Written by Mark Jaeger
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Town Plan Commission recommends large barn on once-neglected parcel

Building plans in the Town of Saukville have been rare of late, which explains why the Plan Commission's last meeting in August.

The doldrums can be blamed on the staggering economy and the painstaking process of amending the town's 2035 comprehensive plan, which has shelved all land division requests.

However, commission members made up for some of that lost time last week by recommending approval of a large barn that will further enhance a once neglected property at 4180 Singing Hill Rd.

Steve and Michelle Brandt appeared before the commission asking for a conditional-use permit to erect a 3,696-square-foot barn that would house their horses and alpacas.

The barn would have six animal pens, along with hay storage and a tack room.

Town code requires conditional-use approval for any accessory structure larger than 2,500 square feet.

Commission members had little problem recommending the Town Board issue the permit after a room full of neighbors attended last week's meeting to support the proposal.

Attorney Michael Herbrand, who represented the Brandts, said some shifting of acreage between two parcels the couple own is necessary to clear the way for the new barn.

Herbrand said some miscommunication led the Brandts to believe they could build the barn on the parcel adjacent to their homestead.

They were later informed that accessory structures can only be build on lots with a primary structure, in this case their home.

Under the plan, two acres from the adjacent 17-acre parcel would be added to the homestead.

"The Brandts are planning a very tasteful barn which fits in nicely with the area," Herbrand said.

The property includes an old quarry, and the couple have already beautified the parcel by planting more than 100 trees on the site.

Town Supr. Kate Smallish, a member of the commission, said she likes what the Brandts have done with their property.

"It was an eyesore and I see this as a definite improvement. I can't see any argument against

it," Smallish said.

Neighbor David Nauman echoed that sentiment, saying, "It can do nothing but improve the property values in the area."

Lakeland Road resident Bonnie Schaefer said the improvements the Brandts have made on the property are hard to ignore.

"That piece of land with all the dead trees and swampland looked like the scene from a horror story and they have made it into a beautiful estate," Schaefer said.

Letters signed by 10 neighbors supported the barn proposal.

Commission member Ginny Pierson also praised the plan, especially because it reinforces the farming emphasis in the area.

"Anything that promotes the agricultural aspect of the town is good to see," Pierson said.

The commission unanimously recommended the conditional-use permit. The Town Board will take up the request at its May 18 meeting.

The planning body also approved a site plan for an 8,448-square-foot machine storage building on the Century Acres property, 3420 Hwy. W.

The pole barn will be shielded from view on Highway W by existing buildings on the property, which is used for commercial egg production.