

**MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF BEECHER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP CENTER
MAY 29, 2008**

At 7:00 p.m., Wayne Wiechen called the meeting to order in the absence of Chairman Phil Serviss.

Members present: Kevin Bouchard, Wayne Wiechen, Denis Tatgenhorst, Kim Koutsky, Althea Machtemes, and Gayle Ahrendt. Absent were Phil Serviss and Dan Walsh.

Staff present: Bob Barber and Don Thomas.

AGENDA ITEM III: CONSIDER A MOTION OF APPROVAL FOR THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24th MEETING. After Marcy Meyer corrected the attendance to reflect that Dan Walsh was present at the April 24 meeting, a motion was entered by Tatgenhorst and seconded by Bouchard to approve the minutes as presented. Roll call: 5 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Wiechen, Tatgenhorst and Bouchard), 0 Nays, 0 Abstain.

AGENDA ITEM IV: CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR REZONING UPON ANNEXATION TO I-T INTERMODAL: 119 ACRES OF LAND EAST OF RACINE AND SOUTH OF CHURCH ROAD (BUITER AND MCWHORTER). A motion was entered by Bouchard and seconded by Machtemes to open the public hearing. Roll call: 5 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Wiechen, Tatgenhorst and Bouchard), 0 Nays, 0 Abstain.

Barber briefly paraphrased the reason for the public hearing: to include two new pieces of land that would bring the development contiguous to school district property. If the development goes through and if it gets TIF'd, this would involve the School District in the TIF negotiations. The reason IT zoning is considered desirable for these lands is because the IT zoning is a PUD which gives the town more control over what is built on the property. The area is now considered for industrial zoning because the Village Board in the past had voted to reserve this area for industrial development. The Village Board of that time was not interested in having the area zoned residential. One of the landowners that is selling was not allowed to sell his land to residential developers. Additionally, Beatty lumber installed a spur in the rail yard with the condition that the rail line would continue west. This occurred long before any talks about intermodal began.

Shalvis agreed that this area would be an extension of the intermodal property. It would be buffered by berms and heavy landscape screens. The rail spur could enter into factory buildings in that area.

The Chairman asked for members of the public to testify. A letter from **Marilyn Hoffmeyer** (attached) was read into the record.

Bob Howard of 32245 Klemme Road in Washington Township offered his admiration and support to the Village for tackling such a huge project and recognized that the Village had been put into a tough situation by Crete. However he felt the impacts to the area must be looked at and asked that the Village make absolutely certain that the development would serve the citizens well. (Full statement is attached.) He wanted to confirm that these additional properties are an extension of the original pre-annexation agreement for this intermodal development.

Bob Barber responded that indeed these properties are an extension of the original project and that the entire project would still be subject to a development agreement where many of the concerns about the development would be addressed.

Bob Carter of 30508 State Line Road in Washington Township expressed his concern in a statement (attached) regarding how he feels the Village will be changed for the worse due to this development.

Mary Schwer of 1112 W. Church Road in Washington Township asked what landscaping would be provided to shield her house from the intermodal development. She also expressed concern about Church Road traffic and whether or not it would be resurfaced.

Barber responded that there is a resurfacing planned for 2012 but no truck traffic will be allowed into the intermodal from Church Road.

Annette Schwer of 1128 W. Church Road in Washington Township stated that she was being held hostage by the intermodal development. She asked why no one cares about them.

Darlene Dymerski of 1142 W. Church Road in Washington Township asked why the developer wants the two properties that are the subject of this hearing if they don't need them for intermodal.

Betty Koutsky of 730 Gould Street, Beecher, stated that the entire project is beyond comprehension and what scares her is that the development is practically in town. She resides at the highest point in Beecher so her view will be of the intermodal.

Janice Brown of 830 Miller, Beecher, lives directly across from Lion's Park and stated that this portion is too close to town. Why can't this be kept up north? The residents had voted for a school to be built on the property to the north of her.

Barber noted that the owner of one of the parcels of land under consideration had been told in the past by the Village Board that his land must be used for industrial development rather than residential.

Betty Koutsky asked why it couldn't be zoned Industrial rather than Intermodal and noted that the development is too close for comfort.

Don Thomas responded that some portions of the IT zoning have less intensive uses that could be considered and that IT zoning is a PUD which gives the Village more control over what is built on the land than straight Industrial zoning.

Barber responded to questions from the audience:

1. To clarify again why the Village is considering Industrial development in that area, Barber noted that the Village Board in 2000 agreed that the area should be rail-served industrial and reaffirmed this decision in 2006. Beatty's spur was installed to enable the rail to be extended further west. The McWhorter parcel of land was looked at for residential development in the 1990s but it was turned down by the Board in favor of industrial development.
2. As far as what type of buffering would be provided for the parcels on Church Road, Scott Shalvis responded that there would be a buffer area composed of a mix of berms and heavy landscaping around the entire project. This buffering is mandated by the IT zoning.
3. In response to the question about what happens to the three homeowners on Church Road, Shalvis responded that there will be buffers shielding them from the project and perhaps a developer might be interested in their land in the future.
4. The reason why these two parcels are needed for the project when they aren't going to be developed for intermodal uses is that these parcels are being considered for other industrial uses that go along with an intermodal development.

Commissioner Wiechen asked what happens to the value of the homes on Church Road? Shalvis answered that generally the property values for Industrial areas are higher than those in Residential areas.

Darlene Dymerski stated that Dale and Jay (of Trinity Development) are offering them low prices for their land to squeeze them out of their property.

Betty Koutsky stated that no one wants to live near an intermodal facility.

Commissioner Machtemes asked if the Village could make the developer buy the three homes as part of the approval process.

Don Thomas responded that it is not legal for the Village to force someone to buy property.

Commissioner Koutsky asked why Dale and Jay are not present for the hearing.

Scott Shalvis stated that this is a multi-stage process. They are here first for zoning, then they return with more concrete plans. The project is developed in stages.

Mary Schwer asked if any lighting studies have been done and if sewer and gas will be installed. If Church Road is widened, how much land will be taken?

Shalvis responded that the lighting requirements with IT zoning would have to be met and they are researching “dark sky” lighting. Don Thomas stated that the road would require 33’ off center on each side or 66’ total width. Barber answered that the largest infrastructure improvement is the water requirement. It will be done in the preliminary engineering phase, which we are nowhere near yet.

Ed Winkless of Beatty Lumber, 800 Church Road, Beecher, asked how many intermodal trains per day would come through and how many lifts, etc. He asked if the intermodal development would interfere with his rail access and the access by other parcels nearby, since they may not be as high a priority on the rail line as the intermodal trains.

Shalvis answered that we don’t know how many trains and lifts are involved since we are not at that phase of the development yet. In response to questions by Bob Barber about noise mitigation and where the intermodal activity starts, Shalvis stated that the noise mitigation has not yet been studied but the lifts will be done toward the center of the development between Eagle Lake Road and Church Road.

With no further public testimony, Bouchard entered a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Machtemes. Roll call: 5 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Wiechen, Tatgenhorst and Bouchard), 0 Nays, 0 Abstain.

AGENDA ITEM V: CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD: REZONING UPON ANNEXATION TO I-T INTERMODAL: 119 ACRES OF LAND EAST OF RACINE AND SOUTH OF CHURCH ROAD (BUIER AND MCWHORTER). Barber reminded the PZC that since there were some legal questions regarding one of the parcels of land, Tim Kuiper, the Village attorney recommended they defer a recommendation to the Village Board until the next session on June 26, 2008. Tatgenhorst motioned and Koutsky seconded to defer the vote until June 26. Roll call: 5 Ayes (Koutsky, Machtemes, Wiechen, Tatgenhorst and Bouchard), 0 Nays, 0 Abstain.

AGENDA ITEM VI: NEW BUSINESS. With no new business brought forth, Machtemes entered a motion and Bouchard seconded that the meeting stand adjourned. The Acting Chairman called the motion to a vote and it carried unanimously. The meeting stood adjourned at approximately 8:55pm. The next meeting will be held on June 26, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Meyer
Secretary