

CARVER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting – July 15, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Scott Hoese, Greg Grazzini, Frank Mendez, Matthew Kerber, Scott Wakefield,

Members Late: None

Members Absent: John P Fahey, Andy Steinhagen

Staff Present: Jason Mielke, Lauren Whetstone

Pursuant to due call and published notice thereof, the July 15, 2025, regular meeting of the Carver County Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Scott Hoese at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Hoese acknowledged five of the board members are present and Andy Steinhagen and John Fahey are absent.

Agenda – A motion was made by Grazzini to approve the agenda. Mendez seconded the motion. Chairman Hoese called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Minutes – A motion was made by Kerber and seconded by Wakefield to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2025, regular meeting. Chairman Hoese called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

File #PZ20250029 – Janet Fahey – Chairman Hoese called the public hearing to order at 7:02 p.m. to consider a request by Janet Fahey. The purpose of the public hearing was to consider a request for an Interim Use Permit for a Large-Scale Activity (Seasonal Agri-tourism Activities) pursuant to Chapter 152 of the County Code. The property is located in Section 2 of Benton Township.

The following was present: Janet Fahey, Chris Commers

The following items were entered into the record:

Exhibit A – Legal Description

Exhibit B – Proof of Publication of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit C – Proof of Mailing of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit D – Site Plan

Exhibit E – Letter from the applicant dated May 30, 2025

Exhibit F – Staff Report addressed to the Planning Commission and Benton Township dated July 7, 2025, and all attachments.

Mielke stated the applicant (Janet Fahey) is an owner of the Hollander Group which own an approximate 5-acre parcel improved with a residence, several accessory and agricultural buildings, a wooded area and outdoor gardening area. The applicant is requesting an Interim Use Permit to conduct a seasonal business for Agri-Tourism and Farm Experiences. The applicant's letter describes potential activities as barn quilt tours, as well as art classes, yoga, floral garden tours, photo sessions and boxed-lunch events. The barn quilt tours would operate from May through October, Monday through Sunday. Tours are held three to five times per month, with 12 to 50 participants per event. Each tour runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and

includes 10 to 12 stops throughout the county, with each stop at the Hollander Farm lasting approximately 15 to 60 minutes. Transportation consists of one coach bus and up to four private vehicles, generating approximately 10 vehicle trips per event. Other occasional agri-tourism events would also occur between May and October, Monday through Sunday, with up to two events per month. Each event would be approximately 4 hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. with up to 50 registered guests. The proposed activity would take place outdoors, primarily utilizing the barn and the surrounding floral garden areas. The barn would need to meet State Building Code requirements as the public would be accessing and entering the structure. The site plan depicts the property layout with the barn, sheds, portable restrooms and two parking areas. There is no need for outdoor storage. Access to the property is from County Rd 153. Carver County Public Works reviewed the request and stated the incidental use of the existing driveway for the barn does not appear to cause any concerns. A private well is on site providing both internal and external water supply. The portable restrooms will be available for use and will be connected to a septic treatment system or holding tanks. That plan is being reviewed and must be approved by the Environmental Services department prior to issuance of any permits. A movable yard sign has been used periodically. Ms. Fahey intends to install a permanent sign which will comply with the Carver County Sign Regulations. The IUP shall terminate when The Hollander Group, LLC (Janet Fahey) no longer owns the property, or the business ceases to operate. The Benton Town Board reviewed the request and recommended approval at their May 12, 2025, meeting. Mielke read the proposed conditions for consideration if the request is recommended for approval. If the Planning Commission recommends denial of the permit application, the deficiencies found should be referenced.

Janet Fahey, 10720 County Rd 153, had no additional comments and stated she agrees with the proposed conditions for consideration of the permit.

Chris Commers, representing the Benton Township supervisors, stated the township board showed overwhelming support for the request and unanimously recommended approval.

Wakefield asked if the electrical wiring in the barn would meet building code requirements.

Ms. Fahey stated the wiring has been replaced and should meet building code requirements.

Kerber inquired about the tours and asked if the bus drives onto the farmyards at the 10 – 12 stops.

Ms. Fahey explained when the program was initiated through the public art program, it was made known that if a family was willing to participate in the program, they agreed that the bus and guests could come onto the site. The sites are also viewable from the road, but the bus and guests are welcome to come onto the yards. Ms. Fahey works with the property owners, informing them of the dates and times and stated often they will talk with the guests about their farm, the farming operation, the barn quilt and other related issues.

There was no one present from the public to comment on the request.

A motion was made by Wakefield to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Grazzini. Chairman Hoese called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried. The public hearing was closed at 7:19 p.m.

Wakefield asked the distance between the residential access and the barn access on the property and if was steep for a coach bus to enter.

Ms. Fahey stated the terrain is mostly level and does not cause any issue for the bus.

Based on GIS mapping, Mielke provided the measured distance between the residential driveway access and the farm building access. Hoese estimated the distance between the two driveways to be approximately 190 feet.

A motion was made by Wakefield to **approve and adopt Resolution #25-13** incorporating the findings of fact with staff considerations to operate seasonal agricultural tourism activities - specifically, barn quilt tours and an ag tourism farm experience from the subject property. Kerber seconded the motion for approval. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Other Business

Mielke introduced Lauren Whetstone as the newly hired Land Management Planner. Lauren shared that she most recently worked for the Federal Aviation Administration and has prior experience in both local and county government in Arizona and Illinois.

The Planning Commission members welcomed her to the team.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Wakefield and seconded by Mendez to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.