

APPROVED

**Eveline Township Planning Commission Special Meeting Minutes
Eveline Township Hall
8525 Ferry Road
June 16, 2021
7:00 P.M.**

- 1) Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance by Chairman Kelly McGinn in the Township Hall.

Commissioners present: Kelly McGinn, Eric Beishlag, Gary Albring and Lorraine Sims. Recording Secretary Sandi Whiteford was also present. Prudence Kurtz was absent and excused. Several residents were also present.

- 2) Agenda:** Motion by Commissioner Beishlag, supported by Commissioner Sims, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

- 3) Public Comment:** No public comment received.

4) Public Hearing Hungry Ducks Special Use Permit

- I. **Open Public Hearing:** Chairman McGinn opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.
- II. **Introduction of Changes:** Zoning Administrator Deb Graber introduced Richard Mueller of Hungry Ducks, 4580 M-66 North. Mr. Mueller stated they are the owners and developers of Castle Farms and its restoration. Received a permit for barns in 2018. Received permit for curb cut in 2019. "We should have known we needed a permit from Eveline Township. The project went from private to public." Focus for petting zoo will be on American animals. Purchased 1/8 scale train and carousel. Would like to have something open to the public. Hoping to open July 4, 2021. Amusement Park equipment is regulated by the state. Main building will contain welcome center, gift shop and museum. Will sell food when permits obtained. Water and snacks, possible food truck. Petting farm will not be open at night. Planning Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. Memorial Day to Labor Day. Animals come from local farms. Trout fishing pond. Geo thermal energy efficient. Zoo train possibly next year.
- III. **Public Comment:** *Daniel Burke* – Trains come with noise and runoff from asphalt.
John Fratrack – Mueller's have done a good job. Petting zoo and museum ok but Merry Go Rounds have music and kids scream and have a good time. I believe there will be noise problems.

Bob Danowitz – Questions of this zoning. Special Use beyond residential. If you issue a permit in 10 years, could they build a Ferris wheel? Sounds like an open door to do what they want to do. Eveline Township has more summer homes than any other in the area. I believe this will have impact on large lakeshore homes. Traffic travels at a high rate of speed on M-66, is it safe for children? I am sure Mueller's would do a good job. I don't think large steel buildings enhance the area. Will they be without limitations?

Greg Stevens – Is the well and septic original or new. Do they have MDOT permit, Soil Erosion permit and days and times set?

Rebekah Moser, Castle Farms Manager for 6 years. They notify neighbors of evening events. Mueller's have no intentions of making large amusement park that would disturb the neighbors. Overflow parking is grass.

Zoning Administrator Deb Graber stated this is an after the fact situation.

Chris Leroy, Sequanota Club – has anything been discussed as far as paving Shaw Road.

Gary Forbrig – After the fact are they requesting rezone to Farm Forest?

Zoning Administrator Deb Graber stated they are applying for recreational area.

Mr. Mueller stated they want to comply with what is built.

Zoning Administrator Deb Graber stated two structures, two ponds, carousel and M-66 access. Ellis M. – MDOT has asked for turning lane.

Kim Stevens – During the week is ok, weekends are our time to relax and work in gardens. Ponds are close to the road, ponds and kids are scary. Castle Farms prices are too high, locals cannot afford to go to activities.

Susan Parks – What is the difference between commercial and Farm Forest? Are MDOT permit approved or just filed?

Nancey Ferguson – When they spoke to the neighbors, restoration of existing buildings, proposed purpose of petting zoo, no mention of carousel and trains. Why 4 portable restrooms? Five permits have been completed. Farm open on weekends, open to special events and bus tours, hours of operation, up to 3 trains in operation, there is no commercial zoning. Does not meet Master Plan, please do not allow this project as presented. Richard's whim is being forced on neighbors. Fireworks disturb the horses. I request a call before major events, request the Planning Commission not to allow project as presented.

Rebekah Moser, Castle Farms Manager – Castle Farms does not allow fireworks.

Richard O'leary – trains are kid's toys. Mueller's have done nothing but good for the community.

Abe, works for Mueller's – Landscaping will be done. Trains don't have to make noise. They have seen much excitement over the carousel.

Peggy Kusina – Look at what Richard and Linda have done. They want to be part of the community. We do have busses at the Castle, most are elderly. Think of Castle Farms and how it has enhanced the area.

Unidentified resident – Will the carousel have music?

Richard Mueller – Not if you don't want it.

Linda Mueller – We have plans for fences around ponds and road. We are very safety conscious.

Zoning Administrator Deb Graber stated fences are on the plans. Planning Commission can put stipulations on the project.

Chris Leroy, Sequanota Club - Mueller's rescued the property. They have taken care to bring it back to historical state.

Ron Chapman – Concerned about lighting to protect kids.

Kim, works for the Castle. – Carousel does not have music, it needs music. Noise will not be a concern.

Unidentified resident – light pollution is of concern.

Castle Farms Employee – Train is electric. No evening events, barn lights are on all night.

Ron Chapman – Set hours of operation if night time hours.

Bob Danowitz – Can there be change once permit is granted, it will go into the future. Think about this being someone else's endeavor. For Farm Forest it is quite different. I have a vested interest. Change can be good and can also harm us.

Nancy Ferguson – Trains, do they have whistles?

Richard Mueller – We recommend we get them.

Nancy Ferguson – As part of the Ironton Ferry Board we had to work with the neighbors and Coast Guard to make the noise acceptable. Spoke about a maximum capacity being established.

Rebekah Moser, Castle Farms Manager – The flow is spread out throughout the day at the Castle, an average of 40 to 50 kids at a time. The Christmas event has about 150 kids at \$5.00 each.

- IV. **Close Public Comment:** Chairman McGinn closed public comment at 8:28 p.m.
- V. **Planning Commission acknowledges correspondence:** No correspondence received.
- VI. **Public Hearing is closed:** Chairman McGinn closed the public hearing at 8:29 p.m.
- VII. **Township Staff and/or Planner summarizes:** The request is for a special use permit for a petting zoo, carousel, trains and fishing pond, public comments and plans will be reviewed by the Planning Commission members.
- VIII. **Commission publicly discusses and may ask questions of staff or audience:**
Commissioner Beishlag stated he feels the emphasis is on a petting zoo. Lighting is not supposed to shine on neighbor's property. Pond sits close to the road. Screening so as not to cause distraction. Fence is not sufficient; more screening is needed.
Commissioner McGinn asked if there is room for vegetation.

Commissioner Albring expressed surprise as to the amount of activity and that neighbor notification has been vague.

Commissioner Beishlag stated concerns can be handled within Special Use Permit. A decision may not be reached tonight. Unknown is the biggest problem.

Richard Mueller asked if fencing could be put up around the barns. The road is high, the county cleaned out under road drainage and the water ran onto the property.

Zoning Administrator Deb Graber stated that barn fencing is ok, perimeter fencing is not. Grass seeding is ok.

Tony Pearsall, *Mueller's* employee asked if a permit is needed for fencing.

Zoning Administrator Deb Graber stated not for barn fencing.

Richard Mueller stated that they have MDOT, Building Permit and State Permit. Professional are her that can answer questions.

Commissioner McGinn inquired about phase 1 and 2 that were mentioned during her site visit and hayrides.

Richard Mueller replied there is a path around the property for hayrides.

Commissioner Albring expressed concern over limited review of information.

Commissioner McGinn stated they need to take time to review the information and comments.

Commissioner Beishlag asked Mr. Mueller about the turning lane.

Mr. Mueller explained it is to be a flared entrance and exit.

Commissioner Beishlag stated that the pond is too close to the road.

Mr. Mueller stated that the front pond is drainage, the trout Pond is near the back.

Mueller employee stated that there is room to landscape with trees.

Mr. Mueller stated that they are trying to make it work for everyone.

Commissioner Albring inquired as to a work session to review the information as it is all new to the Planning Commission members.

IX. Planning Commission Deliberates and May or May Not Reach a Decision:

Commissioner Beishlag made a motion to continue deliberations on Thursday June 24, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall, giving the members time to review the information. Motion supported by Commissioner Albring. Motion approved.

5) Commissioner Comments: No comments at this time.

6) Adjournment: Chairman McGinn adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandi Whiteford
Recording Secretary