

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, April 22, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Bill Stachowiak called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Members present: Chair Bill Stachowiak, Mike O'Malley, Bill Schweitzer and Ted Spangenberg. Dan Wagner was absent and excused. Also present: New alternate Betty Keeling, Clerk Jean Wahlfeld, Planner Sue Becker and Recording Secretary Barb Griswold.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Chair Stachowiak welcomed Betty Keeling as a new alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

SWEARING IN OF ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEMBER

Clerk Jean Wahlfeld swore in the new alternate Betty Keeling with an oath for the Zoning Board of Appeals. She thanked members for their time and service on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the Monday, April 23, 2018 minutes. Spangenberg motioned, supported by Schweitzer to approve the minutes with corrections.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

CASE #19-ZBA-01

Gerald Hopkins of Kenowa Hills Public Schools has requested a sign variance at 3825 Hendershot Avenue within the RA, Rural Agricultural Zoning District.

Planner Becker gave a brief background statement on this case. She stated the Kenowa Hills High School campus is located on a single parcel of property. The High School campus has a main identification sign along 4 Mile Road (which will be replaced) and 3 directional signs of various sizes. The applicant is requesting to add a second ground sign on Hendershot Avenue at the parent/visitor parking lot entrance. Per state law, public schools are not subjected to local general site plan review.

Becker said the proposed sign is 32 sq. ft. in size and 5.25 feet tall. It is identical to the signs recently installed at Alpine Elementary and the Middle School. The electronic reader board portion of the sign is less than 50% of the total sign area which conforms to Section 20.08 (b).

Gerald Hopkins, Superintendent of Kenowa Hills Public Schools stated with the 2016 School Bond Proposal the district has been addressing safety and security at the schools. Also being addressed is traffic flow and separating bus traffic from car traffic. This has now been done at Alpine Elementary and at the Middle School, and at Zinser Elementary and Central Elementary in the City of Walker. Mr. Hopkins stated they want to update the signage to reflect the changes made at the High School and wants to make all the signage identical throughout the school district.

Starting this summer, the High School will start construction of a new parent loop/bus traffic layout in an effort to create a safer environment for students to enter the school while creating better, more organized traffic flow for the High School and Middle School campuses. The

district would like to add a second ground sign at the parent/visitor parking lot entry at the front of the High School as part of a parking circulation re-design. Mr. Hopkins stated this will add for better clarity for visitors and users, along with wayfinding and identification of the new parking and traffic pattern configuration.

The current sign on 4 Mile Road will be replaced with a digital sign, and this sign acts as more of a regional identifier for the school. The proposed sign will be located near the actual front entry of the High School and will identify the Parent/Visitor entry drive. This is similar to what is in place at the Middle School currently.

Mr. Hopkins said the parcel is unique as it is a large 82- acre "L" shaped piece of property on a corner and is part of a larger campus. The property is also unique in the fact that it is a public school and multiple adjacent properties in the area are also owned by Kenowa Hills Public Schools so the area operates as a campus bisected by a county road.

Motion by Schweitzer to open the public hearing, supported by O'Malley
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried

No comments received.

Motion by Schweitzer to close the public hearing, supported by O'Malley
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried

O'Malley asked if the bulk of the school traffic comes from the 4 Mile Road entrance and Mr. Hopkins answered yes and in the traffic study they had done. A high volume is coming from the City of Walker.

Stachowiak asked Becker regarding the directional sign, it would have a "KH" insignia, but not have the words Kenowa Hills Schools and Becker said it will be obvious that it is directional signage for the High School or Middle School. Becker added the school district will make the sign as easy to read as possible for the general public.

O'Malley said the extra sign can aid visitors on where to go and would be beneficial in case of an emergency for first responders. Spangenberg agreed and stated his experience on the Comstock Park School Board has shown it is important to have 2 signs on a school campus.

Schweitzer said the property is in a unique situation with the number of buildings there and the size of the campus. He added it would be confusing without proper signage on where to go.

Stachowiak stated he feels the added sign is trying to protect kids and helps with safety issues to eliminate accidents by giving clear direction.

Chair Stachowiak asked Zoning Board Members to review the information presented. Board members discussed the four standards for a variance.

**Motion for a Signage Variance Request at 3825 Hendershot Avenue
Case #19-ZBA-01**

Variance Decision:

Spangenberg motioned, supported by O'Malley to APPROVE the requested variance from Section 20.11(c)(1) to allow a second ground sign in the RA, Rural Agricultural zoning district for the property located at 3825 Hendershot Avenue NW, PP#41-09-32-400-013.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The requested variance *does* meet Standard # 1, that "There must be unique circumstances or conditions about this property, not the use of the property."

The large educational 82-acre campus with multiple driveways needs clear directions for the safety of the Township's residents and visitors.

2. The requested variance *does* meet Standard # 2, that "In giving the variance, the Zoning Board of Appeals will be assuring that the applicant has the same rights that other property owners in the same zoning district or vicinity have."

The large educational campus is different than other parcels.

3. The requested variance *does* meet Standard # 3, that "The variance will not create a situation that may be harmful or damaging to the neighbors' properties or the public interest."

The variance is not harmful to the public interest and will help improve safety of the Township residents, visitors and students.

4. The requested variance *does* meet Standard # 4, that "The variance cannot set a precedent"

The large educational campus sets it aside from other properties and uses and will not set a precedent.

VOTES: AYES: 5 (Stachowiak, Schweitzer, O'Malley, Keeling and Spangenberg)
 NAYS: 0
 Motion passed to approve the requested variance. 5-0

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

2018 Year End Report

Planner Becker reviewed the ZBA requests and approvals for 2018. She also gave updates on other items the Planning Department worked on in 2018 including the capital improvement plan, recreation plan, sidewalk construction, transportation, utilities and mapping/digital information.

Election of Officers

Motion made by O'Malley, supported by Spangenberg to nominate Bill Stachowiak as Chair Person.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried

Motion made by O'Malley, supported by Schweitzer to nominate Ted Spangenberg as Vice Chair Person.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM by O'Malley, supported by Spangenberg.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Motion carried



Susan Becker, Planning Director



Bill Stachowiak, Chair



Barb Griswold, Recording Secretary