

**Becker County Planning Commission  
and  
Becker County Commissioners  
Joint Meeting  
July 30, 2013**

Planning Commission Chairman Brufloft called the joint meeting to order at 10:00 am. Zoning Technician Julene Hodgson recorded minutes.

**Planning Commission and Zoning Members Present:** Chairman Jim Brufloft , John Lien, Commissioner Larry Knutson, Jim Kovala, Jeff Moritz, David Blomseth, Ray Thorkildson, Mary Seaworth, Mary Seaberg, Zoning Administrator Patty Swenson and Zoning Technician Julene Hodgson.

**County Commissioner Members Present:** Larry Knutson, Ben Grimsley, John Okeson, Donald Skarie and Barry Nelson.

Planning Commission Chairman Brufloft explained the protocol for the meeting and stated that the recommendations of the Planning Commission would be forwarded to the County Board of Commissioners for final action during the joint meeting.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

**FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: APPLICANT: Sherlene Williams** 13884 260th Ave Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 **Project Location:** 13884 260th Ave **LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION:** 190314000 Detroit Township Curfman/Glawe Lakes Pt Lot 1 Beg 227.87' S of NE Cor, Section 16, TWP 138, Range 41 **APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Request to amend an existing Conditional Use Permit document # 400269 to include overnight camping and overnight parking for the "We Fest Concerts".

Property owner Sherlene Williams and representative Robert Bliss of FACE/WeFest explained the application to the Board. They are requesting to amend the existing Conditional Use Permit to allow overnight camping during the WeFest festival. Knutson noted the time-line on the original permit was for three days only and the number of days should be addressed also. Bliss stated he thought the property was covered under the WeFest Conditional Use Permit for camping when they leased the property from Williams. Commissioner Nelson asked weather or not they thought their paperwork indicated overnight camping, it may not be covered under the Counties permit. Commissioner Grimsley inquired if there is other parking accomodations if this property is approved for camping to which Bliss answered yes. Brufloft asked Wiliams how long the lease was for to which she answered five (5) years. Brufloft asked Williams if she realized the original permit did not cover camping and she stated she thought the WeFest "blanket" covered her property for camping. Bliss stated the Minnesota State Health

Department has already approved the camping plan. Brufloft clarified previous permit and public hearing stipulations state parking and no overnight camping. Nelson asked where the cars are going to park that will no longer be parking in this area for daytime parking to which Bliss stated they have ample daytime parking and the parking sites in the other areas by town and the shuttle bus help so it is not a problem. Nelson noted that the day parking and traffic is more controlled than it was 10 years ago. Nelson asked how many sites would be allowed for camping. Bliss stated they had the area platted to take into account the roads, the exists and a 25x40 (1,000 sq ft) individual site area for each camper. Lien asked if the property was fenced to which Williams stated yes and explained the area that is fenced. Williams stated they will use one main entrance/exit and they have another area gated for an emergency exit route if needed. That area would give law enforcement one more access. Kovala stated that the paperwork Bliss handed out read Oatfield/Day Parking and Bliss stated they thought the slash meant either camping and/or day parking. Bliss continued to state they have added roads within the property, they have the lighting in place, water tanks, porta-poties and will be a full service campground with WeFest staff, security and medical staff on site. Kovala calculated the property excluding the home site and roads and he asked what number of sites were requested to which Bliss stated 149. Nelson stated that Becker County Emergency Manager Craig Fontaine has been working on an updated emergency plan and the proposal to keep the existing emergency routes and adding another emergency exit will help for safety. Bliff commented that is their goal as well and that WeFest has met regarding emergency strategies with drills completed with fire/rescue and first responders to cover their bases regarding all emergencies.

Paul Chelmo spoke regarding the request. He lives by the WeFest and when he received the notice of the public hearing he was told the proposed campsites had already been sold. He doesn't begrudge Williams leasing her property but was not in approval of how it came about. He noted everything has already been placed on the property as in the fence and lighting. Craig Fontaine and Guy Fischer stated they have been working with WeFest in regards to an emergency action plan. They noted the previous plan was very limited and somethings have been worked on to improve those areas of concern. They had a consultant address some concerns and give recommendations that were read to the Boards. The plan includes more detail planning for evacuation, communications, recovery planning and so forth. They recommended the FACE hire an emergency management planner. Becker County Sheriff Kelly Shannon spoke in favor of the application. Shannon examined the property and did not have any concerns regarding public safety or traffic issues. Shannon stated the extra camp ground will not change the current workload and the added emergency entrance will help for emergency needs and/or traffic issues if they arise. Thorkildson asked Shannon if he thought the day parking previously approved on this property caused problems with vehicles continually coming and going versus campers. Shannon answered there will actually be less traffic and whatever traffic there is will still continue to use the exit that has been previously been used. Thorkildson asked Shannon if he has any concerns regarding day parking availability and Shannon stated the previous people that used this area for parking can use the overflow day parking areas. Williams stated that last year she only let a few cars park on her property but the previous 3-4 years she never opened it up at all. There was no

written correspondence either for or against the proposal. At this time, testimony was closed and further discussion was held.

Blomseth noted the previous Conditional Use Permit was approved for three (3) days annually and asked Bliss if the request was to change this also and for how many days. Bliss stated the overnight camping would be from Tuesday through Sunday for a total of 6 days. Brufloft stated that WeFest and Williams should have realized the previous Conditional Use Permit meant no camping and should have looked into the current permits before entering a five (5) year lease. Brufloft continued by stating this has placed the Planning Commission and County Commissioner Board into a difficult situation regarding the urgency and late coming of the request. Kovala noted they should have known what was allowed and now there is not only a lease involved, but money exchanged for campers that are expecting campsites and requesting more days based on an after the fact request. Kovala stated maybe the request should be denied. Blomseth noted that although this request should have come in front of the Board before now, if the request would have come in front of the Board with the plan submitted today, there would have been no reason to deny the request. Moritz agreed noting this should have been requested earlier but setting that aside he saw no reason not to approve the request. Thorkildson questioned if there is thought of approval, should the Board place a one (1) year on the Conditional Use Permit and revisit the request next year and the emergency management plan. Brufloft noted the entities involved such as Zoning Administrator Swenson already have the authority to enforce or revoke any and all of the Conditional Use Permits.

There was no further discussion by the Commission.

**Motion: Lien made a motion to approve the request to amend an existing Conditional Use Permit document # 400269 to include overnight camping and overnight parking for the “We Fest Concerts” due to the request meets the criteria of the Ordinance and is not detrimental to the surrounding area. The approval will be for six (6) consecutive days for the “We Fest Concerts”. Kovala second. All in favor. Motion carried.**

At this time the floor was turned over to the Becker County Commissioners.

Chairman Don Skarie requested Zoning Administrator Patty Swenson to address the Board.

Planning and Zoning: Patty Swenson presented:

The Planning Commission forwarded the recommendation to approve overnight camping for six (6) consecutive days during WeFest.

Nelson asked if they had incurred the expenses of the public hearing to which Swenson stated yes. Nelson noted it was suggested to only approve the Conditional Use Permit for a one year period but agreed this was not necessary because the County has enforcement

authoricy of the permits. Swenson stated that if Sheriff Kelly Shannon reports any issues with the Conditional Use Permits, they will be reviewed. Nelson noted the timing was not good but the request is in front of the Boards for process. Skarie stated that there are people coming in the area with the belief they have a place to camp, what would they do if this would have been denied. Knutson gave praise to the Planning Commission Board regarding the hearing process. He noted that although there was alot expressed, the Board set aside any emotions involved and concluded they would have approved the request if it would have came before the Board earlier. Knutson noted the wording on the recorded version of the Conditional Use Permit should state six (6) consecutive days.

There was no further discussion by the Commission.

Motion: Knutson made a motion to concur with the Planning Commission recommendation to amend the previous Conditional Use Permit. Okeson second. All in favor. Motion carried.

At this time the Becker County Commissioners adjourned the meeting.

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Jim Brufloft, Chairman

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Jeff Moritz, Secretary

ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia Swenson, Zoning Administrator