

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
RICE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Commissioner's Room / Government Services Building
Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 6:30 PM**

I. Call to Order

A. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order both in-person and electronically by Chair Charlie Peters at 6:42 p.m.

Members present were: Michael Streiff, Charlie Peters, Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst.

Staff present were: Director Julie Runkel, Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell, Planner Jeremy Edwards, Administrative Coordinator Anna Aguilar, Clerk Laurie Johnson, Clerk Cassy Klumb.

Commissioners present: Steve Underdahl.

Others present: see Sign-in Sheet.

B. Motion by Michael Streiff, seconded by Julia Hogan, Reading of the Notice

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Michael Streiff, Matt Purfeerst, Charlie Peters, NAYS: None

C. Motion by Garrett Johnson, seconded by Michael Streiff, Approval of the Agenda

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Michael Streiff, Charlie Peters, NAYS: None

D. Motion by Matt Purfeerst, seconded by Julia Hogan, to approve the minutes of January 5, 2023.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Michael Streiff, Charlie Peters, NAYS: None

II. New Business

1. Interim Use Permit/McDonough - Section 17, Cannon City Township

Zach Steeves, on behalf of landowner Thomas McDonough, has applied for an Interim Use Permit (IUP) for continuation of an aggregate mining and crushing operation. The property is described as: Part of the N1/2 of the NE1/4, Section 18 and Part of the NW1/4 of the NW1/4, Section 17 of Cannon City Township, Rice County, Minnesota. PID#s: 11.18.1.00.002 & 11.17.2.25.003. Property address is: 17232 Ames Trail, Faribault, MN 55021. The property is Zoned A, Agricultural.

Motion by Michael Streiff, seconded by Matt Purfeerst, to recommend approval of the Interim Use Permit with the following conditions and findings for Zach Steeves, on behalf of landowner Thomas McDonough. The property is located in Sections 17 and 18 of Cannon City Township.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Charlie Peters, Michael Streiff, Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, NAYS: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – Steeves (McDonough) - Interim Use Permit (IUP)

1. The permittee shall comply with all rules, regulations, requirements, or standards of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers and other applicable federal, state or local agencies.
2. The Interim Use Permit (IUP) is for a sand and gravel mining operation including gravel/aggregate material crushing.
3. The applicant or operator shall furnish a six (6) year \$100,000 bond for haul road repair and for site restoration. All bonds shall be reviewed and approved by the Rice County Attorney's office prior to any work on site.
4. This Interim Use Permit shall be valid for a period of five (5) years from its issuance and must be renewed prior to that time or the site completely restored. Failure to renew the permit or to

restore the site shall result in the county exercising the bond and using the proceeds to restore and properly close the site.

5. The mineral extraction mining operation shall be restricted to the area on the applicant's site plan. Any deviation from these boundaries will require application for a new interim use permit. No more than 10-acres of the proposed mining area shall be open to mining at any time. Mining boundaries and required setbacks shall be marked onsite prior to mining and markings shall be maintained throughout the operation.
6. The hours of operation shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.
7. A 20-foot setback shall be maintained between the onsite operations and all property lines. A 70-foot setback shall be maintained from township road right-of-way.
8. The banks shall be sloped at a minimum 4:1 and the operator shall be required to keep the pit, excavations, and stockpiles in such conditions to ensure stability and not to be in danger of caving or sliding banks.
9. Topsoil from the excavation site is to be stockpiled on the premises for use in restoration of the site. No topsoil is to be removed from the site.
10. The applicant is to follow the approved reclamation plan. Reclamation shall be ongoing so that previously mined land is reclaimed as new areas are opened to mineral extraction. The site is to be completely restored to a condition suitable for wildlife habitat or farmland upon completion of permit. Restoration shall include final seeding/cover of the area.
11. The applicant is to be responsible for repair of county, state and township roads adjacent to the site due to damage hauling from the site. The roads are to be restored to their original condition after the gravel mining operation ceases. A road maintenance agreement with Cannon City Township shall be followed.
12. Between the pit access driveway and State Highway 3, calcium chloride, or another similar performing dust control product, shall be applied to the surface of Ames Trail. Application shall be done at least once between May 15th and 31st and again between August 1st and 15th. In addition to the placement of the dust control materials, water will be applied to dampen the surface of Ames Trail in times of high truck traffic or when deemed necessary by a Township or County representative.
13. Solid waste shall not be placed on the property; illegally dumped material shall be immediately removed and properly handled by the applicant. There shall be no onsite burning or burial of waste materials.
14. The site is to be cleaned of all debris and equipment after closure of the pit.
15. Only equipment and materials used in the onsite operations shall be stored on the site. Any equipment requiring licenses, when on a public roadway, shall have those current licenses and shall be maintained in an operable condition.
16. "Trucks Hauling" signage is to be posted in locations to be determined by the County Highway Engineer when hauling from the site and to be removed when hauling is not taking place.
17. The site shall be secured at access points.
18. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in revocation of this permit.

Hearing Minutes:

Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell (TM) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

CP - Interim Use Permits are one year?

TM - No, the previous permits were Conditional Use Permits because mining was a conditional use, it's now an interim use. At least in the draft conditions, I have left that as a five-year permit. Certainly, that's something you could discuss and modify. Generally, mining has been in five-year cycles.

The PC asked the applicant, Zach Steeves (ZS), to come forward to add comments or answer questions

regarding the request.

ZS - Along with what Trent said, this is a lot of restoration, very little mining, and we have a concrete pile that we crush into 1½- inch Class V, which we use for Met-Con and Met-Con companies. Mostly restoration. I've had a discussion with some of the management at Met-Con that the stuff that's out there -dumpsters, storage trailers, can't stay out there. They went out there while we were doing a building addition and rearranging our yard, so they are aware that they cannot be there. I'll add that most of our mining with Met-Con has moved to our Shaw pit off County Road 9. Again, it is mainly restoration.

MS - Is the restoration plan over the course of several years or just one year?

ZS - I'm good with the five years because right now we hope to move our recycle piles out to our Shaw pit, but at this time we don't have enough area that has been mined out and restored to put it there. If we put it out there now, we're putting it on top of aggregate we'd like to use in the future.

MS - So the five-year fits your plan for materials?

ZS - I hope to be out of there within five years.

CP - You are aware of the 18 conditions?

ZS - Yeah, except for the storage one, they are mostly the same as before.

MS - Condition #5: I know with some other sites we've had challenges of where the boundaries are and meeting those. Those are all kind of staked out and clear?

ZS - Again, there might be a few holes dug but this is not large-scale.

Chair Peters opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and the following spoke:

Clayton Mechura (CM) -*Neighbor*- lives just past the driveway to the pit, also a member of the *Cannon City Township Board* -

I have questions about CUP. I see it's not called CUP anymore, but I was just wondering, Dust Control has been an issue with this site for quite a while, and it's gotten better, but I'm still not truly impressed. Is dust control at the applicant's convenience? Does it start when the road restrictions come off or is it year-round? If there's an issue, do I call Trent or do I call a Commissioner or do I call Met-Con directly? Can the Township block access to the pit if dust control isn't taken care of in a timely manner? In the maintenance of the road, us as a township, we hate to go out there and grade because they do put down dust control, and if we go out there and grade then we get the complaint that we graded it and now their dust control isn't working. Should they be in charge of the maintenance when it gets potholes in it and stuff like that, so should they be in charge of all that maintenance or is that still on the Township? Are they only responsible if they're the only ones hauling out of there? I've called about taking care of dust control and in the past I heard, "I didn't even know we were hauling out of there". So, that's all my questions.

CP - Condition #12 covers the dust control and the dates when they're supposed to apply it. That is a conversation you should have with Met-Con or the applicant.

CM - Do they only put down dust control twice a year, like the Conditional Use Permit says? Because it doesn't seem to last.

CP - No, and maybe you should chat with them. In our Township (Forest), they apply when they have a big project. So they apply it, and then the project is done in three weeks.

CM - Ours is pretty much constant. I don't know if it's still going to be.

CP - This condition is a standard condition that we put on most of the gravel pits and it has seemed to work, so maybe the conversation with Met-Con should be brought up with the Township.

CM - Alright that's all I got.

Chair Charlie Peters closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

Discussion:

CP - I know that dust control is an issue.

JH - It's an issue everywhere with mining pits.

MS - And it depends on the weather. If it's super dry like last year, it's probably rough. If it's a wetter year, it's not as bad, but to your point, the condition that's there is pretty standard.

CP - I know dry weather makes it washboard. That's when they want to go in and grade. Because more people call when it gets washboard than when it gets dusty.

TM - I just want to point out that the conditions, while they are very similar to most of the previous Conditional Use Permits/ Interim Use Permits for mining, there are a couple differences with this one.

Condition #11 is one that I would point out. The previous Conditional Use Permit required that they develop a road maintenance agreement with Cannon City Township. This condition, as followed

through, says that the agreement will continue to be followed. If there's issues with that, they need to work that out with the Township. Condition #12, dust control: the additional part, though it's fairly normal, that we have two applications of calcium chloride or something with specific dates, this one does add that water would be used at either high traffic times or when it's deemed necessary either by a Township or a County representative. It's a little bit different than some of the standard ones, and that was because of the previous concerns with dust control and the road conditions.

CP - Did you hear that, Clayton?

CM - Yeah, but when I call the water truck isn't available.

CP - According to Condition #11, they should have a written agreement with you. Sounds like they are going to be restoring the pit. Hopefully, it will be closing in the five-year period. That's a plus on our side.

MS - I would encourage the applicant to work with the township and amicably come to some type of agreement for the conditions that are there. I motion to refer for approval with the 18 conditions as presented.

MP - I will second.

Motion to recommend approval with stated conditions and findings made by Streiff, seconded by Purfeerst, and approved unanimously.

2. **Waiver of Plat/ Nauman - Section 22, Cannon City Township**

Sherry and Richard Truman, on behalf of landowners Glenn and Beverly Nauman Trust, have applied for approval of a Waiver of Plat to create a 2.5-acre parcel through the use of a Transfer Development Right (TDR). The property is described as: Part of the NE1/4 of the NE1/4 and Part of the NW1/4 of the NW1/4, Section 22, Cannon City Township, Rice County, Minnesota. PID#: 11.22.2.25.002. The subject portion of the property is Zoned A, Agricultural.

Motion by Matt Purfeerst, seconded by Julia Hogan, to recommend approval of the Waiver of Plat with the following conditions and findings for Sherry and Richard Truman, on behalf of landowners Glenn and Beverly Nauman Trust. The property is located in Section 22 of Cannon City Township.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Charlie Peters, Michael Streiff, Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, NAYS: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – Truman (Nauman) – Waiver of Plat (WOP)

1. The new 2.5-acre Transfer Development Right (TDR) receiving parcel shall contain one single family dwelling.
2. Any new construction on the parcels is to adhere to all Rice County codes and ordinances.
3. The remaining parcel and TDR receiving parcel shall not be further subdivided or combined with other land(s) unless approved under the Rice County subdivision regulations.
4. The conservation easement for the TDR sending area shall be recorded at the same time or before the new parcel is recorded.
5. Within one year of this approval the applicant shall record a new deed, at the Rice County Records Office, containing just the TDR receiving parcel.
6. In-lieu park dedication fee of \$500 shall be paid prior to recording of the new parcel.

Hearing Minutes:

Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell (TM) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

Chair Peters asked the applicants, Sherry Truman and Richard Truman (ST, RT), to come forward to add comments or answer questions regarding the request.

RT - This is my wife, Sherry Nauman Truman, and I'm Richard Truman. We are part of the trust so we just want to transfer a building right to that piece of property.

CP - Are you aware of the six conditions?

RT - Yes we are.

Chair Peters opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and no one spoke.

Chair Peters closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

Discussion:

CP - It looks pretty straightforward. It looks like a nice building site.

MP - It seems to make sense with the land. The flat driveway going in, the way it fits with Cannon City seems to make sense.

GJ - Yes it does.

MP - I motion to refer for approval with the 6 conditions presented.

JH - I will second.

Motion to recommend approval with stated conditions and findings made by Purfeerst, seconded by Hogan, and approved unanimously.

3. **Zoning Ordinance Amendment/Martin**

Cliff Martin has applied for an amendment to Sections 507 and 508 of the Rice County Zoning Ordinance to allow for "Privately owned recycling or composting facilities" as an Interim Use with standards in Rice County.

Motion by Michael Streiff, seconded by Matt Purfeerst, to recommend approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment as proposed by staff with the 8 standards as discussed.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Charlie Peters, Michael Streiff, Julia Hogan, Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, NAYS: None

Table 508-1 Section E: Compost facility, private – Interim Use – A/UR

507.07 AB: Compost facility, private

1. Minimum lot area: 5 acres
2. All compost facilities shall meet the following minimum structure setbacks:
 - a. All property lines: 100 feet
 - b. Neighboring residences: 500 feet
 - c. Wetlands: 200 feet
3. No more than 4000 cubic yards of compostable materials and 1000 cubic yards of in process active compost may be stored on site at any one time.
4. All on site in process active compost and compostable materials, except yard wastes, shall be contained within an enclosed structure with a concrete floor.
5. Unauthorized compostable materials or other solid wastes shall not be brought onto the site. Only authorized compostable materials shall be stored or processed on site.
6. Unless specifically permitted or prohibited by the Interim Use Permit and the State, allowed compostable material shall be limited to food scraps, yard wastes, non-recyclable paper, compostable materials that meet the standards in ASTM D6400 or ASTM D6868, and vegetative wastes generated from industrial or manufacturing processes that prepare food for human consumption.
7. Applicants shall submit a stormwater plan for the site and descriptions of materials, processes, odor management, etc.
8. All required county, state, and federal permits shall be obtained prior to operation.

Hearing Minutes:

Environmental Planner Jeremy Edwards (JE) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

Discussion / Questions for staff:

CP - The recycling and composting, we categorize all of those into that?

JE - Yes, currently we lump all of that together in the ordinance. If we were to follow the applicant's proposed language, it would break out the recycling and composting from the landfill and soil reclamation, whereas if you were to recommend creating a separate category, then that would bring private composting into its own category, distinct from the rest.

MS - The term "institutional", how is that applied?

JE - We generally understand it to mean colleges, state prisons, things of that nature, but we don't actually have a clear definition in the ordinance.

MS - The only other question I have is, under 507.07 AB, #3, how do we fill in the blanks?

JE - The applicants gave us some numbers about what they think they might be looking at. They might be looking at 3700 cubic yards of compostable material coming on to the site and then 900 cubic yards that would actively be in the composting process. Part of the reason why we left that blank is so that after talking to the applicants and figuring out what they're targeting, finding limits that would allow you to identify how much material they can have on site, versus just letting them have an uncontrolled amount.

MS - The objective of something like this is to always be turning the stuff that's composting and the stuff that's fully composted.

JE - And to be distinguishing out those categories.

Chair Peters asked the applicant, Cliff Martin (CM), to come forward to add comments or answer questions regarding the request. Accompanying Mr. Martin was Grace Brosnan (GB).

CM - I'll give a little bit of context and then we can hopefully answer all of your questions as best we can. We've operated for the last five or six years as Northfield Curbside Compost in Northfield, just collecting food waste but not composting it. Currently, we send it to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Reservation, where they have a big, fancy, nice facility. We actually just got approved to start collecting in Faribault, which is exciting, so we will no longer be just Northfield Curbside Compost, but rather Curbside Compost Cooperative. The goal of our business from day one has been to divert food waste from the Rice County Landfill. Particularly, we were excited and inspired that within the Comprehensive Plan in the last couple of years we were referenced specifically in Goal 3-Encourage Waste Reduction/Reuse/Recycling/Composting. One of the action items was, "Encourage the use of programs like Northfield Curbside Compost" so that's why we are excited about that. That alignment with the Comprehensive Plan is what inspired the creation of our business in the first place. We find that as our collection capacities have increased across Northfield, as we expect to increase in Faribault, as well as surrounding rural areas, to really be able to scale up collection to divert even larger quantities from the landfill. We think we need a local processing site. At least more local. Ideally, Rice County. To differentiate, there are already sites for yard waste. You've got composting sites for yard waste. What we're looking at is technically called a "Source Separated Organic Materials Site" so SSOM is the phrase we use to refer to that, and that's really getting at the difference between the yard waste piles versus composting food scraps. So the current ordinance only allows municipal and institutional, like St. Olaf, and we have pursued this to some extent with City of Northfield, Faribault, and a little bit, Rice County, just to see if anyone would want to start a local processing site and mostly found that all of the bodies that could begin one just don't have the capacity and resources to begin their own site. So, to fill that gap, that's where we finally landed. Let's see if we can change the ordinance to allow for private sites. I think the last thing intro-wise is that SSOM sites are regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. It's a very long, extensive permitting process. It covers basically everything you can think of: odor, fences, rodents, actually managing the material for quality and for pathogens, rainwater runoff, setbacks, everything you could think of is already included in the MPCA regulations and that's a process that can take years, at least six months to a year to even get that permit in the first place. Within the context of what's proposed, we had a great conversation with County staff, and I think in our "dream world", per #3 that you were referencing of those blanks, we would be in alignment with MPCA regulations; there aren't caps on that. Per what we're looking at in Rice County, let's pretend that in 20 years we're collecting huge quantities in both Faribault, Northfield, and other cities in Rice County. With those numbers we still wouldn't be looking at massive 20-acre composting sites. Those do exist in Minnesota, but we still wouldn't be looking at those kind of quantities. We wouldn't want to cap

ourselves at something that would limit us from continuing to divert from the landfill, since that is fundamentally the goal, but we do have some of those numbers that were referred to about what would probably make sense at a site of our scale.

GB - I want to clarify that the 3700 cubic yards that we proposed as a cap is listed as compostable materials in that paperwork that you were given. We intended that to be yard waste, which is a highly less dangerous material than the food waste that we collect, which by MPCA standards, the food waste that we collect will be incorporated into an active pile within 24 hours so it would not be 3700 cubic yards of food waste, which is the stuff that you really need to be more careful with. That's the stuff that has the pathogens that can produce a pretty bad smell. What we're saying is yard waste storage on site, because yard waste comes seasonally. While we do have a continuous input of the food waste material, there is not a continuous weekly input of yard waste. That's a thing you get in the spring and in the fall, and you just need enough to get you through the winter. So that's what that number is based around.

MS - When you say "food waste", I'm thinking vegetables. Is that it or not?

GB - What we collect is the source-separated organics material that CM mentioned, and what fits into that is things like your kitchen scraps, so what is commonly thought of as compostable, like fruit scraps, vegetable scraps, but because we would be doing a larger scale site, we can safely accept things like meat, fish, bones, dairy, the compostable cups you get from coffee shops and restaurants that have compostable paper products, takeout products. Those are things you cannot do in a backyard pile because those piles do not get up to high enough temperatures. So what we want to do is a highly-regulated, highly scientific-monitored process. It is not a backyard pile that you are going to have raccoons going to. It is an industrial process.

MS - What's the cycle time? If you were to take something in today, how long roughly, is that going to be on site?

GB - The answer to that question really depends on the type of site that you would be running. Obviously, whatever you put into the language, I'm assuming isn't going to set people to one type of composting site, because there are a variety of ways that you can have a site. The one that we want to do is Aerated Static Pile (ASP), so it's going to have pipes underneath the composting piles that are pushing air up into it, which helps keep it full of oxygen. Therefore, it isn't going to be releasing smells like ammonia and methane. That's when it gets pretty stinky, when it becomes anaerobic. But in the specific system that we'd like to construct, it would take 45 days to exit active composting. Then it would go to a curing pile where it sits and becomes more mature and more safe to be used with plants, but is a safe enough material that it is not required by the MPCA as needing to be on an impermeable pad, whereas the active composting is required to have that. So it can sit there for three to six months, but really in terms of gross input, of what we're collecting, which can be some pretty nasty stuff, to safe output it's 45 days. Some sites are faster, some are slower.

CM - The reason there are those two pile differences is because we collect the food scrap side and then when you get to the site you have to mix it 1/3 to 2/3 with the yard waste side. In case you're wondering why they're both on here is because you need both to operate this kind of site.

CP - So the actual composting is not a mix site, it's tubes with air pumped in and the actual compost pile?

GB - In an active composting pile, what we are going to be doing is having a feed mixer. We mix in three to four parts of the brown waste, the yard waste, to one part of the green waste, which is what we collect. These two different types of waste that we are referring to each have a couple names. Yard waste/carbon/brown waste and food waste/nitrogen/green waste. Those are two separate things. We collect the green. We need storage of the brown on site. You mix them together, much more carbon than nitrogen to get the right recipe so that the microbes can do their thing. That is what sits on air in this particular pile for 45 days, but there are systems that do not use aeration technology that instead are turned somewhat frequently to allow oxygen to get through.

CM - Conveniently, the MPCA regulations for SSOM sites do require an impermeable pad to do the active composting on, they don't require enclosure, for example. The site we have in mind, if this was possible, would be on a pad, with walls with a cover because we just think that is a better design, but the level of language in the proposal from staff is already in alignment for that type of design, but MPCA regulations for SSOM sites is a little bit broader than that because a lot of compost sites do big piles of compost that they turn with a machine and that's just not the model we're looking at.

GB - There are two main reasons why we would like to have a covered composting facility. If they're

going to include a restriction on what type of enclosure any of this composting happens under, a cover is a big step towards having a better site. You don't necessarily need walls on it, but that can help. What the cover helps prevent is rain getting on to the active composting material. That stuff is contaminated, it's full of pathogens. When you get rain on it, you get contact water, which is different than stormwater. MPCA regulations state that the contact water cannot run off site so it has to be put in a holding pond or somehow processed onsite or brought to a water treatment facility, which is a really challenging thing for a site to manage financially. Putting the cover over what is composting is very helpful in not having to deal with contact water. So that was our intent behind it, which lines up with the intent of the staff who were thinking about this. The other benefit is just in terms of odor. Having any minimal enclosure around it helps prevent odor.

MP - As you look to the future, how much truck traffic are you projecting to come to this facility? Is it going to be 500 vehicles from civilian-use coming down the gravel road every day or what do you project?

GB - It's certainly not going to be that. Even if we collected from every household in Rice County, it would not be that. What we intend to have is nowhere near the size of the site where our waste is brought to, SMSC, or a site in northern Dakota County called SET in Rosemount. I don't know if any of you are familiar with those two sites, but they are like 40 acres or something like that. They're just massive and we're not going to be like that. As of yet, we have no intention of being open to the public in many ways because that is a whole other issue of insurance and things like that. I don't know exactly what the traffic would be, but I will tell you that we collect in pickup trucks and so we're not driving massive garbage trucks around and impacting roads in town and I don't think we're going to be doing that out in the country, either.

CM - Our current projection is we would have some kind of dump truck once a week that takes all of our collection from a couple days of collecting; unless everyone really turns around and starts composting and makes consumer decisions to really just scale that up quickly, assuming that doesn't happen, I think we'd be looking at many years of once a week or twice a week of small dump truck loads. We'd probably have a couple times a year where we have a big collection of yard waste. For example, from a larger vehicle, but basically not substantial truck traffic is what our site would be looking at.

GB - We are not going to be accepting from all of Hennepin County, which is what SET in Rosemount does, plus other things.

CP - What do you do with the end product? Is that bagged for planting? Do you take it out in truckloads, or what is your goal with that?

GB - A big goal on our side is to be able to place this site in a way that we are working with other local farmers. How that is going to look is a little bit up in the air, depending on the timing of this whole thing. If we are able to place this site adjacent to some of the farmers that we work with. We are both actually farmers. Much of the product would be going to perennials on the farm. A huge use of finished compost in this state is by the Department of Transportation. Compost is very helpful in landscaping projects. I don't think we could get that contract. I think we're a bit small for that one, but definitely landscaping and road construction projects would be a big market for us. We haven't specifically approached anyone yet about will you buy our product, because it's been so unsure if we are able to have a site here or not. The product can also be used by local gardeners, our subscribers, perhaps they will want to have a small amount delivered. I don't think we are going to be bagging any of the product. That's a whole other intensive thing, getting bagging equipment. Definitely, farmers that we know and work with very closely, any gardeners in the area who we can get the product to safely or they can come get it if we can figure out that type of insurance to have people come buy stuff, things like that, that sort of infrastructure. Working with landscapers, construction, all that.

CM - Our understanding of the market, for finished product as it exists, it will be easy to get rid of it. We don't have contracts lined up, but we won't have a crisis of too much accumulation on the site because as long as we make okay compost it should be able to move pretty quickly, if that makes sense.

GB - Good compost is an extremely valuable resource.

TM - Just a reminder, process-wise, of where we're at. Right now we're at a proposed Ordinance Amendment. If this goes forward, you are sending this recommendation to the County Board. If they choose to proceed, they would send it back to you for an adoption hearing. If that all goes through as an Interim Use Permit, then an applicant would be able to come forward with a specific site. They'd be presenting those details on the traffic and how often things are turned and what comes in and where.

GB - One thing I want to say about the volume restrictions is that if the County truly has a goal of making organics recycling widely available, then we're going to need accessible sites. If we started accepting not only from households, but from schools, hospitals, grocery stores, a whole range of different facilities and institutions that create food waste, we would want more than just one of our sites that has a limited specific capacity to be run in a clean and sanitary manner. You would need more than one of those sites. If composting is going to be accessible, building a site that fits the needed capacity needs to be accessible and putting limits that people might eventually run up against means that maybe we have to permit an entire other site and maybe have to spend another \$40,000 on permitting. The engineering fees are massive. That's one issue, but the entire process of trying to find another location that fits a site is extremely challenging. If we're thinking very long term about trying to reduce as much compostable waste as possible from going to the Rice County landfill, we're going to need a large capacity for composting. I can't say what that capacity is, I think pretty much everywhere you look food waste is being thrown in the trash. I understand the intention behind the volume limits, but I think that at a certain point they can actually really impede growth of organics recycling in a way that doesn't actually benefit quality of life of the surrounding area.

CP - How big of a pile is 3700 cubic yards?

GB - I did not get that number from doing the math of this big, this big, that big. That number comes from doing the math of inputs over a year, so I personally do not have off the top of my head-what size of 3-D rectangle that is, but if you want, we could just sit down real quick and try to think it out.

CM - It's not as big as you think.

GB - Apologies to not having a better answer.

CP - All the cities in the county do yard waste piles and they have to do the same MPCA thing.

GB - Yard waste sites are definitely less regulated than SSOM sites because the yard waste is just not as dangerous of a material. Not dangerous, necessarily, it doesn't have the same level of pathogens in it

CM - It may be worthy of note that we have looked into whether we could operate an SSOM site alongside the existing yard waste facilities in the county, and the short answer is no. For a lot of reasons specific to each site, but we did try to pursue a lot of options before asking for the ordinance change to see if we can get around having to change an entire ordinance to allow for this, but so far, nothing has seemed to actually work for the scale that we're talking about.

Chair Peters opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and no one spoke.

Chair Peters closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

CP - I think it's a good idea, but I don't like the recycling in there.

MS - On a private basis, could you run something like this without MPCA oversight or permitting?

JE - Not if it was to the scale that they're talking about. If you go over 120 cubic yards of all onsite material, so that's input, active and finished, you need an MPCA permit.

MS - He talked about the permitting process, pretty lengthy and involved, what is the general oversight? Would they be monitoring it monthly?

JE - I'm not sure how often MPCA themselves would check, but I know that the operators would have reporting requirements to the MPCA.

CP - I know with the city, with yard waste, they have to report the pile size and what's hauled out every year and they take pictures of locations and stuff of actual yard waste, so I'm sure it's a lot more intense.

GJ - To your question about the size of pile - a dump truck is 10-15 yards, so 3700 has got to be close to about 250 dump truck loads, just as a reference.

CP - If it piles up to 20 feet, that's not really that huge of a pile.

SU - First off, I think this is a good idea. I guess I understand that there could be economies of scale, but for a new ordinance for us, I'd rather take a more conservative step and not allow that maximum size.

Let us get used to this, and if there's a use that would want more, that would be a time to come and then again ask for further ordinance amendments. I was looking at it thinking about the size. A person thinks about the physical size, but really the limitation as written is really by volume. I think that's fine. It gives us a parameter. It looks like we need to fill that in, and I would suggest rather than 3700 yards, maybe making it even, like 4000 and 1000 or something like that. Someone might say, why 3700? Another thing, and maybe it's not even a concern, but much like gravel pits, what if this operation ceases - should there be something that would be there that would enable the county or appropriate authority to come in and clean up the site?

CP - So that would kick in with the bond issue, correct? On an Interim Use Permit?

JE - We would anticipate that if this were to go through, that's how we'd handle an Interim Use Permit for this type of site.

MS - Any idea of how you would come up with the dollar amount?

TM - That would really be specific on that Interim Use of what size, type of operation, all of those details, what road it's on, it really could vary from one to the other. I did want to mention the design of these regulations is more in line with a small or medium size livestock operation. That is kind of some of the comparisons we looked at for setbacks and some of those things. If we did go significantly larger or didn't have a limit, there probably needs to be some things looked at differently. For something that could be a real large operation, I think it would be important to have some kind of standard to that. I have the real rough calculation of those numbers. At 4000 cubic yards, that's a pile 36' wide, 300' long, and 10' deep. That's the raw yard waste material. The actual compost material in a single pile would be 54' x 50' x 10'.

CP - The leaf pile in Lonsdale is bigger than that, so it's not that big. Should we round up and go with the 4000 cubic yards and the 1000 yards? It's going to be an Interim Use Permit, so we could put conditions on everything when it comes to location, if it's too close to neighbors. I do like the setbacks that are set in there already. The recycling part of it, if that goes through, that will be Interim Use, too.

MP - Why is the recycling part in there? Why can't we take it out?

JE - To clarify, the applicant's proposed language brought recycling out, the proposed language that staff drafted here leaves recycling out of it and makes the ordinance just for a private compost facility. There's a distinction there.

TM - I just want to make sure that with your recommendation that you are sending the board that you're either recommending adoption or denial of it, not just sending it to them.

JE - One last note, I did notice a small typo. The final sentence of standard #7 should be its own item number 8.

TM - So it would be eight standards instead of seven. The seventh one would just be split.

MS - I make a motion to recommend adoption with the eight items and the language in item #3 stating 4000 and 1000.

MP - I second.

Motion to recommend adoption with stated standards made by Streiff, seconded by Purfeerst, and approved unanimously.

III. Adjournment

Hearing no other items before the PC, a motion was made by Johnson, second by Hogan, to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted

Planning Commission


Anna Aguilar
Administrative Coordinator


Charlie Peters, Chair