

Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes

June 28, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Dave VanDeVelde with members Dennis Sullivan, Russell Olson, and Neal Nelson present. James Ufkin was absent. Zoning and Building Manager Kyle Stromquist was present. Applicant representative Joshua Carley was present for 23-09 SU. Applicants and audience members were sworn in. Meeting notices were published, posted and mailed.

Neal Nelson made a motion to approve the May 24, 2023 minutes as printed. Dennis Sullivan seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Committee reviewed the following zoning application:

- A. A. 23-09 SU- Joshua & Marisol Carley being represented by Joshua Carley-requesting Article 8 AG-1 Agriculture Section 8.3 Special Use Permit for an event venue with retreat center and overflow seasonal grass parking area.

Dave VanDeVelde introduced special use permit and then gave applicant representative Joshua Carley the opportunity to discuss the plans for the property.

Joshua Carley stated that he and his wife live in Geneseo and bought the property to have a location for families to have events, celebrations and make memories to last a lifetime. The property has a church on site for weddings, cabins for retreats, camping sites for both RV's and tent camping and a building that can be used as a welcome center. The site can also be rented out for wedding receptions, family reunions, graduation parties, etc. Joshua stated he will be submitting all necessary paperwork for IDNR. The property will be kept clean and orderly and will not have alcohol allowed on the premises. Joshua stated he wants to keep the property very family friendly and keep the property beautiful. Joshua discussed parking plans and that the parking plans do need to be modified.

Lynn Sutton asked if the cabins there were pre-existing.

Joshua Carley stated yes the cabins were pre-existing.

Josh Curry asked how many people would be on the property.

Joshua Carley stated the numbers would fluctuate at any given time but the church can hold 110 people, the cabins can hold up to 135 people and the camping sites have hook ups for 8 RVs.

Lynn Sutton asked about the current septic system and if it could accommodate that many people.

Joshua Carley stated the septic system is adequate and that the Henry County Health Department has been on site and is working with him to review the septic system on site.

Lynn Sutton stated the previous land owners were tax exempt but stated the land is now taxable as the facilities will be rented out for business use.

Josh Curry asked about water run off on the property.

The Department stated the property was mostly flat and sandy and that any water would stay in the middle of the property.

Gerald Franks asked about the hours, noise control and also about golf carts or ATVs.

Joshua Carley stated that there would be quiet hours established and that staff members would be on the property at all times when guests were there. Joshua stated golf carts would be available for use by the staff and guests on the property and for handicap use. No golf carts or ATVs will be allowed to come on the property.

Alexandra Lindbom asked about how many would be camping at a time.

Joshua Carley again stated that numbers would fluctuate but he anticipated 5-6. Joshua stated besides the welcome center building that has two bathrooms, they would have portable hand washing stations and port a potties available as needed. All that gets dumped would be dumped at the dump station on site.

Gerald Franks asked if they are planning to put up any more buildings or anything in the future.

Joshua Carley stated maybe in the future another storage building and a few more cabins would be added but all that would depend on the septic systems.

Lynn Sutton asked if there were any comments or concerns from township officials.

The Department stated there were no official calls with concerns from township officials. The Department stated there are adjoining land owners here in the audience that may speak and asked anyone who would be speaking or asking questions to come to podium and sign in.

Dave Johnson is a farmer that has property across the street to the north and stated he has concerns about the septic systems and the water table. He stated the water table sometimes gets as high as 15 ft. and he does not want any sewer leaking into the water. Dave also stated he was concerned about foot traffic into the crops and fields.

Alexandra Lindbom spoke about the septic system and stated it is up to code and a new system was placed in 2013 and that the property has multiple tanks and fields on the property for other structures.

Lynn Sutton asked if there were any more questions from other audience members.

Mark Deitrick is an adjoining property owner to the west and was the pastor of the property for over 30 years. Mark stated they had youth camps with up to 100 kids sometimes running around the 8 acres of land. Mark stated the children never went off the property and onto another property/field unless the children were invited to come over. For example, a corn maze was made into the field to the south of the property that children were invited to go through. Mark stated there has never been any issues with the septic. Mark stated he was pastor from 1993 to just recently and they never once had any complaints or issues. Mark stated he was very happy to see the applicant bought the property and is going to continue using the property in the same manner as it has been used in the past.

Lynn Sutton asked if there were any more questions from other audience members.

Kyle DeFauw is an adjoining property owner to the west and discuss his concerns. Kyle stated he did not want several hundred people every weekend and was concerned about the noise. He stated he moved out of the city and into the country to peace and quiet and to not be so close to a lot of people. Kyle questioned what seasonal meant and asked about parking. Kyle also stated that he wanted a privacy fence put up between the two properties. He referenced a portion of the zoning ordinance that requires a 6 ft. privacy fence to be put up. Kyle stated that he did not oppose the plans for the property, he would like the plans spelled out a little more specifically though. Kyle also stated that he did not want “certain” types of people staying at the proposed property for instance a battered women’s shelter or an addict recovery shelter or transition home because that could possibly cause safety concerns with theft or physical violence.

Josh Curry asked Kyle DeFauw if he was concerned about his property.

Kyle DeFauw stated he was concerned with the safety and possible liability or being sued if a child was to touch the electric fence that has been live and hot for 3 weeks now.

The Department discussed the zoning ordinance regarding fences and explained the difference between a rural small business and a special use permit for the property.

Applicant Joshua Carley approached the podium again and thanked the audience members for their comments and questions and cleared up some of the confusion. Joshua stated that the seasonal part meant that the property would not be open and used 365 days a year; but open and available during certain months of the year and maybe once or twice a weekend for big events, not every weekend. Joshua also stated that there are no plans to have battered women/men or addicts ever live on the property but would be there sometimes as hired help. Joshua again stated that if the property was rented out for events or for camping, that he or other staff members would be on site at all times.

The Department stated that the special use permit is for the property and that the applicant will maintain all current licensees needed for the events/property and that if at any time any one of the licenses was revoked then the special use permit could be reviewed for compliance.

Dave VanDeVelde asked if there were any more questions from Zoning Board of Appeals members after listening to Planning Committee questions and applicant answers.

Russell Olson asked if there was going to be church services on Sundays.

Joshua Carley stated there were would not be church services on Sundays just mostly weddings.

Neal Nelson asked if there were any issues in the past on the property when it was running the church groups and hosting events.

Mark Deitrick stated there were no issues with water, septic, or neighbors.

Dennis Sullivan asked Alexandra Lindbom about the septic asking if the sand well was dug into a deep well and Alexandra verified that yes it was dug into a deep well.

Dennis Sullivan asked about the fence along the tree line.

Kyle DeFauw stated the fence that is there currently is broken in places and is just an electric fence that he just got live and hot a few weeks ago.

With no other questions, Dennis Sullivan made a motion to approve 23-09 SU. Neal Nelson seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all “yes” votes and motion carried.

The next tentative meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 26, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 102J of the Henry County Courthouse.

With no further business, Neal Nelson made the motion to adjourn. Dennis Sullivan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully,

Kyle Stromquist
Zoning/Building Manager