

Bainbridge Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes

April 29, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Larry Burghdoff, at Bainbridge Township Hall, 7315 Territorial Rd, Watervliet, Michigan 49098 at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL

**Present:** Larry Burghdoff, Ron Bjes, Don Baiers, Dave Peden, Melissa Morlock, Chad Yetzke, Josh Blonde, Jim Doroh

**Absent:** None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OPENED: 7:00 CLOSED 7:01

NONE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: 7:02

Motion by Josh Blonde / Don Baiers to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote: All in Favor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 7:03

Motion by Dave Peden / Jim Doroh to approve minutes March 18, 2024.

Voice Vote: All in Favor

BUSINESS: 7:05

CUTHBERT SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATION-Bill Boston would like to buy a 38-acre parcel from Brian Cuthbert on S M140 in Eau Claire contingent on being able to build a warehouse unit for boat storage.

Motion by Dave Peden/ Ron Bjes to approve the scheduling of a Public Hearing for a Special Land Use Permit.

**Recorder called Roll:**

**Yes:** Larry Burghdoff, Dave Peden, Jim Doroh, Ron Bjes, Don Baiers

**No:** Josh Blonde, Melissa Morlock

**MOTION CARRIED**

MASTER PLAN- Board member comments and changes have not yet been included. Members will review newest revision and send comments to Beth for compilation and submission to Williams and Works.

MORLOCK APPLICATION RENEWAL-Melissa's position on the Planning Commission Board has been renewed and she has been sworn in term ending 2027.

PUBLIC HEARING:

The regular was meeting recessed and public hearing

Opened: 7:09 p.m.

The applicant, Christopher Arver, would like to purchase a 5.2-acre parcel of land on M-140 and Territorial Rd currently zoned AG, contingent on a Rezone to Commercial. He would like to put a modular home on the property to be a showroom for modular homes that would have a well and septic, and an office space in the garage area. There will be a barn on the property and a fence surrounding any supply material on the property for presentation purposes.

Don Baiers and Josh Blonde excused themselves from the board table due to a conflict of interest. Chad Yetzke joins the board table as an alternate.

#### CORRESPONDENCE:

The Chairman entered into the record the following letters received, as well as the following text message received from current property owner Steve Weckwerth:

To Bainbridge Planning Commission: I am in agreement with the agricultural parcel to become commercial property. 146 S M140 Bainbridge Properties Incorporated-rated 5.2 acres. Said parcel at the corner of M140 and Territorial Rd in Berrien County, Michigan has been in future plannings of commercial property for approximately 25 years. This property has been for sale by owner for 2 years and by realtor for 2. Thank You, Steven D Weckwerth, President Bainbridge Properties Incorporated.

Letter from Thomas Sysinger re: Arver Rezone (attached)

Letter from Don Baiers re: Arver Rezone (attached)

Report from Ross Rogien re: Arver Rezone (attached)

#### **Public Comment Opened:**

Thomas Sysinger-8040 Territorial Rd: One of the reasons his family purchased in Bainbridge was because of the farmland character of the area. Their home is close to being considered a heritage home and he doesn't want his home value to drop due to being beside a commercial property. He says TJ's and the other businesses on the corner already make it busy and this would add to the traffic and congestion. He also said they have expressed interest in the property and have made offers on it almost quarterly with no response from Steve and are still willing to make a cash offer on the property. He says his family will likely move if the rezoning is approved.

Don Baiers-7980 Territorial Rd: They also have a cash offer on the table.

Donald Weckwerth-8431 Territorial Rd: Wonders if the home will have a functioning well and septic, etc.

Chris Arver response: Yes, it will have the potential to be a fully functional home in the future.

Chad Yetzke-1745 S. Bainbridge Rd: Asked if the intention is for just one home and one barn on the property.

Chris Arver response: They intend to build the most elaborate model that they can produce and that it will be valued at \$400,000 or more to show people what they can provide. There will be a barn at the rear of the property. He says the intention is to have a place for people to see an

example of a home and have a place to come and choose their finishes. The intention is not to have more than one home on the property.

Steven Weckwerth-7901 Territorial Rd: He has kids and understands the idea of farms and residential areas, and he grew up on a farm where Rivertown Crossing Mall is now in Grand Rapids. He says he has a degree in Business Marketing and that the property in question is a great corner, is very active, it's on a state highway, and had been mentioned for commercial use in years past. He says this is not really a farmable piece of land because it is only about 2.5 acres of farmable land surrounded by two active drain fields. He has removed trees and stopped using equipment on the back part of the property for this reason.

**Public Comment Closed: 7:47 pm**

Chairman, Larry Burghdoff, reminds the Board that they are meant to approve this Rezone unless there is reason not to.

Ron Bjes concurs that it is in line with what has been laid out in the Master Plan and should pass.

Jim Doroh expresses concern for the home value of the resident directly involved.

Melissa Morlock expresses concern for traffic safety on the corner.

The applicant, Chris Arver, would like to reiterate that his project will have the appearance of a residential home with fencing and landscaping as is appropriate.

Steven Weckwerth, current property owner, mentioned that modular homes are misunderstood and that they are very nice and respectable and that it will be an attractive addition to the area.

Melissa Morlock mentions that they did discuss adding more Prime Farmland to the Master Plan and had talked about not adding any more homes to the area.

Don Baiers-7980 Territorial Rd: questions if he could have his property next door rezoned as well. Also wants to know what permitted use we're putting this under in the Zoning Ordinance book.

Thomas Sysinger-8040 Territorial Rd: confirms that with the building of the barn on the property as well that they will definitely be moving if the rezone is approved as it will be right at their kitchen window.

Chairman, Larry Burghdoff, reminded the group that the state mandates that we abide by the statutes laid out in our Master Plan and that the main question is if there is any reason that we shouldn't rezone it.

Motion by Ron Bjes/ Dave Peden to approve the Rezone.

Recorder called roll:

**Yes:** Larry Burghdoff, Jim Doroh, Ron Bjes, Dave Peden, Chad Yetzke

**No:** Melissa Morlock

**MOTION CARRIED**

ADJOURN: 7:53 PM  
Motion by Dave Peden / Melissa Morlock to adjourn  
Voice vote: All in Favor

Respectfully,

Office Manager and Sitting Secretary,

Elizabeth Fritzsche

