

Alaiedon Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Special Use Permit Public Hearing

August 7, 2017

The Alaiedon Township Planning Commission met on Monday, August 7, 2017 at the Alaiedon Township Hall to conduct a public hearing to consider a special use permit (SUP).

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Laurie Koelling at 7:30 pm.

Roll call was taken. Laurie Koelling, Beth Smith, Matt Oesterle, Barb Kranz and Kim Hafley were present. Bill Schneider and Roger Cook were absent.

Beth Smith made a motion to approve the agenda. Barb Kranz seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Beth Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2017 meeting. Matt Oesterle seconded the motion. Motion approved.

New Business:

Secretary Hafley read the public hearing notice for the SUP request by property owner Christopher Haddad (3490 Okemos Road) for tenant Time for Flowers. This property is located at 3490 Okemos Road in Alaiedon Township.

Chris Haddad introduced Andy Manni (3490 Okemos Road) the owner of Time for Flowers. Haddad asked that the Planning Commission consider the value Time for Flowers brings to the township as it evaluated the SUP.

Andy Manni stated the mission statement for Time for Flowers is to provide easy access to purchase flowers, create sales and create jobs. He continued that his employees use the "square" to enable customers to pay quickly. He also emphasized customers don't have to get out of car to make a purchase – he or she can just roll down the car window, indicate which bouquet he or she wants and pay. He said reviews have been wonderful from the community and he is able to provide more jobs to college students.

Matt Oesterle asked questions regarding new construction and traffic flow. Haddad and Josh Cohen (3490 Okemos Road) drew the construction changes on the site map. Haddad said they did not believe construction is going to impact their ability to sell flowers. Haddad also stated he is working on cross access agreements with his neighbors to share access to Jolly and Okemos Roads to improve traffic flow and safety at the corner.

Trustee Beth Smith expressed concern about the unsafe environment it creates with the Time for Flowers sales staff so close to the intersection as well as the distraction to drivers. Manni stated that they have not had traffic issues and he doesn't believe sales on the corner will cause traffic congestion or additional safety issues. Marissa Davis (3490 Okemos Road), a Time for Flowers employee stated that she stood out there for Mother's Day flower sales and did not feel unsafe. Planning Commission members Kranz and Hafley also expressed concern over safety issues of selling flowers on this corner.

Oesterle asked Haddad and Manni if the drawing reflected the setbacks required because on the current site drawing it did not appear the location of the table for sales complied with the township's zoning ordinance. The conclusion of this line of questioning was that measurements and a new sitemap are needed to Alaiedon Township officials to adequately evaluate.

Haddad stated that they wanted the special use permit just for Time for Flowers. Chairwoman Koelling reminded the applicants that special use permits go with the property. Haddad asked if the township could put limits on this permit so it would only be good for Time for Flowers. Koelling reinforced that special use permits go with the property and the Planning Commission is not able to put limits to allow it for just one specific business.

Chairwoman Koelling asked if there were any other comments. Haddad stated the goal was to help Time for Flowers grow their business and to serve the community. He continued saying they don't want to put anyone's health and safety at risk and they do not feel they are doing so with the proposed plan. He hoped the Planning Commission would grant the special use permit for what they feel is a good way to conduct business. Cohen stated that Time for Flowers have received incredible customer reviews and are a joy to the community. Manni stated that Time for Flowers the purpose is grow their business, make customers happy and keep people employed.

Chairwoman Koelling reminded the attendees that the Planning Commission's charge is to make recommendations to the Alaiedon Township Board of Trustees based on the existing ordinances and the Township Board has the final vote and it would be considered at the August 14, 2017 meeting.

Trustee Smith made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend to not approve the special use permit because of safety, traffic flow and driver distractions the sales table on the corner can create. Kranz seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Trustee Smith suggested to the applicants to submit a better sitemap with the setbacks and construction clearly marked for the Monday, August 14, 2017 meeting.

Oesterle made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kranz seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Minutes submitted by Kim Hafley, Secretary