

**Pennfield Charter Township
Joint Session
Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals
Meeting Minutes of October 22, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Commission Chairperson Jon Bartlett and Zoning Board of Appeals Chairperson Maryann Herbstreith called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm at the Pennfield Middle School cafeteria. Planning Commission members present were: Jon Bartlett, Jack Pooler, Paul Anderson, Brad Messenger, Elaine Walter, Tammi Damerow and Curtis Whitaker. Zoning Board of Appeals members present were: Maryann Herbstreith, Chuck Adams, Perry Beard, Curtis Whitaker, and alternate members Lindsay Draime and Frank Schumacher.

Others present: Supervisor Rob Behnke; Deputy Supervisor Barbara Darlington; Township Trustee Larry Skelding; Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Smith; Mr. Randi Wille and Mr. Leon Belden, representatives of Meyer Material, a division of Aggregate Industries; and Recording Secretary Sandra Cummings.

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**INTRODUCTION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MEYER MATERIAL/
PURPOSE OF INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Mr. Behnke introduced the Regional Manager of Environmental and Land Services for Meyer Material, Mr. Randi Wille, and the Production Manager Leon Belden. Mr. Behnke indicated that he and Deputy Supervisor Barbara Darlington had recently taken a tour of the existing mining facility for Meyer Material, located on 12 Mile Road and L Drive at the junctures of Convis, Marshall and Emmett townships. The facility has operated for approximately 27 years, and is within a one to two year time span of exhausting the current supply of material in Convis township. Meyer Material wishes to expand its operation into adjacent land located in Pennfield Township in order to prolong the life of the business by 6 or 7 years. The purpose of this informational meeting with both Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals Board members is due to the fact that in order to expand operations into Pennfield, a Special Land Use Permit will need to be granted, in addition to Zoning variances.

PRESENTATION BY MEYER MATERIALS

Mr. Randi Wille gave a presentation regarding the general operation of Meyer Material. The operation is a mining business, extracting sand, gravel and limestone from the ground, crushing and washing the raw material, storing the product on site, and selling the product to companies who turn it into bricks, concrete and other building materials for roads, foundations, and houses.

The trucks which haul the product from the storage site are not owned by Meyer Material, but are monitored at the time of loading to ensure that they are not over the weight limit, that the load is covered properly, and that excess product is cleaned off the trucks prior to leaving the site to prevent dropping onto the road.

The hours of operation are 6:30 am to 8:00 pm on weekdays, and 6:30 to 2:00 pm on Saturdays. The hours vary according to daylight availability, and reduce to 7:00 am to 5:00 pm when daylight is reduced in the fall. The operation closes down between November and April.

For the protection of the public and adjoining homeowners, Meyer Material posts signage every 200 feet and creates a 5 foot high berm around the area being mined. Meyer Material prefers not to construct fencing or plant trees as a buffer, as these have to be removed as the reclamation process proceeds, making it an added expense. They feel the berms provide a very good buffer. They have not had any complaints from neighboring land owners in regard to the use of berms as opposed to fencing and trees as a buffer system.

The operation consists of excavating machinery such as backhoes and bulldozers, dump trucks, and other machinery such as crushers and washers. The product is conveyed from the mining site to the processing site by means of a conveyor belt. The finished goods are stockpiled, and the sediment left after the washing process which consists of clay and silt, is stored in areas which will eventually be reclaimed. The mined areas are sequentially reclaimed so they can be put back to farming or recreational use. The reclamation process takes a few years, and can be speeded up by planting certain crops such as radishes, which help to break up the "hard pan" left behind by the reclamation process.

Meyer Material has been in close association with several land owners in the area for over 21 years, and has maintained a good relationship with them. They welcome the public to visit the operation, and have invited all attendees of the Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals to visit the operation site.

The primary goal of Meyer Materials now is to locate and remove new sources of material to prolong the life of the operation. They feel that land located in Pennfield adjacent to the present operation will provide material for another 6 to 7 years.

In order to make this venture work, Meyer Materials will need to build under 12 Mile Road an 8 foot high by 11 foot wide tunnel and run a 30” conveyer belt to the stationary processing plant on the other side of the road in Convis township.

The problems with expanding operation into Pennfield Township center mostly on setback and fencing requirements, tree planting requirements, and bond requirements, all of which are much greater than those in Convis, Emmett and Marshall townships. These requirements make expansion cost prohibitive unless variances can be granted.

Mr. Wille pointed out that Meyer Material provides jobs to local workers and businesses. They would hire Hoffman Brothers Excavating, a locally owned business, to build the conveyer belt tunnel. The permit for the construction of the tunnel would be issued by the Calhoun County Road department.

The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals members had some questions and concerns regarding the expansion of Meyer Material’s operation. One question was regarding nearby wetlands, and how close the operation would come to that area. Mr. Wille indicated that there was not much gravel near the wetland area so they would stay at least 500 feet for the wetlands. He indicated that Meyer Material obtains soil erosion permits and must meet DEQ requirements at all mining sites. The Planning members asked about digging near power lines. Mr. Wille indicated they stay at least 30 feet away from any power pole.

Another concern was that traffic could be increased dramatically on 11 Mile Road, which is a busy road. Mr. Wille indicated that the daily volume of loaded trucks would not increase as there is a limit as to how many trucks can be loaded in a day. Rather, the whole operation would be prolonged by 6 or 7 years. The Commission asked about dust control during the mining of the gravel. Meyer Material used dust control measures, and the DEQ monitors for dust control.

The Planning Commission members inquired how deep the mining had to go to retrieve material. The answer was: no deeper than 40 feet. When the reclamation process is complete, the level of the land is approximately 20 feet lower than it originally was. The reclamation process takes about 20 years to complete.

The Planning Commission pointed out that there have been a few mining operations in the township which did not complete satisfactory reclamation processes, leaving behind eyesores in the community. Meyer Material stated they follow good reclamation procedures, and have had good relationships with many communities that will attest to their reputation of being a good neighbor. Mr. Lynn Smith has had a good working relationship with Meyer Material for many years, and has commended their business practices.

The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals indicated that the next step for expansion of Meyer Material would be to obtain the proper variances and Special Use Permit. Lindsay Draime suggested that possibly the Pennfield Township Zoning Ordinances should be amended first to be more closely in line with those in Convis Township, thereby eliminating the need for some of the variances regarding mining operations currently required by Pennfield. The cases of mining operations in Pennfield have been very few in the past 20 years, and Lindsay Draime pointed out that the Ordinances should be reviewed every 5 years as a general rule.

Brad Messenger made a motion, seconded by Elaine Walter to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

Sandra Cummings
Recording Secretary