

Planning Commission Hearing

April 15, 2014

Members Present: Chairman Dwight Freeman, Grover Hathorn, Gene Glover, Leonard Brown and Rose Vanderpool.

Members Absent: Wesley O'Rourke and Mike Mitchell

Others Present: (See Attached)

Chairman Freeman call the Hearing to order at 1:30pm.

First Item on The Agenda: Chairman Freeman called for approval of the Agenda as submitted; Mr. Grover Hathorn moves to approve the Agenda; Mr. Gene Glover seconds motion; motion carried unanimously. The Jan 21, 2014 were corrected to include Mr. Gene Glover as the Member who seconded a motion.

Second Item: Conditional Use submitted by Andrew, Don and Robert Toews. The request is for approval of hydro-ponic greenhouses that exceed the permitted size/square footage of 500 square feet.

Andrew Toews and Robert/aka Bright Water Farms LLC purchased a 40- acre parcel from Tim and Yvette Cooley just off the Maxeyville Rd and El Rio Drive North of Monte Vista. The applicants would like to utilize a portion of the parcel for commercial size green houses.

- This endeavor will provide jobs-local produce (i.e. leafy greens, herbs using a hydro ponic system growing outside of soil. Like a pond.
- This system uses less water, grows faster looks better and taste better. We would market to local business, and sell at Farmers Market. This business would employ about 4-6 people per acre on the low end.
- Each bay will be 3800 square feet-11 bays would sufficiently take up an acre of ground.
- These greenhouses are nice and clean, we are very attentive and our attention to detail means that the area will be well kept and attractive; this will be a positive thing in this area. We do not plan to destroy or do anything to detract from the area. These are high tech green houses. Computer controlled, no smells no noise.
- This is environmental friendly no harmful chemicals to the environment and would be more efficient in food producing. Lettuce, we can get 11 per year as opposed to 1 crop a year.
- Traffic will consist of three pick-ups (ours) and during construction materials will be brought in. After construction again, our personal vehicles and up to 4 employee vehicles. One box truck anticipated to load produce and deliver every other day depending on orders. No 18-wheelers.

Chairman Freeman asked if they would grow anything outside of the greenhouse. Andrew answered that they could but is not part of the plan at this point. "We have our plates full with what we have presented (11 bays).

The maximum height of the greenhouses will be 14'x 30'wide roof pitch about 22'.

These ponds we fill them with about 12" of water and will drop about 8" leaving 4" of water after harvest. We will start the plants in trays-plugs-transplant to a larger tray and then set in the water. The water is recycled; we fill the pond once and add nutrient and as add water as needed. We might have to clean out the water once a year, we fertilize and monitor ph-levels.

We have submitted information in regards to water and we have enough water to put this plan together. If business grows outside of what we have presented we could reaugment if needed.

Chairman Freeman opened the floor for discussion: A letter submitted by CAH Farms (Chris Hayes) is very OPPOSED to this request.

Tracy Gosar attended the Board of Realtors Meeting a couple of days ago and they are supportive of this request. The Division of Water Resources supports this, future of growing using less water this will set a new precedence.

Grover Hathorn asked what type of materials are used to construct these greenhouses? Andrew stated that they are lexcarbon doubly poly evaporating cooling system. In the winter they will heat it, but are still working on that.

Chairman Freeman asked when the produce is ready for market what is the process? How will you clean and/or package? Andrew stated that all packaging will be done by hand. The Plant is a living plant it will go to market with root. When the consumer gets it home and they trim the root off that is when it is "harvested".

Chairman Freeman: Asked if the center of the property was the ideal place for this? Andrew stated that they are requesting for a minimum of 1-acre with possible expansion. 1-acre will accommodate 11 bays 30x30.

A discussion on exactly how much land would be needed to support this endeavor and to get the approval done at one time so that we don't have to keep coming back for approvals would be best. Andrew stated that up to 5-acres of green houses would meet our needs and not be obtrusive to the neighborhood.

Tim Cooley supports this, it would be a local boost to the economy. The Construction business is not good right now and this won't be an eyesore. The neighboring parcel has a feedlot of about 2000 head of cattle, it stinks. This business won't have smell or noise.

Tracy Vanderpool has no issues but would have liked that the applicants would have consulted with the neighbors of this plan. We have a conservation easement along portions of our land and would like that the greenhouses be placed in a specific area maybe backed to an edge of the property based on what is was not what it is going to be.

Ron Wert stated that he would like to see that it doesn't expand more than what is requested.

Joe Mellott would like clarification; if this is approved - ten years from now, if they sell does the conditional use follow through? Chairman Freeman stated that it would be tied to the owner not the land. Another concern is marijuana. If the county changes their minds to allow marijuana

could this evolve into to growing operation? Planning Commission stated that the current owner would have to submit to the county transferring the current conditional approval and any conditions placed to the new subsequent buyer. No deviation from what was originally approved would be allowed without going through the process.

Mr. Mellott also stated that we need the business and this would be an economic, viable endeavor.

Mike Rios, the closest neighbor that would be affected with this change is not opposed but traffic is a concern.

Mr. Andrew Toews explained that we want to know we can expand. We want to be good neighbors and is important for us that we are safe to invest the money for this project. Mr. Toews asked for clarification on transfer of ownership, no more bays and no changes. It was explained that this approval is for 'you' not for a subsequent owner. If you sell you and/or the new owners must re-apply or amend the current approval to reflect new owner and any changes if any.

Chairman Freeman asked with the water you have, what is the maximum and/or number of total acres you would need? I suggest you ask for enough but don't ask for too much.

Mr. Toews stated that 55-bays would be the max and probably would never come to fruition on the total 40-acre parcel but that is not what we want. Possibly 10-acres keeping total build out at the NE corner (closest to Maxeyville). The parcel has sloughs and ditch easements running through it so buildable sites are limited. The NE corner is a high spot and we could get 10-acres of buildable area there.

Mr. Grover Hathorn moves to recommend approval of the greenhouses 11- bays on 10-acres to be located in NE corner of the parcel and adds that no marijuana growing would be allowed; Mr. Gene Glover seconds motion; motion carried unanimously.

With no further business; meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

Next Meeting May 20th, 2014