

Greenvale Township Planning Commission
PUBLIC HEARING – OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 20, 2023

Present: Ken Malecha (Chair); Commissioners Joyce Moore, Scott Norkunas, Victor Volkert; Supervisor Charles Anderson, Board Liaison and Jane Dilley, Town Clerk

Absent: Mark Legvold

Others Present: Tom Wirtzfeld, Duane Fredrickson, Terrance LaCanne, Joe Kalina, Gregory Langer, Carolyn Fott, Linus Langer, Shawn Lorence, Tony Rowan, Mike & Becky McNamara, Dave Roehl, Steve Hansen, Bruce Paulson, Bobbi Bolton, Dean Odette, Dave & Cindy Roehl

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited at 2:00pm.

Agenda: Chairman Malecha asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Being none, Moore moved to approve the agenda, Volkert seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

Opening of the Meeting: Malecha called the Special Meeting of the Greenvale Township Planning Commission to order. The sole topic of today's Public Hearing is to hear testimony regarding an Interim Use Permit (IUP) requested by Terry LaCanne and Duane Fredrickson on behalf of Circle City Outdoor Advertising.

Attendees were asked to silence their phones and other electronic devices as a courtesy to the Planning Commission and members of the audience. If the need arises to take a phone call or have a conversation, please step outside the meeting room.

The Planning Commission is appointed by the Board to make recommendations on planning and zoning issues. The Planning Commission's recommendations are advisory only; the final decision on any planning and zoning matters is made by the elected Township Board of Supervisors.

One of the responsibilities of the Planning Commission is to hold public hearings so anyone with an interest in the topic has an opportunity to provide testimony and evidence in support of their position. It is the Planning Commission's role to review the application based on regulations in our ordinances and the State of Minnesota. We do not have the discretion to change or ignore these rules. There may be strong feelings on the issue. We are committed to conducting a fair and open process where everyone will have an opportunity to be heard but require everyone to participate in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Today the Planning Commission will be taking testimony regarding the IUP application to construct two outdoor advertising signs on parcel 16-03000-51-021 west of Northfield on Highway 19.

For public testimony, one person at a time is permitted to speak for three minutes. Please adhere to this time limit so everyone has a chance to speak. Come up to the microphone, state your name and address. The Chairman will call on all first-time speakers before a person will be allowed to speak a second time. All comments should be addressed to the Planning Commission Chair. This is not a debate or an opportunity to cross examine an applicant. Audience members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner, speak only when called upon, limit the comments to the matter before the Planning Commission and speak only for the allotted time. Disruptive attendees may be asked to leave the meeting.

Malecha asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to be introduced as a guest (none).

Before public testimony is given, Malecha asked if the Clerk had received any written comments. Dilley replied no written comments were received.

Duane Fredrickson gave a brief presentation about the proposed outdoor advertising signs. He displayed a replica of the advertising sign on County Road 86 & Cedar advertising Lorence's Berry Farm. His focus is on local businesses and family values. For instance, he would accept a bar & grill serving food as an

advertiser, but not a bar (only) or alcohol related advertising. The signs are single pole construction made of steel engineered to withstand 110 lbs. of force per square foot. The signs are 10' high x 30' wide. By comparison, signs along the interstate are generally 14' high x 48' wide.

Malecha then opened the meeting for public testimony. Joe Kalina lives approximately 1,000 ft from the proposed signs. He stated the land is zoned agricultural. Suggested Victor Volkert, as the selling agent, would have a conflict of interest in this transaction. Volkert indicated he plans to abstain from voting. The sign is near a vegetable farm and next to a home and may not be welcome there. The house across the road was recently purchased by a new buyer. He believes Dakota County allows billboards only on commercial property. He stated the time of day for the Public Hearing is inconvenient for people who work. Kalina has a petition signed by ~15 people. All live near the proposed installation. Kalina read their names and addresses. The signs are not going to benefit Greenvale Township. He stated that home values are negatively impacted by adjacent billboards. Kalina gave the petition to the Town Clerk.

Shawn Lorence rents an outdoor sign from Duane Fredrickson for the Lorence Berry Farm. He likes there are plans to put up additional signs.

Tom Wirtzfeld expressed his belief that people should be able to do on their own land that which does not truly harm anyone else. He is a big believer in landowner rights. He has operated a couple of small businesses and understands the value of advertising. It is significant. He is frustrated that the township does not allow business owners to put up signs. Most have survived because they are good, clean, honest businesses and made aware of their existence by word of mouth. He finds it beneficial when he is in an area new to him to see signs that let people know about a nearby or new business.

Becky McNamara shares a driveway with the Ackermans near the Linus Langer home. Her comments are from a safety perspective. Drivers exiting I-35 are accustomed to driving 75 – 80 mph. There is just enough of a knoll beyond their driveway where it is sometimes hard to see eastbound traffic when leaving their driveway. Her concern is adding another distraction for these drivers. She is also concerned that post construction, 320th St W is becoming a thoroughfare. Are we going to allow billboards there, too?

Carolyn Fott concurs with the comments made by Mr. Kalina and Ms. McNamara. She believes neighbors should have a strong say in this matter. She quoted Lyndon Johnson “A new and a substantial effort must be made to provide places of relaxation and recreation wherever our roads run.” For decades, Hwy 19 has been free of visual pollution. But why destroy our natural environment with billboards? Billboards have become eyesores. On I-35 south of Lakeville, there are three billboards in succession. Two are in use. The third is still looking for an advertiser. Highway 19 will soon add a six-legged roundabout with I-35, County 46 and County 59. Drivers headed westbound toward I-35 should be paying attention to which lane they need to be in to get on the desired road. The roundabout at 185th St W and Hwy 50/Kenwood Trail contains multiple lanes. Drivers – going far slower than they are on I-35 – are trying to figure out which lane they should be in and slowing traffic down. The accident rate in this area is quite high. She appreciates the care Fredrickson puts into his business. But what happens if he sells his business to someone who doesn’t share the same values in selecting advertisers? Fewer and fewer businesses are advertising in newspapers. More and more advertising is shifted towards the internet. What will become of the billboards once they become obsolete? Let’s slow down the visual pollution and enjoy the beauty provided by nature. Four states and one Minnesota city have already banned billboards. Fott urged the Planning Commission as stewards of our environment to be visionaries and say no to the billboards.

Linus Langer gave greetings to the Planning Commission, the Clerk and the audience. He believes this meeting should be broadcast online and recorded. He comes with a heavy heart with opposition to the application. The vehicle of an IUP is inappropriate as the township’s zoning contains provisions for agricultural reservation, floodplain and shoreline. There is no commercial zoning in Greenvale Township. Langer stated they would have look at these signs from the deck windows in their home. He can give examples of “signs gone bad.” He is not against any one person, but he is against the billboards as they directly impact on his home and signs are not permitted with our zoning.

Greg Langer clarified a statement made by a previous speaker that signs were not permitted in the township. That is not true. The ordinance for home occupation operations allow for signs, with township approval. This is addressed in Section 4.05 of the township’s ordinances.

Joe Kalina spoke for a second time. He agrees with most of what has been said here today. Signs that are allowed might be 4' x 8' which is a lot different than a billboard. A speaker said you should be able to do what you want on your own property; Kalina added but you need to follow the rules. A lot of properties are owned by people who don't even reside in Greenvale Township. There are five residence and field driveways near the proposed installation. Kalina himself has been rear ended in this area. The driver immediately behind you may see that you're turning but the second and all other drivers do not and they're following too close to stop. He is also concerned about large equipment using those driveways as well.

Malecha then asked if anyone else wanted to speak. Per the Planning Commission's Policies and Procedures Manual, this question is asked three times. There were no other requests to speak. Malecha stated the Public Hearing is now closed.

Norkunas made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Moore. Motion carried 4 – 0.

APPROVED – May 11, 2023

Prepared by:



Ken Malecha, Chair



Jane Dilley, Town Clerk