

Matt Wieber, Chairman  
Robert Bollenberg, Vice Chair  
Bruce Wildie, Secretary  
Tim Flynn, member

Jason Barnard, Zoning Administrator  
Mary Pitcher, Assistant Zoning Administrator  
Alison Michalak, Recording Secretary  
David Gardner, member

## **WEST BENZIE JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **PLATTE TOWNSHIP HALL SPECIAL MEETING MINOR SPECIAL LAND USE, 2024-01 WILD THINGS FARMS MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER-** Call to order at 5 pm by Chairman Wieber.

In attendance: Wieber, Bollenberg, Flynn, Wildie, and Gardner; Zoning Administrator Barnard and Assistant Zoning Administrator Pitcher

Public Present: 12

Brooke Kaminski, Cindy Gottschalk, Paula Figura, Hank and Louann Werksma  
Bob Michalak, Road Commission Foreman Tyler Machiela, Cameron

Leuenberger, Lisa Pyne, Molly Franks, Gretchen Knoblock, Jean Noah

A MOTION by Gardner-Support by Flynn to approve agenda as amended;  
motion carried all ayes, voice vote.

Wild Things site visit- all members and the public present walked the Wild Things Farm to visually inspect the location of the tent sites and proposed driveway. Returned from site visit at 5:35 pm

#### **PUBLIC INPUT**

**Jean Noah-**asked if there are other campsites in Platte Township. Another resident stated There is one active primitive campsite on Oviatt Rd, which cannot be seen from the road and has been permitted for 25 years.

Gretchen Knoblock asked if this is considered a short- term rental application.

#### **CORRESPONDANCE-**

Chair Wieber read one letter from a Marvis Road resident opposing the Wild Things-application creates a precedent for future requests. He read a letter from additional residents stating not opposed to the application but would suggest having an on-site manager; Another letter from an adjoining landowner stated safety and trespassing concerns and granting this

application will create a nuisance and a potential for more tents to be erected to accommodate larger groups. Another letter states possibility of environmental damage to the ground water, excessive noise, and is concerned that too many unknown people renting and transients will create unsafe situations.

Wieber stated that the intent of this meeting is to recommend to the Zoning Administrator either 1-approve, 2 -approve with conditions, or 3- deny.

**Site plan /driveway location-**

Wieber read the driveway language of the West Benzie Joint Planning Ordinance which clarifies that only one access drive is allowed per parcel, and any driveway over 800 foot a water tank is required to be on site and have the capability of a two-hour supply of water for fire suppression. The road must meet requirements for emergency vehicle access. Chairman Wieber read the Language of the RP 20 districts. Wieber read the letter dated January 24, 2024, sent to the Zoning Administrator from the applicant stating the intended use for the parcel is agricultural with the campsites as a way of supplementing income until the agricultural use is productive.

This application may be considered with conditions such as  
- Buffer strips 15 foot wide with plantings of (50 trees on Fowler and 25 in front of the tents) a berm, or a fence. The buffer could require setbacks as well. Wieber cited articles 20, 21, 24 and article 16.4.

Wieber read the department of natural resources maximum number of sites permitted without state approval: 5 total, 1 tent per site- any additional tents prohibited. The complaints have been trespassing, visual site from Fowler Rd, excessive noise, and public safety.

The ordinance has been in effect since 2013.

Assistant ZA stated there were 10 notification letters sent to adjoining landowners. This parcel is located in the densest residential area of Platte township- adjoining property owners are year-round residents.

**Questions** to Members: does the application meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance, water supply, fire suppression, compatibility with adjoining residents and health, safety, and welfare?

Gardner talked about the deck sizes and height from the ground; also stated ground debris around the tent sites is a fire hazard. Barnard suggests Homestead Fire Chief can be contacted to get his recommendations. The applicant stated he has been working with the ZA in getting permits for seven years and was thought the right to farm act enables this application.

## **DELIBERATION**

- The members discussed denial of application.

. Bollenberg stated that the main use is agricultural. Wildie states if used for agricultural, would that mean another use cannot be permitted. Flynn asks if unpermitted events occur, what is the fine- Barnard stated it would be a civil municipal infraction with a fine amount of \$1500 per incident/site.

-The members discussed considering recommending approval with conditions:

- 1.) requiring driveway access to accommodate emergency vehicles; compliance with the county road commission- per their requirements for access entranceway.
- 2.) water tank for fire suppression for driveway exceeding 800 feet;
- 3.) only one driveway allowed;
- 4.) Buffers to be required- tree plantings along Fowler Road; Fencing along the western property line from Fowler Road to the tree line (Sec.21.8)
- 5.) 160-foot setback requirement has been used before as a permit condition as well using a planting buffer; this application has a 132- foot setback request.
- .6.) Signage required along property boundaries;
- 7.) A maximum total of no more than 4 tents; and compliance with all other required permits required;
- 8) on site management required.

A **MOTION** by Flynn **support** by Wildie to recommend approval with the conditions listed above. Roll call: Bollenberg-nay, Gardner-nay, Flynn-aye, Wildie-aye, Wieber-nay; 3 nay, 2 aye- Motion fails.

A **MOTION** by Gardner **SUPPORT** by Bollenberg to recommend denial of application. Roll Call vote: Gardner-aye, Wildie-aye, Flynn-nay, Bollenberg-aye, and Wieber-aye. Motion approved 4-1

A MOTION to adjourn at 7:12

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison Michalak, recording secretary