

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WILLIAMS
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m., by Brandon Paten. Present was Brandon Paten, Joel Johansson, Brian Jean, Larry Lijewski. Absent was Jeremy Rosenbrock. In the absence of Jeremy Rosenbrock, it was moved by Brian Jean, seconded by Larry Lijewski, to appoint Joel Johansson as acting chair. The vote was unanimous.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all. The meeting was opened to the public by chairman pro tem Joel Johansson, with a question whether about whether public comment should include the issue of Little Forks, to which the answer was given that Little Forks should have its own public comment session. There being no other general public comments, moved by Johansson, supported by Jean, to close public comment, unanimous consent by all.

Brandon Paten moved to approve the Minutes of November 6, 2023, and Brian Jean seconded it. The voice vote was unanimous approval of this action.

The next item of consideration was the Little Fork's Conservancy zoning variance request. Ben VanDyke on behalf of Little Fork's made a presentation. In summary he indicated that the 42-acre site with Three Ponds that has been used by the public for fishing and recreation for many years. It was donated to the conservancy in 2021. It is their effort to enhance the enjoyment of this natural setting recreation by improving safety, by adding a parking lot off the roadway of North Union. It was non-profit conservancy that had hoped to utilize aggregate which would be more in line with the what the area has for uses in the surrounding community and would limit the damage to the site. He further indicated that of their nine other areas open to the public, eight have improved parking with gravel only and no hard surface such as asphalt or concrete.

He also discussed the design for the maximum safety looking at the density of the surrounding area and coming there to be used by various individuals, it would not be long term parking and that gravel parking lot would be better with the rural nature of the surrounding neighborhood as opposed to a hard surface.

They looked at the requirements of the Bay County Road Commission to pave the apron, which they would attempt to do, once the money is available, but they were exploring the possibility of gravel covered with limestone for the ADA compliant parking.

Upon further questioning, it was determined that this would be the requested ADA compliant basis as opposed to asphalt or any other hard surface.

The hope was that by having more people access the site, there would be less trash and more volunteerism to remove the trash receptacle or at least notify the conservancy when it was in need of dumping and taking into account the community character the surroundings would be most appropriate.

Citizen Mike Kelly expressed his support for the project with gravel as a more appropriate parking area.

Planning Commission member Steve VanTol indicated the Planning Commission had noted nothing about parking on the road as a positive and believed that a parking lot with asphalt millings may be the best compromise for the surface of the ADA spaces.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin also provided a letter in support and spoke generally in favor of the conservancy and their volunteer efforts for the conservancy.

Brian Jean moved to approve the use of gravel based upon the natural character and surroundings of the neighborhood around Three Ponds and that it would promote public safety by allowing those that are visiting to park off the roadway, and further that it would in his motion contemplated that the parking area would be gravel, but the ADA spaces would be topped with limestone, to be in ADA compliance scenario.

After much discussion, it was supported by Brandon Paten with the modification that instead of limestone for the ADA spaces, the entire parking area be constructed with asphalt millings and that the ADA spaces be compliant with ADA requirements as determined by the Planning Commission.

The applicants were not aware of what asphalt millings might be and before they appeared at the Planning Commission in three weeks, they were encouraged to determine whether asphalt millings could be readily obtained, placed over the gravel and create a harder surface area.

Roll call vote

Yes: Brian Jean, Larry Lijewski, Joel Johansson, Brandon Paten

No – None

Absent – Jeremy Rosenbrock

Being no further business, moved by Brandon Paten, supported by Larry Lijewski to adjourn and meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15.

Respectfully submitted

Richard C. Sheppard, Recording Secretary