

Empire Planning Commission Meeting Minutes October 20, 2020

The Empire Township Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Tom Kaldunski and at 8:00 PM at the Empire Township Public Works Building.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Chris Williamson, Bob Bjerke, Jane Kansier (via Zoom), Charles Seipel, and liaison Ed Gerten.

Luke and Kimberly Waldriff with Lighthouse Motorsports and Marine presented information on their existing business in Rosemount and their proposed plans to expand at a new site in Empire Township. The business operates as a retail store and service center and carries snowmobiles, off-road vehicles, lawn mowers and are now getting into carrying watercraft. The business also offers a full line service department on these types of makes and models.

They are proposing to purchase new property that will allow their business to continue to grow and will provide them with the capability to operate as a commercial business with outside storage. They have checked into properties on Highway 3, just south of the Empire water tower and on 160th Street, just west of Highway 3. The Waldriffs indicated that their preference is for the two parcels at 3618 160th Street, as it also contains a home and provides easy access to 160th Street. The Waldriffs plan is to construct a commercial building on the site to house their operations and the new building would have great street presence. Jane Kansier indicated that this property is currently in the Ag District in the Mineral Extraction Overlay. In order to permit the business on the property, the potential buyers would need to submit applications for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and a Zoning Amendment. If rezoned, the existing home on the property would become a nonconforming use. Discussion was held on the existing parcel to the west of this property. It currently has a home in the Ag District and would likely need to be included in the rezoning process.

A conditional use permit would need to be granted to permit outdoor storage on the property.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that the Waldriffs should submit the proper applications to move forward with this proposed project.

Robert Nitti and David Domack from Nitti Sanitation / Lightning Disposal discussed their plans for a proposed relocation of their business to Empire Township in order to provide more space for them to expand by relocating to Empire Township from their existing location in Inver Grove Heights.

They are considering a property near the intersection of Clayton Ave. and County Road 46 to construct an office building and maintenance facility. The facility would be kept clean of all debris due to State regulations. They would need approximately 20 acres out of the 55-acre parcel. Nitti Sanitation would like to purchase the entire parcel and eventually plat the remaining property for future light industrial development.

Discussion was held on the future alignment of Clayton Ave. This is a County Road and the County may want to remove the existing intersection at County Road 46 and reroute the road to the west at some point in the future. Nitti Sanitation will check with the County Highway Department regarding future plans with this road.

Jane Kansier reported that this parcel is currently zoned AG and is identified as Industrial on the portion parcel west of Clayton Ave. and Commercial on the eastern portion of the parcel in the Comprehensive Plan. Nitti Sanitation would need to submit an application for Zoning Amendment to use the property as proposed. A Conditional Use Permit will also be required for outdoor storage.

Nitti Sanitation should also submit a plan that shows how the remaining property would be subdivided for future industrial development before it is subdivided.

It was reported that a special Town Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27th at 7:30 PM to meet with representatives from Dakota County to discuss the draft Land Conservation Plan. Several members of the Planning Commission indicated that they would like to attend this meeting as well. Seipel will post this as a Joint Meeting with the Town Board and Planning Commission. It will be held at Town Hall.

The November 3rd Planning Commission Meeting will not be held due to General Elections that day.

The Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.