

## CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting held on Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 of the Benton Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chairperson Trina Rodez, Joseph Taylor, Marletta Seats and Gregory Whitehead  
Members Absent: Matt Davis  
Staff Present: Loyall Bennett, Caleb O'Toole and Deeann Scalf  
Also present: Able Palacios (Applicant), Bladimir Pedroza (Applicant), Adan Pedroza, Ade Adewoye (Architect), Brandy & Will Jaquez (Applicants), Tara Kellez, Mike Yates and Deborah Yates

## SILENT INVOCATION:

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Taylor motioned and support of approval by Ms. Seats. Motion passed.

**AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

## NEW BUSINESS:

**Applicant Brandy Jaquez, of Sunrise Farms, located at 1310 Hillendale Rd. Benton Harbor, Michigan, 49022, is seeking a site plan amendment to an existing special use permit. The applicant is seeking to add a glamping area consisting of three temporary tents and an outdoor shower. (Property ID# 11-03-0026-0005-08-0) (public hearing)**

Ms. Seats motioned to move to a Public Hearing and supported by Ms. Rodez.

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mr. Bennett advised this is an Amendment to an existing Special Use Permit to allow (3) three temporary tents and an outdoor shower on the back side of the property.

Some of the items for this Project are as follows:

- a. Only up during the summer months
- b. (3) three temporary tents
- c. Outdoor Shower
- d. Back side of the property

Mr. Bennett advised the only Tent Ordinance states it has to be temporary and movable in Section 82-555.

Ms. Brandy Jaquez (Applicant) stated Glamping is Glamorous Camping, all furniture inside is permanent (so no air mattress, it's an actual residential bed). They have now moved on property full time, as before they lived onsite, they rented it out to the Bridal Parties to stay in. Other Locations in the Area have these, mostly in South Haven, but Brides are looking for this concept more and more. The Area is contained in (1) one location on the property for all the Entertainment purposes.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS:** None.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Taylor would like to make a Motion to accept the Sunrise Farms Site Plan Amendment to the existing Special Use Permit subject to the following Conditions:

1. Everything is temporary and movable.

Ms. Seats supported the motion. Ms. Rodez made a motion to close the Public Hearing has ended at 6:09 p.m. Ms. Seats supported. Motion carried.

**Applicant Bladimir Pedroza, owner of Pedroza Construction, is seeking site plan approvals to build a new business headquarters located at 1829 Territorial Rd. Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022. (Property ID# 11-03-0016-0017-11-1)**

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mr. Bennett advised this is a E Restricted Industrial. So, it is an allowed use. Site Plan shows meeting all the set backs for Zoning. As well as the front yard set backs. Mr. Bennett the

only thing we do not have at this time is the Drainage Commission Approvals on the Drainage Pond and Retention Pond out back. This is only a Site Plan Approval at this time, everything else is subject to Permitting.

Some of the items for this Project are as follows:

- e. Business Office of Company
- f. (2) two story building
- g. In front of the Fruit Market on Territorial Road
- h. Utility Bays for trucks parking, storage and material
- i. Retention Pond will be out back
- j. This is an Allowed Use in this District
- k. Expanding Business and need Office Space and Storage Space for Equipment

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Taylor would like to make a Motion to accept the Pedroza Construction Site Plan Approval subject to the following Conditions:

- 1. Must meet all Site Drainage and Requirements per the Berrien County Drain Commission.
- 2. Must complete the Construction within (1) one calendar year from the start date.
- 3. Subject to the Approval from the Berrien County Road Department for a Driveway Permit.
- 4. Subject to all necessary Licensing and Permitting Requirements by the State of Michigan.

Mr. Whitehead approved the Motion. Motion carried.

**Applicant Marisa Dempsey is seeking site plan approval for a 4,000 SF pre-engineered steel storage building located at 711 Starlite Dr. (Property ID# 11-03-0031-0038-09-1)**

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mr. Bennett advised this is Michigan Gas Utilities on the corner of Starlite Drive and Union Avenue. They are building a Cold Storage Unit for storage of materials and trucks. This is a Public Utility. At this time we have no additional Conditions or Requirements.

Some of the items for this Project are as follows:

- l. Build a Cold Storage Unit
- m. Storage for materials and trucks
- n. A Public Utility Building
- o. Training Area with a chain link fenced in Area
- p. Corner of Starlite Drive and Union Avenue
- q. Allowed Use in D1 Commercial District
- r. (2) two entrances into the Parking Lot

Travis Miller, Architect on this Project advised that there is (2) two entrances into the Parking Lot.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Whitehead would like to make a Motion to accept the Michigan Gas Utilities Site Plan Approval subject to the following Conditions:

- 1. None.

Ms. Rodez approved the Motion. Motion passed.

**Request for an Opinion for the Beer Garden located at 1559 Pipestone Road (Property ID# 11-03-0029-0053-01-2)**

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mr. Bennett advised Able Palacios is trying to purchase the old Ferguson Monument property on the corner of Napier Avenue and Pipestone Road for a potential Beer Garden, and it is only requesting an opinion at this time, since he does not own the property as of yet, nor is there an Application for the Beer Garden at this time.

Some of the items for this Project are as follows:

- s. Outdoor drinking / social area

- t. Fenced in area
- u. Family and kid friendly environment
- v. Property goes all the way to Ox Creek
- w. Container Rest Room Area with living Plant Walls all the way around them
- x. Tru Grid System for Parking Lot (instead of a concrete Parking Lot, which is bad for the Environment)
- y. A lot of Environmental thoughts went into the Renderings and layout of everything
- z. Concept has been in the making for (4) four years now

Ms. Seats mentioned the Renderings look great. Mr. Taylor advised Benton Charter Township owns back of Sorter School and down to Ox Creek. The Ox Creek Revitalization has been done in the City of Benton Harbor, but has not reached Benton Charter Township yet. Mr. Bennett mentioned it was stopping at M 139 as of now, and wouldn't reach BCT for years to come. Mr. Bennett stated the Revitalization of the Home Depot and Starbuck's locations had to be completed prior to Starbuck's opening. Mr. Bennett advised it would need to be Rezoned as the (9) nine acres are split as D1 Commercial and back ½ is zoned residential. D1 Commercial allows for Bars and Night Clubs with indoor social drinking, but this will be an Outdoor Drinking Facility that is why we are asking the Board for an Opinion to fit into the D1 Category.

Able Palosios (Applicant) fence around entire property for sound barrier, protection, safety, and privacy. Large Wooded Area (aka Ox Creek) in the back of the property. With the Revitalization Project that is going to happen with Ox Creek that is the reason they are choosing this Property Location. The Apartment upstairs in the Building at this location would be dissolved once possession of the property was taken over.

Ms. Seats advised JB Sorter has a brick oven / stove on the property needs to be preserved somehow as it is from the 1800's. Mr. Taylor mentioned the Underground Railroad along Ox Creek and Sorter School and is being investigated by the Historical Foundation now for future preservation and will limit future Buildings if this is found. Mr. Bennett states there are a lot of concerns with this idea, that is why this is just a Request for an Opinion at this time. Mr. Taylor great idea, as there are a lot of them around the area, and they are all by a busy or Main Street in the Town. Ms. Rodez as long as it is a safe area, and there is fencing from the Streets, she thinks it will work out at this Location.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**TOWNSHIP BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:** None.

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:** None.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Taylor would like to recognize Mr. Greg Whitehead, and welcome aboard to the Planning Commission.

**OTHER COMMENTS/CONCERNS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Seats motioned to adjourned Mr. Taylor supported. Motion carries and Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business before the PC, the Meeting was adjourned:  
*Minutes: Deeann Scalf the Secretary of the Planning Commission.*

**Loyall Bennett, Building Inspector**