The Zoning Administrator stated that he would review our greenbelt requirement and setbacks that have been applied to other day-care centers within the township and report back to the commission with a recommendation for moving forward.

Gary Veldink opened discussion regarding whether or not the Planning Commission has the authority to enforce prior site plan approvals if access routes to the development are being used in a way and for a duration that was not approved.

The Zoning Administrator stated that he would look into it and clarify which location the issue is occurring at.

#230301-08 – Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.