

**Meeting of the Village of Beecher
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Washington Township Center
March 22, 2012**

At 7:15 p.m., Phil Serviss called the meeting to order. Members present: Phil Serviss, Kim Koutsky, Kevin Bouchard, and Lance Saller. Absent: Dennis Tatgenhorst, George Schuitema, Althea Machtemes and Gayle Ahrendt. Staff present: Robert Barber and Don Thomas.

AGENDA ITEM III: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2012 MEETING. A motion was entered by Bouchard and seconded by Koutsky to approve the minutes as presented. Roll call: 4 Ayes (Koutsky, Saller, Serviss, and Bouchard, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM IV: PUBLIC HEARING. CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO INSTALL A DIGITAL SIGN AT DEJONG IMPLEMENTS, 383 S. DIXIE HIGHWAY. Members of the public present were: Paul and Lucy Rietveld from 410 Dixie Highway, Beecher; Nathan Dykstra from DeJong Implements and Bill Hollahan from All-Right Sign, Inc.

Bouchard entered a motion to open the public hearing. Motion was seconded by Koutsky. Roll call: 4 Ayes (Koutsky, Saller, Serviss, and Bouchard, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain. Motion carried.

Don Thomas provided a recap of the discussion from the prior meeting regarding items that had been considered: dimming of the sign at night, dimensions of the sign, frequency of message change and flashing lights.

Don Thomas asked about the level to which the lumes can be dropped at night, and whether it can be turned off at 11:00pm. Barber said there were day/night settings that can usually be activated.

Paul Rietveld, who lives across the street, asked about the day/night setting and commented that a sign in Crete is very bright at night. How does "night setting" translate? Chairman Serviss asked Bill Hollahan to clarify the settings. Hollahan replied that there is a photo cell, but the owner can make further modifications. Rietveld noted that it is liveable as long as it is turned down at night. Barber noted that the new LED signs don't project as much light as older versions even though they shine brightly. Koutsky wanted to know if the petitioner would be open to addressing any complaints that could come up in the future by residents. Dykstra said they would.

Don Thomas said that as long as the conditions regarding decreasing lumes at night and the owner agreeing to address any future concerns of nearby residents, Staff recommends approval.

Further discussion between Commission members included a desire to create further specifications for future signs such as distance allowed between digital signs, and saturation. Can one sign be approved, but not others?

Koutsky entered a motion to close the public hearing. Bouchard seconded. Roll call: 4 Ayes (Koutsky, Saller, Serviss, and Bouchard, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM V: CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD REGARDING A REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO INSTALL A DIGITAL SIGN AT DE JONG EQUIPMENT, 383 S. DIXIE HIGHWAY. Bouchard motioned to send a positive recommendation to the Village Board regarding the installation of the digital sign with the following stipulations: 1. Lumes would be decreased in the evening; 2. The petitioners would address any future concerns that could arise. Roll call: 4 Ayes (Koutsky, Saller, Serviss, and Bouchard, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM VI: CONSIDER A MOTION REQUESTING THE VILLAGE BOARD TO REFER TO THE PZC A REEXAMINATION OF THE PORTION OF THE VILLAGE'S ZONING ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO SIGNS.

Barber went over the history of the sign ordinance. The PZC was originally going to revise the sign ordinance regarding digital signs but the project was shelved after it was bogged down with details about window signs, paper signs, etc. Since then, there have been questions raised about temporary signs. This issue also needs to be addressed.

Don Thomas mentioned that the sign ordinance could be taken out of the zoning ordinance and the Village Board would then determine sign regulations. Some municipalities do this. Some villages allow two periods a year of 30 days each for temporary signs. A question was raised about "wayfinding" signs. Barber informed the Commission that the Village would be installing one of these for the war memorial, location of Village Hall, Firemen's Park, the depot, police and fire departments.

Koutsky said we need to decide which route we want to take: don't control them at all, or control them with stipulations (which could be decided upon at a later date).

Phil Serviss suggested putting the struggling downtown businesses on the wayfinder sign to be installed. The Commissioners wished to send an informal recommendation to the Village Board allowing downtown businesses to be placed on the wayfinder sign being installed by the Village.

For temporary signs, Commissioners preferred providing two 30-day instances for temporary signs within a one-year period: a temporary sign could be placed twice per year, with each placement not to exceed 30 days per event.

Saller entered a motion to request that the Village Board refer the reexamination of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to Signs back to the Plan Commission. Roll call: 4 Ayes (Koutsky, Saller, Serviss, and Bouchard, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM VII: LAND USE PLAN UPDATE. As a result of the Illiana Expressway Corridor announcement and availability of grant funds for land use planning, an application is being made for a full \$75,000 comprehensive land use plan amendment. The results of the application should be available in June, July or August. If the grant is not awarded, the Village will scale down its plans and redo the land use plan and associated text for \$5,000. Either way, the plan will be redone beginning this Summer.

Koutsky entered a motion of support for the Village Board to refer the Land Use Plan back to the Plan Commission for revision. Saller seconded. Roll call: 4 Ayes (Koutsky, Saller, Serviss, and Bouchard, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM VIII: ALL PZC COMMISSION MEMBERS MUST TAKE OPEN MEETINGS ACT TRAINING. There is a new law that requires all PZC Commissioners to take an Open Meetings Act training course and exam online through the Attorney General's Office. It needs to be completed by December 30, 2012 and will be repeated annually. It takes approximately 90 minutes to take the course and exam, and a certificate will be awarded upon completion. The certificate must be forwarded to the Village Clerk. Commissioners will be paid their usual \$15 meeting fee for taking the course. Website information was provided in the packet.

ITEM IX: NEW BUSINESS. The meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 26, 2012 may not be needed but the Village expects to begin the land use plan process at the May 24th meeting. There will be monthly meetings after that point. The meeting of June 28th falls on a Fourth of July Commission work

night so it could be pushed up to Thursday, June 21st. The July 26th and August 23rd dates should work but they will have to work around vacations.

Koutsky entered a motion and Bouchard seconded that the meeting stand adjourned. Serviss called the motion to a vote and it carried unanimously. The meeting stood adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcy Meyer".

Marcy Meyer
Secretary