

Meeting Minutes
Crete Township Plan Commission
Oct. 3, 2024
Crete Township Hall

Commissioners

Present: Steve Clark, Howard Robinson, John Rzymiski and Dennis Sullivan
Secretary Rita Luedtke arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Absent:

Quorum present? Yes

Others present: Crete Village trustee Holly Milburn and township residents Stacey Bukowski, M.A. Cramer, Don McCauley, and Judy Tucker.

Proceedings: Chair, John Rzymiski, called the meeting to order with roll call, followed by Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Rzymiski announced there was nothing to be decided at this meeting. He asked Commissioner Sullivan to take meeting minutes.

Previous Meeting Minutes: No minutes

Cases for Discussion

* ZC-24-049 Vacant properties on South Rincker Road

Chairman Rzymiski explained the one-acre property currently consists of three lots. It is directly south and west of Will County Forest Preserve District property. There are some private homes to the east. Responding to Commissioner Robinson, Chairman Rzymiski acknowledged the road bends kind of off Stoney Island, northwest. The Rademachers have rented out the forested property as campsites.

Chairman Rzymiski said the proposed owner wants to consolidate the three lots into one lot, probably for pasture or farmland.

Chairman Rzymiski said the proposed owner wants to obtain a map amendment changing the zoning from commercial to agricultural. That takes away the possibility of making anything commercial, he said. The proposed owner also is seeking two variances: (1) Zero lot line to the road and (2) minimum street setback. Access would be via a private road shared with other property owners.

Chairman Rzymiski said Will County current charges applicants a \$2,000-\$3,000 fee to submit an application for a zoning change or map amendment, to cover the cost of staff time. He said he was bringing the issue up because Crete Township gets notified a day or two before it occurs in Joliet. Since no application has been made, there's not much reason for us to comment, he said and promised to pass information along as he gets it.

Pre-Application Conferences

* 2400 Bemis Recovery Home

Chairman Rzymiski said a non-profit organization committed to rehabilitating substance abusers wants to obtain the former Double Dakota harness racing training facility, located near a small residential subdivision. The clients would work the farm and work with horses as part of rehabilitation. Part of it is to build a two-story house. Commissioner Clark characterized it as a 6,000-square-foot farmhouse. He told Resident Stacey Butowski that there would be 10-15 clients. Answering her question about tax status, Commissioner Clark said the organization has a 501-C-3 (non-profit) status. Resident Bukowski noted, "When you take those (properties) off the tax rolls, we're the ones who are going to be bearing the (tax) burden." Commissioner Rzymiski said the proposal basically depends on financing. "The gentleman (Jim O'Connor) is still looking for millions of dollars to do this." Chairman Rzymiski said there are four half-way houses for developmentally disabled adults, but the proposed "Second-Story Ranch" would be the first "recovery" facility in Will County on land zoned for agriculture.

* 25420 Stoney Island Senior Housing

Chairman Rzymiski said the proposal is either for residents to live in one large building or separate houses. "We did comment. Any development would have to bring in water and sewer," he said. "The County brought that up and they withdrew the request. Plus if there were individual houses there would have to be roads."

* Dixie Highway & Elms Court Lane Mobile Home Park

Chairman Rzymiski said the location is a small lot and Crete Township representatives "pointed out to Land Use it violated all the ordinances already on the books."

In a separate discussion, Chairman Rzymiski said a "party barn" on Munz Road that drew 300 revelers on one occasion is no longer operating. The main building and multiple kiosks were built without permits or inspections. "The County told them, 'You have to bring everything up to code' - water, toilets, parking, building codes. No permits have been taken out, so effectively that's stopped."

Old Business

ZC-21-036 705 E. Goodenow Road Goodenow West Solar 1

Chairman Rzymiski said in 2019 the County gave the company two years for construction, but Covid delayed it. The County revisited in November 2023. The company got a permit and is constructing on the south side of Goodenow Road.

Resident Bukowski said the company hasn't maintained its required screening and grass isn't mowed. Chairman Rzymiski said Crete Township representatives have talked with the County's land use and code enforcement areas and the company is now being required to maintain a cutting schedule.

Responding to resident Don McCauley's question about future decommissioning on the site, Chairman Rzymiski said, "The first one that went in, we requested a lot of things and they did not fulfill them. The State's Renewable Energy Facilities Agricultural Impact Mitigation Act is supposed to take care of this, he said, noting a bond is supposed to be paid but there is still some question if there are enough funds in the bond. Will County doesn't have strict guidelines regarding requiring solar projects to address resource recovery, also when environmental damage can occur from an acidic environment.

Resident Bukowski said company workers hammering pylons four feet deep into the ground have caused enough noise that "I've got cattle jumping fences."

Resident McCauley said the company obviously has no maps of drain tiles and the pounded pylons are breaking the tiles. Commissioner Luedtke said the broken tiles mean uncontrolled streams of water, noting her wetland pond "is overflowing. It's pitiful." Later in the meeting, Chairman Rzymiski noted State Rep Anthony DeLuca is sponsoring legislation to amend the distance a solar project would be from a home - currently at 150 feet - to 500 feet. Chairman Rzymiski also said solar farms potentially mean more property tax revenue than what is gained from farming.

New Business

* Tiny Homes subdivision at Bemis Road and Greenwood Avenue

Chairman Rzymiski said there is a tiny home on a trailer on the lot. The owner has applied for a permit to put a number of tiny homes on the parcel, he said, "possibly six." Resident Bukowski wondered about the difference between County requirements for a tiny home versus a regular home. There is no County ordinance addressing tiny homes, Chairman Rzymiski said. "I've asked code enforcement and land use," he said. Resident McCauley noted the County specifies acreage for mobile homes, estimating the lot covers 1 and 1/3 acres. Chairman Rzymiski said it's a regular-shaped lot. Responding to an ECHO-related question from Commissioner Sullivan, Chairman Rzymiski said ECHO projects are secondary to main residential structures and are assumed to be temporary.

Next Meeting

Chairman Rzymiski said the next meeting would be contingent upon there being business.

Minutes submitted by: Dennis Sullivan