

Benner Township Planning Commission
April 11, 2024

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Benner Township Planning Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Willis Houser with members Lynn Chaplin, Judson Mantz, Randy Moyer, Lee Copper and Jim Leigey present. Member Alex Moyer was absent. Also in attendance were Jamie Smith, Denise Wood, Jillian Hockenberry, Jill Grove, Duane Grove, John Fala, Kathy Evey, Cady Barcak, Natalie Leslie, Mike Lesniak, and Sharon Royer.

MINUTES

The minutes of March 14, 2024, were presented to the Board for their review and comments. Mr. Copper moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Chaplin seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Chaplin – yes	Mr. Mantz – yes	Mr. Copper – yes
Mr. Leigey – yes	Mr. R. Moyer – yes	Mr. Houser – yes
Mr. A. Moyer – absent		

PERSONS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Duane & Jill Grove: The Groves located at 147 Grove Drive, Bellefonte, PA were present to go over their conditional use request to construct a kennel to board dogs and cats on their 10.044 acre lot with the tax parcel of 12-002-096H, 0001; Over 11 acres including their adjoining house lot. Mr. Grove noted that they are looking to retire soon and this would provide them with some supplemental income. Mr. Grove noted that if approved, they would like to construct a 20' X 50' metal building to house the kennel with concrete floors and well insulated walls. The kennel would be able to hold 15 to 16 dogs. It was noted that the area used for boarding dogs would have indoor as well as outdoor runs. Mr. Grove noted that he is familiar with dog kennels as his ex-father in law ran one. Mr. Grove mentioned that his property is surrounded by approximately 200 acres of the family farm that is normally planted in corn or soybeans. He noted that he knows that noise is probably the most concerning to the neighbors and that until the dogs can be weeded out that there will be noise. Mr. Lesniak noted that the proposal meets all of the required zoning requirements. Ms. Chaplin moved to forward this request on to the Supervisors for the required public hearing. Mr. Copper seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Chaplin – yes	Mr. Mantz – yes	Mr. Copper – yes
Mr. Leigey – yes	Mr. R. Moyer – yes	Mr. Houser – yes
Mr. A. Moyer – absent		

Jamie Smith: Ms. Smith noted that she currently owns the Pet Pub on the Benner Pike which is a grooming and pet supply store. She noted that she is constantly being asked by her current clients if she offers boarding. She noted that she has been looking for property in which she could expand her business and offer pet boarding and feels that the property at 246 Raymond's Lane will work for what she has in mind. Mrs. Smith noted that she has been working with John Sepp of Penn Terra Engineering and currently they are thinking that the building on the back corner closest to Bellefonte Airport could be converted to a building that she could use for the boarding operation. Mr. Lesniak noted that this property would be able to meet all setbacks. A five to six thousand square foot building will be utilized for the kenneling area. Mrs. Smith noted that she would also provide an area for cat boarding as well as she also does cat grooming. Mrs. Smith noted that she would be moving into the home at 246 Raymond's Lane and therefore would be onsite at all times.

John Fala noted that he lives 294 Raymond's Lane and wants to know what will be done to control noise as he is well aware that when one dog begins to bark, they all start barking. He noted that he also has concerns regarding traffic since he shares a driveway and would also like to know if a sign will be erected. He noted that a number of people walk along Raymond's Lane and with no sidewalks and additional traffic he noted that this could be a hazard. Mrs. Smith noted that she has been working with an Engineer to find ways to keep the noise down. They are looking at sound reduction panels for the walls and building walls in between the kennels so that the dogs won't be able to see one another. She noted that there will also be panels installed so that the dogs won't be able to see each other across the hallway either. She noted that she doesn't feel that traffic will be much of an issue as the dogs will be dropped off and most will remain there for a week until they are picked back up, so it won't be getting dropped off in the morning and picked back up the same day. They will be there for longer stays. She noted that as far as a sign, most of her business will be her current cliental and through word of mouth so there may not be a need to put a sign up. Mr. Fala asked if both driveways will be used. Mrs. Smith noted that she has animals and children herself so will want to keep the traffic away from her home and mainly utilize the roadway that will go to the kennel itself. Mr. Fala noted that he has concerns that people using the right of way will speed. Mrs. Smith note that she will be living on site and will make sure that speeding doesn't become a problem.

Kathy Evey asked questions regarding the right of way that was going to be used. Denise Wood, realtor for Mrs. Smith, reviewed with Mrs. Evey what she found during her search.

Mr. Houser noted that the Township does have a noise ordinance so if noise does become a problem a complaint can be filed.

Mrs. Smith noted that anxious dogs will be asked not to return but again, this will be a learning curve to get to know which dogs are anxious and ones that aren't.

Questions were asked regarding water to the property. It was noted that with the established padlocks for the horses that water is available throughout the property. Questions were then raised what would happen with the sewer. Mr. Moyer noted that the main sewer line runs down Raymond's Lane if it would be necessary they should be able to tap on to it.

Mr. Randy Moyer moved to forward this application on to the Supervisors for the public hearing. Ms. Chaplin seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Chaplin – yes
Mr. Leigey – yes
Mr. A. Moyer – absent

Mr. Mantz – yes
Mr. R. Moyer – yes

Mr. Copper – yes
Mr. Houser – yes

NEW BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Amendments:

More than one principal use: Mr. Lesniak went over the proposed zoning ordinance amendment that would allow more than one principal use, by conditional use, in the Forest Conservation and Agricultural Zoning District. It was noted that for instance currently, a farmer wouldn't be allowed to farm and also have a welding shop or sell feed and fertilizer. Mr. Copper moved to recommend approval to the Supervisors of this zoning amendment. Mr. Mantz seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Chaplin – yes
Mr. Leigey – yes
Mr. A. Moyer – absent

Mr. Mantz – yes
Mr. R. Moyer – yes

Mr. Copper – yes
Mr. Houser – yes

Commercial Uses: Mr. Lesniak noted that the second zoning amendment would consist to include the word “Kennel” on the line where “Office-animal or veterinarian office/hospital,” is listed so the line would now read: “Office-animal or veterinarian office/hospital/kennel,” with the minimum number of parking spaces as 1 per every 250 square feet of gross floor area. It was also noted that in the definition of kennel should be amended to include not only canines but also felines. Mr. Copper moved to recommend this zoning amendment to the Supervisors. Ms. Chaplin seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Chaplin – yes
Mr. Leigey – yes
Mr. A. Moyer – absent

Mr. Mantz – yes
Mr. R. Moyer – yes

Mr. Copper – yes
Mr. Houser – yes

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Moyer moved to adjourn the meeting the time being 7:36 p.m. Mr. Copper seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Chaplin – yes
Mr. Leigey – yes
Mr. A. Moyer – absent

Mr. Mantz – yes
Mr. R. Moyer – yes

Mr. Copper – yes
Mr. Houser – yes



Sharon Royer, Recording Secretary