

West Deer Township
Board of Supervisors
11 April 2023
7:00pm

The West Deer Township Board of Supervisors held a Public Hearing at the West Deer Township Municipal Building. Members present were: Beverly Jordan, Chairperson; Shirley Hollibaugh, Vice Chairperson; Vernon Frey; David Harrison; and James Smullin. Also present were: Daniel Mator, Township Manager; Joseph Shook, Assistant Manager; Gavin Robb, Township Solicitor; and Scott Shoup, Township Engineer.

6:00 p.m. – PUBLIC HEARING– BRICKYARD HOLDINGS LLC

Township Solicitor Gavin Robb opened the meeting.

Roll Call taken by Mr. Mator – Quorum present.

The court stenographer was present.

The purpose of this public hearing was for the Board to review testimony and evidence in order to make a determination as to whether to approve a concert venue and associated parking at 940 & 982 Little Deer Creek Road Russellton, PA 15076.

Lot/Block Numbers: 1219-A-25 & 1219-J-75
Zoning District: I Industry

Mr. Robb opened the meeting by announcing there were some preliminary matters to be addressed. He proceeded by asking Mr. Shook to confirm this public hearing was advertised in compliance with the Municipality's Planning Code.

Mr. Shook confirmed and stated it was advertised March 23rd and April 2nd.

Mr. Robb summarized the conditional use request.

The hearing was then turned over to the development company, Hampton Technical Associates, who was represented by Mr. Jerry Nist.

Mr. Nist outlined the current use of the property that the proposed concert venue would be built on and then turned the presentation over to property owner, Mr. Charles Vrabel and facilities manager Mr. Joe Voloch.

Mr. Vrabel explained that the proposed concert venue would be utilized during the off season of the youth sports events.

Mr. Voloch added how the idea evolved and explained that the tickets would be purchased as parking passes. He also explained a second option to purchase a ticket was as an Uber drop-off.

Mrs. Jordan asked what the plan was for the traffic entering and exiting the events.

Mr. Voloch requested that Mr. Joshua Haydo, of David E. Wooster and Associates answer the traffic questions.

Mr. Haydo reported having a meeting with PennDOT and the Township to solicit input to finalize a traffic plan to address any issues.

Mrs. Jordan asked if there is a solution yet.

Mr. Haydo responded that it was a work in progress. He explained how there would be a separation of the traffic so the two types - the parking pass tickets and the Ubers, Lyfts or any type of ride sharing services – would not negatively impact one another.

More discussion was held.

Mr. Robb asked Mr. Scott Shoup, the Township Engineer and Mr. Robert Goetz, the principal of Trans Associates - Township Traffic Engineer – to report on their findings.

Mr. Shoup summarized his Letter of Recommendations to the Board and Mr. Goetz outlined his findings.

More discussion was held.

The Board had requested that Chief Robert Loper look over the plans, traffic circulation, and public safety issues and Chief Loper spoke on those issues.

Chief Loper reported reading the narrative and having an onsite visit with Assistant Township Manager, Joseph Shook and Facilities Manager Joe Voloch. He voiced his concerns regarding the Township police staffing such large events, and recommended that other police departments be asked to be part of the security detail.

More discussion was held.

Mr. Robb opened the hearing up to the public for comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Colton of Bakerstown Culmerville Road

- Mr. Colton voiced his approval of the proposed concert venue. He explained that he has been a long time Township resident and owns a development company in West Deer. Mr. Colton took the view that this venue would be a bonus to the community.

Clyde Vitale of Little Deer Creek Road

- Mr. Vitale stressed that the sports fields were approved and are still not completed, so he did not feel the concert venue should be permitted until the other projects are finished. He complained about the dust that ends up on the Little Deer Creek Road due to the traffic coming out of the sporting events. There was much discussion between Mr. Vitale and Mr. Vrael.

Ron Osinski of Little Deer Creek Road

- Mr. Osinski expressed the view that the proposed concert venue will take away the small town feel for the residents of Russellton. He brought up about how he currently hears the referee whistle and the sound of a bat hitting a ball on his property, so he knew he would hear the music coming from the proposed venue. Mr. Osinski reiterated the fact that the current sports fields were not completed, so he asked that the Board not approve something new without that being finished first. He also expressed his concern over the speeding on the Little Deer Creek with increased traffic.

Lee Gornick of Little Deer Creek Road

- Ms. Gornick voiced her concern over the noise of the proposed venue since she currently heard the spectators cheering for the sports. She stressed her dislike of all the dust and dirt on Little Deer Creek Road. Ms. Gornick also mentioned that she has young children and does not feel comfortable knowing that there will be alcohol on the premise, and in such close proximity of her property.

Guy Gornick of Little Deer Creek Road

- Mr. Gornick asked how the event traffic will be handled if a tractor trailer gets stuck trying to turn around in front of the one lane tunnel on Little Deer Creek Road.

Paul Kneib of York Way

- Mr. Kneib took the view that – in his professional opinion – the venue raised many concerns. He explained the resale of the properties near the proposed venue could be affected and the Township's modest public safety resources could become overwhelmed handling any incidents that may occur such as fighting, DUIs, and drug use.

Guy Gornick of Little Deer Creek Road

- Mr. Gornick asked if there have been complaints about JB's concerts that can hold hundreds of people, whereas this proposed venue will hold thousands of people.

More discussion was held.

Mr. Robb stated the Board has 45 days from the closing of the hearing to issue it's written findings and decision on this matter.

Public Hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.