

CASTLE ROCK TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
CONTINUED CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR 1120 220TH ST W
June 24, 2014 @ 6:00 p.m.

Approved

A Continued Public Hearing of the Planning Commission of Castle Rock Township was held on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 6:00p.m. Present were Monique Berg, Chair; Arlyn Lamb, Vice-chair; Jeff Partington, Gerald Larsen, and Jon Juenke, Commission members. Also present were Drea Doffing, Barbara Lang, Mary Schreiber, Tammy Salmon, Cliff Salmon, Janet Zimmer, Sandy Weber, Ed Siegfried, Dorraine Dorneman, Jen Venz, Al Venz, Travis Overbye, Melissa Schmitz, Bernie May, Tom Schmitz, Adan Ali, Kim Miller, Hyder Aziz, Jason Maras, Alysia Maras, Matt Lemke, Delores Henry, Gretchen Schreiber, Melanie Smith, Doug Pelach, Mike Overby and Mark Henry.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Monique Berg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The purpose of this meeting is to continue the Public Hearing that began on May 27, 2014 and has been continued to June 24, 2014 at 6 p.m. to review a conditional use permit for the establishment of a cemetery within the parcel located at 1120 220th St W, Farmington, MN 55024. The purpose of the conditional use permit would be to allow the establishment of a cemetery owned by Kim Miller to be known as Dakota Gardens Cemetery.

Monique then opened the meeting for questions and statements from the floor.

QUESTIONS / STATEMENTS

Gretchen Schreiber: I have two articles from the Star Tribune that I would like to leave as reference information. The topics are about water pollution and green burials. The article about water pollution specifically mentions Dakota County. Other concerns I have are that if conditions require sealed burial vaults and if the court would throw out that condition if it came to that, does that mean that they could proceed with the green burials? Also, a few years ago the township lost some tax base when the industrial area was annexed by Farmington. Since this property is over 70 acres of land, will that affect our tax base?

Monique Berg: Yes, it could affect the Conditional Use Permit conditions. The township can't restrict land use if it meets the zoning ordinance requirements.

Bernie May: What is the probability of this property being re-zoned?

Monique Berg: The re-zoning process is tight, and a complex process. I can't comment at this time if that might be considered.

Jason Maras: I have concerns about establishing this new cemetery next to a housing development.

Al Venz: Has anyone asked how many burial sites there will be in the new cemetery?

Hyder Aziz: The plan is for the property to be divided into four phases of approximately 20 acres each. The front area would be designed to be more like a garden area, and burial plots would be spaced apart. 20 acres would be more burials than we would expect to use within my lifetime. Because the sale of the property is not final, we have not had the property plotted yet.

Al Venz: The information I have seen about the Burnsville Muslim Cemetery says that they have enough space to accommodate burials for another 100 years, so we're trying to understand the need for another cemetery in this area.

Hyder Aziz: That cemetery is a combination of Muslim and Christian burials, with sections for each.

Al Venz: Would you allow people from other faiths to be buried in this cemetery?

Hyder Aziz: Maybe we would consider burial sites for other faiths, but at this point we expect to remain Muslim.

Janet Zimmer: I just want to reiterate my concern for the water table in the area.

Bernie May: If this is approved, will anyone from the Township or County be monitoring burials so that they are done according to the Conditional Use Permit?

Monique Berg: State guidelines will have to be met, and if the CUP is not adhered to the township would be required to take action.

Al Venz: If the water table would become contaminated, who is responsible for monitoring?

Monique Berg: The landowner.

Jan Venz: What controls would be in place to make sure this is monitored?

Monique Berg: They would be regulated by state guidelines.

Hyder Aziz: Research regarding green burials indicates they are more eco-friendly than conventional burials. No chemicals are used so they don't get into the soil or water.

Dorraine Dorneman: I've been researching this and found that the State of Minnesota doesn't have a lot of experience with green burials. The UK has more exposure and information. They do a lot of research and follow-up with water tables because they need to be monitored. I turned in a packet of information that I found if others want to read it.

Monique Berg: The packet will be on file at the Town Hall for anyone who would like to review any of the articles and information.

Janet Zimmer: What is the next step in this process?

Monique Berg: The Planning Commission will make their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors and will review the draft Resolution which includes conditions. The Board of Supervisors will review at their next meeting.

Jeff Partington: Does anyone know how deep the existing wells in that area are?

(Several residents replied): 120', 130' 150'.

Gerald Larson: Will the State have to give an approval once the design and plotting is drawn up?

Kim Miller: We didn't realize there was going to be such an issue with the water situation and concern about ground pollution. The other issue we are concerned about is does the community want the cemetery here? We are still investigating the feasibility of a cemetery being established in an area where the citizens are opposed to it. I am not aware of a new cemetery in the Minneapolis area being established with the past 30+ years, so I'm not sure of State guidelines at this point.

Gretchen Schreiber: I feel that sealed vaults would be a necessity if this goes forward.

Kim Miller: We haven't done any preliminary boring for water table levels or further investigation because it hasn't been determined if the CUP will be approved yet.

Cliff Salmon: I have a new septic system that was installed within the past year and ran into problems with the high water tables (only seven feet down), and was required to install a mound system and a pump station.

Arlyn Lamb: Castle Rock Township in general has a high water table. I believe the area for the cemetery is sandier soil, and as it was just mentioned, the high water mark is as little as seven feet. The county has charts showing the water table levels and historical data, which could give the group an idea of what to expect before spending money on borings.

Kim Miller: If we found that the water tables are high or the soil is too rocky, the purchase of the land won't go through.

Arlyn Lamb: What is the typical gravesite dimension, 4' x 8'?

Hyder Aziz: The plan is to be 3' x 6'.

Kim Miller: For green burials there would be no grave reservations. The plots are laid out in advance by a numbering system, and bodies are buried as they happen in the order of the plot numbers.

Mark Henry: Another consideration is that in the past five or six years, this community has had a lot of large projects forced upon us such as the Great River Energy CAPX2020 power lines and the

pipeline. The township doesn't have the staff to deal with some of these situations, since we are still a largely rural agricultural area.

Sandy Weber: A bit of information to keep in mind is that the City of Farmington was built on a dead lake, so it's natural for the high water tables. The County should be able to help with some data regarding the water tables in the area.

Cliff Salmon: I am still concerned about additional traffic in the area with the addition of a cemetery. Highway 50 is already known to be a hazardous road.

Chair Monique Berg asked if there were any further comments or questions. Hearing none, the Planning Commission moved on to review the draft Resolution that the township attorney has drawn up. It has already been determined that the Conditional Use Permit can be for the cemetery only. Conditions discussed included:

1. Perimeter landscaping. A privacy fence at least six feet in height would be required to be constructed along the residential boundary. This would be in addition to moving trees on the property around to create a border.
2. Times of use. Will be set for 7 am to 6 pm.
3. Adequate parking must be provided so that there is not an issue with traffic along Highway 50.
4. Will require sealed vaults with liners. The Township is declining use of green burials at this time.
5. Number of burial lots. The expectation is that 20 acres at a time will be developed. Approximately 1/3 of the area involved would be used for road access and space between lots. Lots will be plotted for 3' x 6', which would equate to approximately 35,000 burial lots per 20 acres.
6. Determine what the ground water table is in the area. Buyer is responsible for costs associated with having borings done and any additional environmental studies that may be required.
7. Flat grave markers are to be used that are no higher than two inches about the ground.

MOTION: Arlyn Lamb/Jeff Partington made a motion to recommend the CUP with the following conditions:

1. **Times of use: 7 am to 6 pm.**
2. **Adequate parking**
3. **Require use of sealed vaults and vault liners**
4. **Define number of potential burials (determined to be approx. 35,000 for first 20 acres developed)**
5. **Water table for the property information is required before proceeding with approval of CUP**
6. **Identify landscape perimeter requirements**
7. **Only flat stone markers are to be used at the gravesites.**
8. **Suggestion that the Board of Supervisors should review installing a turn lane on Highway 50 with MNDOT.**

5 ayes. Motion carries.

MOTION: Arlyn Lamb/Jon Juenke moved to adjourn the Public Hearing. 5 ayes. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned, 6:55 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Lang, Town Clerk
Castle Rock Township

Attest: Monique Berg, Chair, Castle Rock Planning Commission
Drea Doffing, Chair, Castle Rock Board of Supervisors