

**Charter Township of Filer  
Minutes of the Planning Commission Public Hearing  
Held on March 15, 2016**

Present: Karen Kolk, Shirley Ball, Richard Mark, Roger Dittmer and Linda Rogers.

Absent: Jennifer Williams and Christa Johnson

Also present: Lynn Kooyers, Zoning Administrator and Terry Walker, Township Supervisor.

Hearing called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Chairman Mark.

Township Attorney Richard Wilson entered the hearing at 6:47 p.m.

Steven & Marcia Southard Special Use Permit Application

Zoning Administrator Kooyers stated that the purpose of this hearing is to accept public comment on the Special Use Permit Application filed by Steven & Marcia Southard proposing to construct a Walkabout Golf Course, 3D Archery Course, Fruit Orchard & Vegetable Garden with Roadside Stand in the Agricultural Residential District of Filer Township, located at 150 W. County Line Rd. on Parcel #51-06-136-475-01.

No written or verbal comments were received on the application.

Zoning Administrator Kooyers reviewed the main points of the application:

- Subject parcel #51-06-136-475-01 is a 19.94 acre vacant parcel located in the Agricultural Residential District of Filer Township.
- Application states the desired theme is to provide outdoor, family oriented, healthy multi-dimensional, non-intimidating activities.
- Parcel History – Parcel was originally 38 acres with a house and two barns that were constructed during the 1920's. In 1974 the property was divided and sections were sold to Martin Marietta and Consumers Power. By 1976 assessing notes indicate the residence had burned down and the barns were unusable. The property has remained vacant since that time.
- **Article 37 - 31.37.3703 Filer Township Code of Ordinances** A Special Use Permit is required in the Agricultural Residential District to construct a golf course.
- The Southards also plan to plant a vegetable garden, fruit orchard and berry patch with roadside produce stand on the same parcel as an accessory use to the golf course.
- Applicant is proposing a walkabout golf course (no golf carts will be used) offering nine 110 -160 yard holes. Holes are designed to use snag equipment (Starting new at golf). The course will also accommodate the sport of Footgolf.
- 3-D Archery will also be offered. This is another outdoor family activity with scoring based on a point system.

- 3 proposed structures are included on the site plan:

30' X 40' Storage Bldg.	1,200 sq/ft
20' X 32' Utility Bldg.	640 sq/ft
<u>7' X 16' Moveable Farm Stand</u>	<u>112 sq/ft</u>
Total:	1,952 sq/ft

- All proposed structures comply with required setbacks for the Agricultural District.
- All proposed structures comply with height and building area standards (footprint) for the Agricultural District.
- Proposed hours of operation will be 8am - dusk daily, from Memorial Day through mid-October.

- Two bathrooms will be provided for customers in the utility building.
- There will be no outdoor lighting on the golf or archery course. Exterior lighting on buildings will be installed under the soffit and will point straight down. One light will be placed near handicap parking.
- One new entrance/exit drive will be needed to access the property from County Line Rd. A driveway permit will be required from the Manistee County Road Commission.
- Site plan proposes 48 customer parking spaces based on US -31 traffic patterns and the anticipated customer flow through the courses. After discussion the Planning Commission may choose to accept this the suggested 48 spaces with the condition that additional green space is reserved for future parking if/when it is needed.
- A sign permit application must be filed with the Zoning Administrator in order to display a sign.

Christa Johnson entered the hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Steven Southard introduced himself and spoke about his application.

- Mr. Southard stated that he currently manages 3 golf courses in the Loveland, Colorado area through his employment at the Park District. Two courses are traditional 18 hole courses and the third is a 9 hole walkabout golf course.
- Mrs. Southard will be staying in the area when the course opens to run the day-to-day operations. Mr. Southard will commute from Colorado on a regular basis during the season.
- Mr. Southard stated that he is proposing an unimposing course for families to play in a “down home” natural setting.
- Applicant presented a pie chart explaining the different ways people learn to play golf.
- The sandy, rolling terrain of this property will be a perfect natural setting for the course.
- There will be 7 acres of turf on the golf course that will be drip irrigated from 100 ft. wells drilled on the property.
- Township Attorney questioned fertilizer runoff from the greens.
- 3-D Archery course will offer 14 holes. Mr. Southard discussed the archery course safety which included arrow flight trajectory, shooting over rising ground and safety zones. 3-5 persons at a time are expected to play the course.
- Road side stand will be limited to produce grown on the property. Mr. Southard intends to grow strawberries, cherries and vegetables. He commented that Saskatoon berries are very popular in Canada and they have been very successful where they have been introduced in Michigan.
- Maximum of 3 employees per shift.
- Business will close in the winter.
- Gravel parking lot will help to control runoff.

#### Public Comment

- Doug Bell from Manistee National spoke in favor of the Walkabout Golf Course. He commented that this alternative to traditional golf would benefit the community and Manistee National as well. He is 100% behind the idea and hopes it is successful.
- Building design and farm stand are very attractive.
- There is currently no 3-D Archery Range nearby.

Public hearing was closed by the Chairman.

Hearing adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Dittmer, Secretary  
Charter Township of Filer Planning Commission

