

MINUTES OF THE BEECHER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
(THE PZC)
Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.
Beecher Village Hall
625 Dixie Highway

At 7:00 p.m., Chairman George Schuitema called the meeting to order.

All present joined in the pledge to the flag.

ROLL CALL. Members present: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

Member absent: Commissioner Weissbohn.

Staff present: Secretary Patty Meyer, Administrator Robert Barber and Village Planner Pete Iosue.

Guests: Village President Marcy Meyer, Trustee Erik Gardner, Irene Eich, Ruhwada (Ruby) Abuhamdeh (petitioner for Godfather Cigars and Tobacco), Cynthia White-Wilson, Dwayne Adkins, Vernon Thomas, Rose Gordon, Chanci Herer and Sal Llamas.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 MEETING. Commissioner Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2023 PZC meeting as written. Commissioner Heim seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING: CONSIDER A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR A TOBACCO STORE AT 997 DIXIE HIGHWAY: GODFATHER CIGARS AND TOBACCO (MOHANNAD NASSAR, MONEE) Petitioner Ruhwada (Ruby) Abuhamdeh was present to explain her business plan and answer any questions. Material was provided pertaining to the type of lighting proposed for the windows.

A public hearing was held to consider a special use permit for a tobacco store at 997 Dixie Highway. Commissioner Serviss made a motion to open the public hearing at 7:01 p.m. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

Motion carried.

Resident Irene Eich asked if there would be an age limit to enter the store. Persons under 21 will only be allowed if accompanied by an adult age 21 and over. Technology will be in place to monitor valid age identification.

Petitioner stated that either she or Mohannad Nassar would be running the store.

Material was provided regarding a Lockport tobacco store that was owned by Mohannad Nassar's cousin. Mr. Nassar had no ownership in the Lockport store. Petitioner stated that everyone will be carded – no exceptions. There will be security cameras and machines to read identification. Camera system information was provided in the packet for review.

Commissioner Schuitema asked about the sale of illicit vapes. Petitioner stated that she would not be selling anything illicit and nothing sold to minors.

Commissioner Gardner expressed concern about vape products with THC. Petitioner stated that they are more interested in selling cigars and tobacco products.

Administrator Barber stated that in regard to exhibit provided about window lighting, the solid rope lighting would be more desirable and subtle.

Commissioner Hearn asked petitioner why they wanted to open a store in Beecher. Petitioner stated that they are Monee residents and thought Beecher was the perfect place to open a tobacco store.

There were no further comments or questions from audience or the Commission.

There being no further testimony to be heard, Commissioner Heim made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. Commissioner Hearn seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

Motion carried.

CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR A TOBACCO STORE AT 997 DIXIE HIGHWAY.

Resident Irene Eich asked about hours of operation. Petitioner stated that hours will be determined by demand.

Commissioner Heim made a motion of recommendation to the Village Board for a special use permit for a tobacco store at 997 Dixie Highway, to include the following conditions:

1. Minimum of 50% tobacco products to be sold in the business
2. Minimum of 50% exposed glass on exterior windows for law enforcement
3. No flashing string or rope lights
4. Must provide video security and access to the video system to be provided upon request by law enforcement
5. No one under the age of 21 permitted unless accompanied by an adult.

Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

Motion carried.

WORKSHOP: CONSIDER A MOTION TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING ON A SPECIAL USE PERMIT IN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT FOR A CANNABIS CRAFT GROWING FACILITY AT 744 W. CHURCH ROAD (LLAMAS AND WHITE-WILSON). This special use was discussed back in 2020 but was placed on hold until the State issued a license for this specific facility. The business has obtained the appropriate State licenses. All of the conditions of the Village's cannabis special use ordinance have been satisfied including the location of the proposed facility. Application was provided in the packet for review.

Petitioner Cynthia White-Wilson was present along with her management team and explained her project, which would consist of a greenhouse, two wells and retention area. She plans to make a very sound state-of-the-art facility that will be well-kept and profitable.

Commissioner Serviss asked if it would be a point-of-sale facility. Petitioner stated that the proposed facility would only sell to dispensaries.

Administrator Barber requested a plat of survey showing the building location on the property in order to verify setbacks.

Pete Iosue assured the Commission that the State strictly regulates growing facilities.

The facility would employ 23 people, all of which would go through a background check.

Commissioner Eich asked about meshing on the fencing. Building would not be visible from Church Road, so meshing would not be required.

Commissioner Schuitema asked about dealing with cash transactions. Petitioner stated that they use Brinks trucks to move cash, and banks they can do business with are limited.

Commissioner Eich asked questions about employee access. Employees would park inside the security fence. There is only one entrance from Church Road. Fire protection will be dealt with during the building permit process. Access road may need to be upgraded to support employee and truck traffic.

Administrator Barber asked about power demands. There would be a combination of solar and LED lighting. A new service would need to be run to the facility.

The only service the Village would provide to this property is law enforcement.

Petitioner stated that any odors would be controlled.

Commissioner Serviss made a motion to hold a public hearing on November 16, 2023 at 7 p.m. to consider a special use permit in an agricultural district for a cannabis craft grow facility at 744 W. Church Road. Commissioner Hearn seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

Motion carried.

The Village will place a notice of public hearing in the Daily Journal for the November 16th public hearing. No special conditions were suggested.

Petitioner stated that property would have 24-hour security.

WORKSHOP: CONTINUED WORK ON DRAFT ZONING ORDINANCE. The Steering Committee has completed five chapters of the new ordinance and Pete Iosue provided a summary of the edits and changes from the current code. A review sheet was provided for review. The goal is to make everything consistent throughout the Village and make it easily understandable. Some topics discussed have been administrative variances, planned unit developments and non-conforming uses.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for Thursday, November 9th at 3 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS.

Administrator Barber reported that Union Electronics building mass grading has begun.

Commissioner Schuitema reported that delineators have been reinstalled on Indiana Avenue, and quiet zone is hoped to be implemented soon.

The next regularly scheduled meeting for the PZC is Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT. Commissioner Heim made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Serviss seconded the motion.

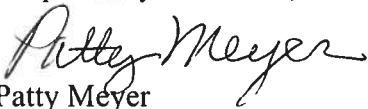
AYES: Commissioners Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema and Serviss.

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Patty Meyer
Secretary