

**Conestoga Township Planning Commission Minutes: August 26, 2024**

**Present:** John Stipe, Scott Kriner, Dan Alexander, Wes Bruckno

**Others:** Jim Caldwell, Randy Groff, Benuel Esh, James Stoltzfus, Nathan Howe, Julie Howe, Michele Lovett, Matthew Connelly

**Call to Order:** 7:01 pm

**Old Business:**

Approve minutes from **July 22, 2024:**

Motion by John, second by Dan, approved 3-0-0; (Scott Kriner arrived late to the meeting)

**New Business:**

**Mt. Bethel United Evangelical Church – Lot Add-on Plan**

Jim Caldwell presented the final lot add-on plan for 3785 Main Street. Important issues that were discussed:

1. Lot 1 remaining lands will include 3.302 gross acres which include the existing Bethel UEC cemetery. The resultant Lot 2 will be joined with Parcel A to included 3.463 gross acres. Lot 2 will include an existing residence and sloping wooded areas intended for pasture.
2. Jim Caldwell is the caretaker of the existing cemetery, and is confident there are no internments being conveyed with the add-on areas (Lot 2).
3. The Township engineers review was completed with comments submitted on 8/19/24.
4. There is an easement for the cemetery to use the existing driveway at the east side of the “gravestone area”.
5. There is an existing non-conforming shed on the property.
6. No new sewage flows or septic facilities are proposed for Lot 1 or Lot 2.
7. The applicant is requesting a waiver to install permanent property boundary monuments, and utilize pins recently set and the existing boundary monuments that were found by Hershey Surveying and shown on the plan.

**Motion by Wes, second by Scott:**

1. The PC recommended approval of the plan subject to addressing the Township Engineer comments of 8/19/24.
2. The PC approved the waiver requested for the installation of permanent boundary monuments.

**Motion approved 4-0-0**

## **Safe Harbor Village/5365 River Road – Proposed Campground Concept Discussion**

Benuel Esh of Safe Harbor Village LLC and James Stoltzfus presented a conditional use campground concept for the undeveloped 22.97-acre tract that surrounds the existing Safe Harbor Village Community. Mr. Esh requested preliminary comments and feedback from the PC on their conceptual design. The following issues were discussed:

- 1) Approximately 38 camping cabins are proposed; the structures would be in use year round, and would tie into the existing sewage treatment system for the existing Safe Harbor Village. According to Mr. Esh, the existing sewage treatment (drip irrigation) system has ample excess capacity to handle the proposed sewage flows associated with the campground project. Electric utilities would be run underground. Additional groundwater sources/wells would be needed to support the project.
- 2) The camping cabins would be geared toward “couples getaways” and would be 1 or 2 bedroom max, roughly 400 square feet on temporary wood, pillow block or piling foundations; they would be equipped with hurricane tie downs. They would not be “permanent structures”, but mobile units on axles. Mr. Esh is undecided if the facility would have a swimming pool, common area or other entertainment amenities. The project would seek to preserve much of the wooded areas on the property.
- 3) Upon formal submittal, Mr. Esh would seek approval for the project in phases, with the first phase of the project likely on the eastern side of the property.
- 4) The existing zoning for the site is Rural Conservation, and the project would require a 100' building setback variance to the existing Safe Harbor Park property.
- 5) The PC discussed the following issues:
  - i) Steep slopes and depth to rock will be a concern with regard to stormwater management and road construction.
  - ii) Sewage facilities planning will involve PADEP and needs to be completed early in the approval process.
  - iii) Parking: 1-2 spaces per cabin is proposed.
  - iv) Length of stay is a concern; the cabins should have limits on stays. Mr. Esh indicated the average guest stay is 2-5 nights.
  - v) Noise, trespassing and litter concerns also need to be addressed; also canoe/kayak/boat storage.
  - vi) Site lighting and reflective signs at each cabin for fire department/first responder access in the event of an emergency.

- vii) Trail access from this facility could potentially be linked in with existing trails at Safe Harbor Park.

#### **4459 Main Street – Proposed Agritainment Facility Concept**

Nathan and Julie Howe presented a preliminary concept for a small outdoor event facility and proposed 3 lot subdivision at 4459 Main Street, a 76-acre rural residential property that is currently for sale. They requested preliminary comments and feedback from the PC on their concept for the property. Important issues that were discussed:

1. The Howe's are considering a 3-lot subdivision of the site; they are also considering future use of the existing barns and outbuildings for a max 150 guest reception/outdoor/small event facility.
2. The PC directed the Howe's to review the appropriate sections of the Township Zoning Ordinance (Section 1308) and SALDO. There are many limitations for agritainment uses. Portions of the property along Main Street are zoned Village Mixed Use, while the remaining acreage is Effective Agriculture. There is a 25 acre minimum lot size for agritainment use. The PC also encouraged the Howe's to evaluate sewage facilities planning aspects early in the land development process.

**No further discussion.**

**Meeting adjourned 7:50 PM.**