

**Lenox Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, February 25, 2019**

1. **Call to Order:** 7:00 PM
Members present: Gennette - Chairperson, Vennard - Co-Chair, Clifford - Secretary, Ickes, Marino
Planner: Stephen Cassin
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Approval of Previous Minutes** –November 19, 2018
Motion: Marino Support: Ickes
Motion to approve the minutes for the November 19, 2018 meeting as presented. All Ayes. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of Agenda**
Motion: Vennard Support: Ickes
Motion to approve agenda with the following change; table agenda item 6b Election of Officers to the next Planning Commission Meeting. All Ayes. Motion carried.
5. **Unfinished Business**
6. **New Business**
 - a. **Public Hearing: Special Land Use Amendment Request from TEJA Enterprise, LLC.**
Vennard read the Public Hearing Notice.

Motion: Vennard Support: Marino

Motion to open the Public Hearing at 7:05 pm. Roll Call Vote: Vennard, Marino, Ickes and Gennette. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Stephen Cassin, the Township Planner, gave a brief explanation of the applicant’s request. The proposal is for an amendment for a previously approved Special Land Use for TEJA mining operation. The property is currently being used for a sand mining (gravel pit) operation. The original application specified for a certain number of years then they would close the mining operation and building single family homes. They’re asking for an amendment to allow a public RV campground. Partially RV sites and prebuilt cabins with a community building and other campground amenities. The Township Zoning Ordinance does allow this as a Special Land Use being labeled as Large-Scale Recreation in Agricultural District, which is subject to Planning Commission approval.

B. Washington, Pashalk Rd, Lenox resident, commented that he lives about one quarter mile from the sand pit development. He voiced several concerns. One was about the length of time for the original mining permit and the number of years it was extended. This was supposed to be beautiful homes that would increase land values in this area. He feels that putting in a trailer park with 220 trailers moving in and out transiently down his road, would decrease property values. He voiced that this would bring transient people and the children in this area will be put in some risk because of them. He’s totally against this development, it would decrease property values, it would put him at liability having a small lake adjacent to the property and concerns for trespassing on his property.

S. Boss, Pashalk Rd, Lenox resident submitted a letter read aloud by B. Washington. She is against this development for the following reasons; decrease in property values, increase the risk of crime, traffic problems and this campground will bring in transient strangers in the area.

I. Mayer, 32 Mile Rd, Richmond resident, commented on the transient nature of camping. His concerns for his children with human trafficking. Summer weather, a time with windows open and with this new development his concern is with campfires and the smoke. Camping generates trash and litter. Traffic: the RV’s are going to create a big problem with traffic. Wells: how are they going to supply water to all the sites? Site lighting: there is nothing on the plans. Management: is there going to be someone there to manage around the clock? Where will the RV’s going to dump their waste?

C. Mayer, 32 Mile Rd, a Richmond resident submitted letter read by her husband. When they purchased their home, they took great care in verifying that the area around the home was zoned agricultural so they wouldn't be in a position where stores and noise producing venues would be built. She voiced concerns regarding the traffic flow in that area especially around planting/harvesting seasons and that the increased traffic the campground would bring could be dangerous. Campgrounds are inherently transient in nature and they are afraid of losing their sense of security. Concerned that having a private campground so close will affect property values in a negative way with the noise levels, increased garbage and pollution, constant smoke and site lighting.

D. Esper, 32 Mile Rd, Lenox resident, commented that when the gravel pit was first proposed the township was going to get roughly 55 acres of taxable base when this went in. With what is now proposed, you're going to have 10 to 15 acres of taxable base. He had concerns about the wells and where all the waste is going to go. This board works for the township people and there are better uses for this property.

L. Fanale, 31 Mile Rd, Lenox resident, over the years he has renovated his home to make it better for the community. The original plans for this site were to build homes, not make it transient. He had concerns about lighting, waste issues, tax base and wells that went dry. Build homes not transients, where they leave litter, come and go when they please. Wants nice homes not a trailer park.

J. Rhein, 32 Mile Rd, Lenox resident, commented that the thought of over 200 plus of families in that small area where you couldn't put that many homes there. Safety threat of people consuming unrestricted amounts alcohol and smoking marijuana, then driving away is concerning. For the interest of the township residents would be better served by the ones that have a stake in the community.

D. Schoof, 30 Mile Rd, Lenox resident, as one of the residents effected by the last drilling at the mining at Havenridge & 30 Mile Rd. she stated that six (6) of the home owners there, lost their wells due to the change of the water tables and have major cracks in their foundations. No one maintains that pit, they made their money then left. They were going to build beautiful homes now they want to change that. It's going to change the water table. Past practice and court documents tell you that. This township spent a lot of money in court. Think long and hard for what you're going to do for the people who live there. We were once promised beautiful homes too. No one sticks to what they say.

P. Eisen, Lake City resident, Lenox property owner, not sure if he's for or against this. Concerns regarding the slope: 1 to 5 slope? Lot sizes look small, maybe take a third of them out. He has not had that much time to look at this and has many questions. Looking to build a house this summer, right across from the site on Pashalk Rd.

M. Esper, St. Clair resident, Lenox property owner, has all the same concerns as what was already stated, campers, kids and drinking. One that wasn't addressed is peddle biking and are they going to cross his property to get to the bike path?

R. Washington, Pashalk Rd, Lenox resident, adjacent to the pit has many concerns regarding the kids. 1200 people, bumper to bumper, no sidewalks on 32 Mile Rd or Pashalk Rd, condition of the gravel roads, Weigand. Where are the people going to go bike riding or hiking? She discussed her pit and the slope. Liability if someone comes on her property. Safety for the children. 32 Mile Rd. is the only road paved but there are no sidewalks.

J. Ilowski, Gramer Rd, Lenox resident, owner of vacant property across from the proposed site. What is the extra cost for fire and police? Who's going to patrol this? Campgrounds are a 24-hour business. He doesn't have an issue with them developing their property, everyone has that right. He just wants to know, what's the revenue for the township and what's the cost too? The cost for road maintenance, fire and police?

D. Doan, 31 Mile Rd, Lenox resident, she has many of the same concerns as everyone that spoke.

Motion: Marino Support: Vennard

Motion to close the Public Hearing at 7:51 pm. Roll Call Vote: Marino, Vennard, Ickes, Clifford, Gennette. Motion carried.

G. Pieprzak representing TEJA Enterprises for the proposed Special Land Use Amendment. He explained their vision for the upscale RV Resort. Their vision was approximately 3 years in the making. They will have 100% paved roads inside resort. The lots are paved sites and are approximately forty (40) to fifty (50) feet by one hundred and twenty (120) feet. Lake slope is 1 in 7. Regarding the lighting, right now they are 30 to 40 feet below street level, so lights will be below any horizontal vision you would see from the road. Lenox has a noise ordinance that they will adhere to. Tent sites and motorized boats will not be allowed. There will be a club house, indoor pool, playground, basketball & tennis courts, a community center, a retail center with ice cream shop. For families without RVs they will have mini cabins.

Marino inquired about safety concerns and if they were planning on any type of attendants.

G. Pieprzak anticipates security 24 hours on-site.

Vennard asked if he would speak to the dried-up wells issue.

G. Pieprzak explained that they have been at this current site for 13 years, they have lake level & well monitoring available. The lake level is pretty much established and controlled with the outlet that has been in place for about five years. The water never stops moving through the lake and the outlet. We will be doing a well study, for the community well for this site, they're looking at a 2- or 3-inch pipe with a ½ inch line to the RV. RV's don't draw much water. Their preliminary indications show they shouldn't be using any more water than about 75 houses; every site will have full hookup.

Marino asked if Mr. Pieprzak could address the concerns regarding property values.

G. Pieprzak explained that RV sites they researched and spoke with many park managers, stated that the surrounding areas were not negatively affected.

J. Pieprzak elaborated that he had traveled to many RV parks because he owns an RV which is in Florida. The lots are beautifully landscaped with trees, flowers and shrubs and the interior roads are paved not gravel. That's what we want here. At the site in Florida, just to buy a lot there is over \$150,000. There is a RV resort in Traverse City and Petoskey where the lots sell anywhere from \$150,000 to \$200,000.

G. Pieprzak, added when completed this site will be the first and only RV Resort and campground park in Macomb County.

Vennard inquired are these camp sites to lease, sell or rent?

G. Pieprzak replied that it is not their intension to sell these sites. They can stay one night, a weekend, one month. No one will be allowed to leave their RV on site or put a permanent deck or attach anything of that nature onto it.

J. Pieprzak commented if anyone would like to see what they are visioning, to go online to Gulf Waters RV Resort in Fort Myers, Florida to view that RV site.

Vennard commented that what it sounds like from the crowd here, inconsistencies in the past and with other pits. This sounds great but what assurances do they have? Would you be opposed to the Planning Commission writing some of these concerns into the amendment so this will stay like you stated here tonight, an upscale RV resort? Like there will be no tents, paved roads.

J. Pieprzak replied that he has no issues with adding these conditions.

Motion: Marino Support: none

Motion to approve the Special Land Use subject to rental sites with paved roads and engineering, fire, building.

Marino retracted his motion.

Motion: Vennard Support: Marino

Motion to accept this recommendation for TEJA with the stipulation that this be a Hi-end RV Park like Golf Waters RV Resort in Fort Myers that is 100% paved, will not have tents and subject to engineering, building, fire, health, County, DNR and DEQ approvals.

Roll Call Vote: Vennard, Marino, Ickes, Clifford and Gennette. Motion carries.

7. Citizens Comments

I. Mayer commented that he was very upset with this decision. He is not opposed to land development but does not want to see this site from his home in Richmond Township.

L. Rhein commented that she appreciates the commission taking the time hear all of them, but this board made their decision without thinking about it, like they decided before they got here. A little time to think about it would have been courteous to them. Thank you.

B. Washington, inquired about septic tanks and water whether it's well water or city water and sewer?

D. Esper, stated "that he's disappointed in this board. The board is here to protect us". If you are going to take the gestapo walk as you have done on other things and development in this township, wish you would take it here. There is not one of you mentioned any of the concerns of the residents here in your vote. This is a proposal, wants the board to remember, it's what the 9th proposal on this piece of property, none of them have come true. Why would this board vote so fast without having more depth plans into what's going to happen? This township is run like the Nazi army.

Gennette explained that the public hearing is closed. Public Comments are for items not on the agenda.

Several people harshly voiced their objections to the commission's approval of the Special Land Use.

8. Township Planner

Nothing to report at this time.

9. Adjournment

Motion: Vennard Support: Clifford

Motion to adjourn at 8:29 pm. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette M. Ventimiglia
Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Clifford
Secretary