Business permit tied up in red tape
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Town will have to amend zoning code before it can approve plans for excavating operation

When Jim Winnemuller talked to Town of Saukville Building Inspector Wally Grotelueschen about his plans to build a house and storage building for the vehicles he uses in his excavating business, he was told he would need to get a conditional-use permit from the town.

Heeding that advice, Winnemuller, the owner of Jim’s Excavating, appeared before the Plan Commission last week.

Winnemuller explained to the commission how he wants to build a 2,700-square-foot house with a 4,000-square-foot attached storage building on a 20-acre parcel he owns on Beech Lane.

While the commission had no problem with the buildings, they grappled with the concept of whether they would be approving a business on an agricultural parcel.

Worse yet, commission members said they could not find excavating listed among the permitted businesses in the recently revamped conditional-use ordinance.

Winnemuller explained that he wanted to store two heavy-duty dump trucks and a semi used in the business inside the attached garage, although no real work would be done on site other than some equipment maintenance.

Even that raised the question of whether his proposal fit in with the agricultural zoning of the property, and what would the primary purpose of the parcel be.

Although he avoided getting involved in much of the discussion, Town Chairman Don Hamm said “in the interest of full disclosure” he currently farms the land on which Winnemuller intends to build.
In hopes of clearing up the agricultural use question, Winnemuller joked, “I could get some goats.”

As a paperwork solution to the issue, some commission members said it would be easier if Winnemuller simply did not list the Beech Lane property as his business address.

Winnemuller noted there are four or five excavating businesses based in the township, and town officials confirmed that none of them have conditional-use permits.

“I just wanted to do the right thing and get approval from the town before I built,” Winnemuller said.

Ultimately, the commission felt the only way they could legally approve the permit is to recommend the Town Board first alter its ordinance to include excavating as a conditional use on land with agricultural zoning.

Because a legal notice publication and public hearing are required as part of that process, officials said a delay in Winnemuller's project is inevitable.

“It is possible it could take two months,” Hamm said.