

CITY OF COLUMBUS
PUBLIC HEARING IN ALTERNATIVE MEETING FORMAT
STATUTES SECTION 13D.021
CST COMPANIES, 14045 LAKE DR NE CUP (PC20-105)
05.20.2020

The 05.20.2020 Public Hearing to consider a request by the applicant, Stotko Speeding Construction (Greg Stotko), a public hearing was request for a conditional use permit to operate a business consisting of the wholesale and distribution of dry goods (firewood, softener salt, stone, mulch, etc.) and the manufacturing and warehousing of colored mulch at 14045 Lake Dr NE, was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission member Kris King and Barb Bobick. Present via telephone were Commission members: Pam Wolowski, and Steve Wagamon; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko via telephone; City Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht; City Planner Dean Johnson; and Administrative Technician Rochelle Busch. The meeting was held in a telephonic meeting format.

Also, in attendance via telephone were: Mayor Jesse Preiner; City Council members: Janet Hegland, and Shelly Logren; Greg Stotko, Megan and Chad Toft, Boni Caine, James Houghe, John Hovorka, Nicole Eppoliti, Sue Copeland, Rob and Kathy Osterberg, Mike and Brenda Welch, and David Rife.

Hanegraaf: Were going to go on to agenda item number 6 on the agenda, which is a Public hearing and questions. 14045 Lake DR NE, CST Companies, LLC. Conditional Use Permit application for the operation of a landscaping dry goods wholesale and distribution business and the manufacturing of colored mulch. Pages 1-35 enclosures E1-E5. Rochelle would you like to read the notice as published in the Forest Lake Times?

Notice was read at this time by the recording secretary.

Hanegraaf: Thank you, Rochelle.

Wolowski: Ron? This is Pam. Can you remind everyone to put their phone on mute when they're not speaking? Because there is a lot of background noise, and I think it's coming from that.

Hanegraaf: I hear that too. We all hear that here. Its amazing when has one, the noises we hear. We haven't heard no dogs barking or babies crying but a lot of feedback out there. So, we will try to get through these hard times, working on the telephone here. But at this time, I would like Greg Stotko, or their representatives to acknowledge their presence and state their name and address.

Stotko: Hi I'm Greg Stotko, Stotko Speeding Construction. My home address is 2330 Timber View Drive, Hastings MN 55033.

Hanegraaf: Is there anybody else with you Greg?

M. Toft: Megan Toft, Chad and Megan Toft. We own CST Companies and are the applicants. Our business address is 11717 205th Ave NW, Elk River MN 55330. Home address 6705 Northshore Trl N Forest lake MN 55025.

Hanegraaf: Thank you Megan. If you are going to be the owner of the business I guess were going to have to figure out. I guess at this time what I would like to ask Mr. Stotko was probably to you Megan and your husband, you're requesting a conditional use permit. And what we would like to do is give us a description of your business and what activities you will be conduction and 14045 Lake Dr. So, I don't know who wants to start off here. If Greg wants to or the owners that are going to operate the business?

Stotko: I think that Megan and Chad, you can talk here.

M. Toft: I can talk the specifics of the business. And Greg would be able to speak more to the construction and the plans.

Hanegraaf: Okay.

M. Toft: Chad and I own CST Companies, CST Distribution and CST Transportation, all of which is run out of Elk River MN. We've been in business for just about 10 years. CST Distribution is a wholesale manufacture. We buy and we sell softener salt, ice melt, windshield wash, firewood, and outdoor products that you would typically find at Speedway, Holiday, your local Ace Hardware, Cub Foods, anything of that. We deliver to about 2500 different convenience stores and grocery stores and hardware stores, all of them operate out of a 60,000 sq. foot warehouse in Elk River. Secondly, we have a mulch packaging facility. It runs out of Elk River as well. We take in raw pre-ground material that has been either recolored to be sold as bulk much. Additionally, we take in cedar bulk mulch and nicer bulk mulch from Canada or Florida, that's resold then or bagged. We have a packaging part of that. We have two robotic autoing and line. We package roughly about a million bags a year, I'm sorry 4 million bags of ground mulch product. We do roughly 400 pallets per day. All of that is in Elk River and would stay there. We primarily do that for the big box stores, Home Depot, Fleet Farm, Menards, and then additionally Lowes. We do that as well for Runnings, the convenience stores, for Holiday and Speedway, and the local greenhouses and garden centers. The third piece then would be, we run a trucking facility out of there. We have roughly 33 drivers that run flatbed vans and flatbeds where the forklift hangs on the back. They do deliver our own product that we deliver to all of the convenience stores. Additionally, we do a lot of work for Cemstone, we haul all of their bagged rock, quick-crete, into the big box stores, we haul (unintelligible) pipe. We do a lot of brick and for Metro Brick, we also haul a lot for Patio Town, things of that nature we do a lot of retaining wall block, pavers, that type of stuff, that natural stone we deliver as well. All of that is run out of a 40-acre facility in Elk River. The reason that we are looking to expand we have current customer base, a lot of which is on the east side of the cities that drive over to Elk River to pick up their products. We would like to open up a second facility on this side, on a much smaller scale. Primarily they could pick up their product and then, we are looking for the tree waste. So, it would be a collection site not for, not grass, not compost, not anything of that type,

just trees, where people would, either contractors who do the tree trimming or if the city allows, and may have homeowners who trim their trees that can be dropped off there. Stumps are not ideal; we charge if stumps want to be dropped off. But we don't want everybody's compost or leaves, we're not looking for anything of that sort. What we do then, we collect it, then we would grind it and then it would go back to our facility in Elk River. What they do, we take in roughly about 400,000 yards of natural material that's pre-ground and we pay for that. Where were located currently in Sherburne County, that's a process that they don't allow. We are certified and have some (unintelligible) at the Minnesota Department of Ag. for all of our mulch that comes in now, and our firewood that we contract out. So, we are very familiar with they ask for, or anything that they require. The City just doesn't allow the drop off where all of our competitors and similar business and they do have that option, and when the tree companies drop it off that would be free product that we pay for currently. So out of that facility then there would not be upfront a lot of employees, it would more just to service current business. We're not looking to deliver to homeowners, we have a customer just down the line, who is kiddy corner to this location. And we don't want to cut into his business. They've been a very good customer. We are looking to serve the customers we have and then pickup on the backend who may come in and drop off the trees, they pick up their mulch, they could pick up their retaining wall block with us, and it would be with conjunction with our current customer base already. Like Patio Town, we work with them so we would purchase from them and then sell the product. So, it would be more to work in with our existing business currently. In particular, we live in Forest Lake, we drive to Elk River every day. Personally, I would love to have a location on this side of the cities, so I don't have to drive. Then one of us would drive. We would have a fairly small office staff. We're not anticipating to grow to the size of Patio Town. I'm not looking for that kind of footprint or foot traffic. Its more of a small local business. You know if homeowners wanted to come in, they could certainly come in to pick up a bundle of firewood or bagged softener salt, instead of the big box store. But our primary business is that wholesale. We don't want to backout as a wholesale company and sell retail. We don't have any retail business currently and aren't looking to do that, that's not what we are about. Currently in Elk River we have roughly 60 employees. In Columbus we would anticipate having maybe 4 including myself. Adding more if we need. Hours of operation would be roughly Monday through Friday 7-5, with shorter hours in the winter. In the winter we wouldn't have you know a ton of business. We sell to contractor's ice melt. Then we would have the offices that would additionally do some of the (unintelligible) and paperwork, that Elk River takes care of, but it would be out of that location, not necessarily any more foot traffic that comes in. Saturdays would be the only day that we could possibly be open. That would be the if business warranted that. And it would typically be a short day, 8-4 8-Noon, during the busy season. But I don't anticipate being open on Sundays. As far as equipment there wouldn't be a lot of equipment that would on site. We would have your forklifts and a skid loader to be able to load. Those would get stored inside the warehouse at night. We would have a warehouse that would store all of our calcified product, so if we have softener salt it would be store inside, we don't store any of that outside. All ice melt would be stored inside, windshield wash, things of that. Any calcified stuff that can be stored inside will be. We don't anticipate a large amount of truck traffic. It would be (unintelligible). I know there's a lot of traffic with North Pine and Cemstone, we don't anticipate that at all. Regarding semitruck traffic it could be a handful a day 5 (unintelligible) a day. Most of it would be your small contractors which would be picking up (unintelligible), a dump truck or a dump trailer, a pull behind trailer, a dump trailer. As far as the grinding, that's the only thing that was a little bit

different, when we take in the tree waste, we would be pretty careful. Were not looking for like I said the leaves, grass clippings, we don't want to compost. We don't do that; we don't have a need for that or any reason for it. So, we'd be looking for just tree limbs or logs. What would happen is, that would fit, for us ideally, most people trim in the fall, late summer into the fall. That's for the trees, so that's the time that we would collect most of it. Once it got to a certain level, we like to grind it right away. We actually color in Elk River, year-round, almost. There's about 8 weeks a year that we do not bag product. So, what would happen this product would go through the grinder, and then a walking floor would take it back over to elk river so it would grind the pile down and take it right away. Wintertime is ideal for that. There are no smells to it. Peoples windows aren't open, so it would be less noisy. The machines in particular don't run much over what's acceptable of allowed, 110 to 123 decibels. So, it would be a little bit over a lawn mower. In particular then, all of that product would be trucked back to Elk River, to continue on with our normal process. We don't anticipate anything else to be stored on site regarding mulch. We don't anticipate upfront to do all of our coloring. Most of our products is colored, we have one coloring machine in Elk River. If we had product that we needed over there to sell, we would have one of our walking floors to deliver it, just as we do to our customer that would be kiddy corner. Down the road if we needed to color, if the sales warranted, but it's a big investment to get a second coloring machine. They are quite expensive about \$700,000. So, it would require a substantial amount of business, which we are just not set up to do. Were just not looking to grow, were not looking to add a (unintelligible). Its more a site to take in the trees, (unintelligible) and then to do the (unintelligible). And thank you, that's about all I have. And I can answer questions or we're both here for that. But that's in a nutshell what we do and what we're looking for, the site for.

Hanegraaf: Thank you, Megan. I guess we will talk about the operations of business and maybe come back to the building. Or does Mr. Stotko – Stotko? Or how do you pronounce it?

Stotko: No Megan pretty much covered it. If you have any questions about the site or the building, I can answer those.

Hanegraaf: Okay. Well Id like to start off the questioning right off the bat. What would the name of this business be?

M. Toft: We haven't decided that. All of our other businesses started as CST. My husband's name long is Chadwick Stephen Toft. So, when we started, we just picked CST which are his initials. And we are open to that. We don't have any (unintelligible). It could be CST again, but we're fairly open to that. We don't have anything yet. We have been through thinking about it and trying to figure out what we want, but there is nothing that has clicked yet.

Hanegraaf: Okay, Megan. My next question that I have is how much of this business model that you're proposing in Columbus is different from what you're operating in Elk River. And I bring that up because if I was mistaken, I thought that it wasn't really retail. But on page 4 of your letter it says down on the bottom, 1 use of property would be for retail and contractor. I mean is there a 50/50, or did I misinterpret you that it wasn't really for retail.

C. Toft: We really on the retail side, if somebody stops in to serve, but we're not really looking for it. We have all of our existing customers over here that drive over to pick up. We're trying to service those customers because they don't want to keep driving over here. And then they buy from other people. So that's what we're really looking for is existing customer we have had. We are struggling some of them that pick up at our place because they don't want to spend that 45-minute drive over and drive back (unintelligible), those areas. So were looking for, we're struggling with the fact (unintelligible). Not really set up for the retail part.

M. Toft: We're not looking to advertise for the retail part, if you have somebody who stops in, that's great, but its just contractors. Contractors are our business that's our core business, contractors and wholesalers. The business that we're having with in Elk River due to of where were located. We have customers that go in there are from Wisconsin. And they drive to Elk River to pick up product.

Hanegraaf: Okay, Megan, and for everybody out there. I'm just as guilty of it, before we talk, we got to say our names. So, when its documented in the minutes. But I thank you on that. I just had that question on if it was retail. So, in general you're more of a distribution. In other words, you'd be bringing the product there and somebody would be coming to pick it up. Am I right?

M. Toft: This is Megan, Correct. Yep.

Hanegraaf: Thank you Megan. The next question that I have is, you talk about the number of employees on page 4 and 5 on your application. Are these employees that are coming from Elk River? I know that you already are an employee and will be there, but will these employees be newly hired? Or is this just a transfer of employees?

M. Toft: This is Megan again; they would all be new. We don't have any, for our employees at Elk River, we add staff yearly for growth. We normally add one person in the office and 2-3 drivers per year. This in particular would be all new. So, we would have to hire a new forklift driver, a new warehouse person, and someone to work in the office with myself and myself. So, 4 people is where we would start at.

Hanegraaf: Okay, thank you Megan. I would like to go to the chipping. The tree waste. Is there a limit on size of what could be dropped off? Like in diameter? Like 6" or do you accept a stump? I know you said stumps were not allowable. But is there a size limit on this or is it the big stuff you want?

C. Toft: Chad. Preferably the big stuff you get more out of it. But I would take pretty much anything. we can grind anything from a 6 foot around log to a little tree, it doesn't make any difference.

Hanegraaf: Okay, I...

C. Toft: If you look at Forest Lakes, the City of Forest Lake compost, the trees that are over there. We clean all that up. We do all their grinding.

Hanegraaf: Okay, I know a lot about that one over there. So, is that your machine sitting over there?

C. Toft: Yes Sir.

Hanegraaf: Okay, last year you didn't allow, or was that the city's deal, they didn't allow anything over 3" I think wasn't it?

C. Toft: That was a city deal. They used to use a different grinder, Precision. And now I'm doing it. They had a (unintelligible) I have a tub grinder that's the difference. Tub grinder can take larger wood.

Hanegraaf: Okay, how many times do you grind that over there?

C. Toft: Once, this is Chad. Sorry.

Hanegraaf: And how long does it take you to grind that up Chad?

C. Toft: If we hit it hard, 3 days 4 days. We sort of stretched out, because we were busy with other stuff and it took us 6 days this year.

Hanegraaf: And they have contractors that come in there, is that correct?

C. Toft: I have no idea, this is Chad. Sorry. I have no idea what they do.

Hanegraaf: Do you take the chips then?

C. Toft: Yep.

Hanegraaf: Okay. Tell me something, is this grinding a part of your business model? In other words, if we really were unhappy and didn't want the grinding would that end your business? Is that part of your model? Your business model here? Or is it more or less to get the product here, closer to your customers.

C. Toft: So, 50/50. Grinding will help cover the cost of the building at our site. And hoping more business comes with the wholesale side of the business with contractors and stuff like that with the site dumping. But the really the grinding will cover it at the beginning as well. What I'm projecting because I don't have (unintelligible) the majority of it.

Hanegraaf: And now I'm going to jump to another question here, out at Forest Lake. Do they pay you to grind that up? Or are you just taking the mulch for the grinding.

C. Toft: Chad. I just take it.

Hanegraaf: Oh, so the grindings kind of free?

C. Toft: Yep. I need the product for my facility. We run a lot of materials; I just need the product we just run so much product through our facility. The previous people that used to do it. They used to charge Forest Lake, and I do it for free.

Hanegraaf: Okay.

C. Toft: You can talk to Dave over there about how it went and stuff like that. He was really happy.

Hanegraaf: Oh, Dave in the street department?

C. Toft: Yep.

Hanegraaf: I'll do that. Well I don't have to do that but, I take your word for it.

C. Toft: We don't grind like the grinder has been sitting over there since April. We are super busy with other stuff right now. So, I don't really have any, I don't grind full time. I'm not like a typical land clearing company or anything like that. We grind probably (unintelligible) or just here and there when we need it. So, it's just been sitting over there since mid-April and probably, I have another site I got to do in Hugo. And I will probably do that mid- to end of June.

Hanegraaf: Okay, so when the product comes up, let's say in Columbus here would that piece of machinery, it just sits wherever the last place you would be at? Is that how it goes? Like so if you go to Hugo...

C. Toft: So, I have a date with Dave to let me leave it there, because I have to go to Hugo next. And its costly to move that machine around because its overweight so I asked him, since I grind for free if I can just leave it sit there for a month and a half, 2 months and then I would move it down to Hugo. It cost me about \$1500 to move it to Elk River and then \$1500 to move it back. So, I can save myself about \$3000 by letting it sit there.

Hanegraaf: Do you think that piece of machinery would sit in Columbus at any time, other than just to do the grinding? Or could it sit there all winter?

C. Toft: I move it in the winter. we use it a lot in Elk River. It will always be back in Elk River. This time of year, it doesn't need to be there much. So, I just asked Dave for a favor. So, I just left it there.

Hanegraaf: And the product, woodchips, would they be moved out today, well not today, but as soon as you chip them? In Columbus? Or would they...

C. Toft: They chip them right into a trailer and they go right to Elk River.

Hanegraaf: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to ask you another question here before we go onto the other commissioners here. Chad, Megan, did you receive a letter from the City of Columbus, noting the 35 findings of fact and the 25 conditions concerning your CUP request?

M. Toft: Megan. Yes, we did.

Hanegraaf: And do you have any questions about these 2 areas we would like to discuss now? Or conditions that you have any questions concerning them.

M. Toft: Megan again. We read everything. I spoke about it with Ben. Everything was fine. The only thing that would be different, would be under recommendations, number 7, we chip opposite of that. It's says, "the grinding of the wood should only occur when necessary" which is completely fine and "it's only allowed the months of May to October". We grind less in the spring and in the summer. We grind more in the fall or winter. So, it's a little bit opposite of what is asked for there. Everything else should be fine. 6 hours is fine. Regular business hours, informing one week prior, there's no issue with that. Its just most people trim their trees in the fall, because it's the best time, the arborists suggest it, so that's just what happens. That's when most of the product comes in so we grind in the fall. If we have some that comes in in the winter, its best to grind in the winter. More or so due to conditions. Its easier to grind, the ground isn't wet. We don't have equipment that sits there or anything like that. So, it's just a good time to grind. It shatters the wood easier. You don't ruin as many blades, things like that. So, we would do the opposite. We don't do so much grinding in the summer. And we don't do it that often. We're totally find with all the other conditions.

C. Toft: We may only grind once a year. You may only see us in there one week or two, that would be it. Chad, sorry, I forgot. You may only see us in there one week a year, it all depends on how product comes in.

Hanegraaf: Okay, thank you Chad. And thank you Megan. I'm going to go to the other commission members to ask questions and then after that, we're going to ask if any staff have any questions. So, we're going to start off with Pam. If she could start off tonight if she has any questions to ask.

Wolowski: Pam did you say?

Hanegraaf: Yes.

Wolowski: Okay, this is Pam speaking. I have a couple questions on truck traffic please. I've been taking notes here and reading the facts over it sounds like you have small contractors coming to pick up product. Is that correct?

M. Toft: Megan. Correct.

Wolowski: And how many per day do you anticipate?

M. Toft: Megan again. Honestly? We don't have a best guess. If I was guessing how many people would pick up, I would say, during busy season maybe 20 a day. And that's a best guess.

Wolowski: Pam. And that would be a trailer and small dump trucks, would be the situation for a small contractor, is that correct Megan?

M. Toft: Megan. Yep. It would be whatever those contractors haul with. All of them do something different. Some use the small trailers. Some use pick up trucks and just use the bed of their pickup. Some use the dump truck. We have very few that do end dump. But most of them do a smaller dump trailer, dump truck or pickup truck.

Wolowski: Thank you. Pam. And then you had on semis, the number of semis would be drivers that are employed by you. And they would be coming to get product to deliver to your larger companies. Is that correct?

M. Toft: Megan. Yes, that's correct. Our employees deliver with a walking floor. So, when they would color mulch in Elk River, and would fill a bin, they would come in and dump it, just as they do kiddy corner at Welches. It's the same as what we do.

Wolowski: Pam. Thank you. And how many semis per day do you anticipate at the Columbus location?

C. Toft: Chad. If you're grinding everything else would probably move about 12-17 trucks a day out of there. And when we're filling the yard maybe 10 a week. So that's our normal 3 trucks that we have that will park there, they'll come in and out once a day. So, once they come out, they will go back over to Elk River (unintelligible). So, our 3 trucks will go out once a day.

Wolowski: Pam. Thank you. Shifting gears here to grinding. How long will a pile, I guess I should go this direction, how high and how long will a pile sit on the Columbus site.

C. Toft: Chad. Until we can get at least 20 trucks out of there. I don't move a grinder unless we can get 20 trucks. (unintelligible) And if you say like the Forest Lake jobsite, you want it like that site, when that was just full over there, that was 75 truckloads. So that gives you an idea on pile size.

Wolowski: Pam. Okay Thank you. And my last question is, kind of related to noise, you stated that it's just a bit louder than a lawn mower. At your current facility in Elk River, do you have residential neighbors around your site?

C. Toft: Yep, we have one on the left side of our property.

Wolowski: Pam. Thank you. And how happy is he with you.

M. Toft: Megan. We've never met them or talked to them. So, I'm going to say very happy because we've never heard from them.

Wolowski: Pam. No news is usually good news. That is all I have Mr. Chair. And thank you.

M. Toft: Thank you.

Hanegraaf: We move over to Barb now.

Bobick: Good Evening. I'm a little confused, I must say. The original paperwork that we have says you were planning on doing coloring onsite. So, I was concerned about the colorant you were going to use. And you said you would give us a MSDS, a materials data safety sheet. And you know there was some information that I wanted to know about because... since we didn't get that sheet, I looked up colorants and your saying its safe to drink. And from what I've read exposure can cause allergic reactions in sensitive people and repeated prolonged contact can cause dermatitis, asthma, bronchitis, and things like that. So, I was concerned about that. And skin and eye irritations. And they're recommending gloves and safety goggles and dust respirators. So that is kind of my concern, but now you're saying you're not going to color on the property at all?

C. Toft: Chad. Down the road I put it in there, if business justifies to color. Yes, I will need to color there (unintelligible) down the road, if we do. You know obviously everything (unintelligible) I never heard of dust issues with a liquid. If you're looking up a dry dye yes you can have issues with that. We're a liquid dye. So, it's completely different when you look it up. I can send the MSDS to you. Its an iron oxide that's all it is in there. Its an iron oxide and water that's how you get the color. If you're looking up the dye on the dry dye, yes you need a respirator and a whole bunch of (unintelligible) We're a liquid form not a dry form.

Bobick: And its your feeling that people that are sensitive aren't going to react to the liquid? I guess it would be better if we did have that material.

M. Toft: Megan. No, its not anything that we've ever seen or heard. I've never had anybody even voice a complaint or even bring it up even from a homeowner. And we produce and bag mulch for (unintelligible) Home Depot, Fleet farm, Runnings, Menards, convenient stores.

C. Toft: Chad. We have people call all the time when we sell the bulk bag mulch and stuff, dogs eat it, I know dogs eat it. We have never had anybody ever get sick. I mean I have guys that touch it we've never had a rash. I've been in the business since '97 and never had an issue. If you had rashes, you would have it around your house, you would have the same issue. Now the dry dye, yes you will see that, it's a whole different system.

Bobick: Okay, and you said your truck drivers are owners. You own the truck the equipment. Is that correct?

M. Toft: Megan. Yes, that's correct. We own the trucks and trailers and they are company drivers.

Bobick: And you had indicated like I say the that it was going to be a retail and contractor yard so that's kind of different than what we have in our paperwork also. So that's kind of confusing.

M. Toft: This is Megan again. We put that in because people can stop in and buy retail. Were not marketing that but they asked for every use that we could possibly do. And then that's an option for people to stop in and purchase off the street. That's not one that we would anticipate having a high volume with. We get people who come into our facility in Elk River just the same, who say "oh, I saw your product at Home Depot, so I stopped in. I saw you were in Elk River; can I pick

up just my own Bulk Mulch". So, we do get some foot traffic that comes in, but we don't market for that.

Bobick: Okay, then I do have either a question for either Ben or Elizabeth. Is Lake Dr. city water?

Gutknecht: No.

Bobick: So, they'll be required to have a well?

Gutknecht: Correct.

Bobick: Okay, and if there is a fire, will the well be enough to take care of that?

Gutknecht: That is a good question.

Stotko: So, I can answer that question, this is Greg Stotko.

Bobick: Okay.

Stotko: The way the building is designed it will have 4 separate buildings divided by 3-hour firewalls. So, a sprinkler system is not required. The well is (unintelligible)

Bobick: Well I'm more concerned about the surrounding, you know, the chips and firewood and so forth, you know. Do you have some kind of preventative plan if something like that happens?

C. Toft: This is Chad. We're not going to keep any chips on site and logs and brush don't ignite on their own (unintelligible). We're going to keep (unintelligible). Brush don't ignite on their own, now if someone wants to come light it on fire, something like that is something I can't control. Brush just doesn't ignite on its own. Like the Forest Lake site has sat there for the last year and (unintelligible).

Bobick: And you're not concerned about the wood mulching area?

C. Toft: Chad. No, I'm not. I don't have any concerns. It's a 10th of the size, 1% of the size of Elk River so (unintelligible) Elk River we keep 1 5000 gallons of water on site. (unintelligible) there's 99% (unintelligible).

Bobick: Okay, and with the diesel fuel, how large of a tank are you thinking?

C. Toft: Chad here. Anywhere from 1500 to 2000 gallons. Because all my diesel vehicles come from Elk River so they would like to (unintelligible).

Bobick: Okay, I guess that's all I have. Thank you very much.

M. Toft: Thank you.

Hanegraaf: We'll go onto Steve.

Wagamon: Yeah, thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you, Chad and Megan. I only have one question that hasn't been asked. Everything that I was going to ask has already been asked and answered. And you guys were very thorough in your description. I just have one question and its on page 9, under D. I'm just wondering what a walking floor is. I don't know what it is.

C. Toft: Chad here. Do you know what garbage trailers they haul in? They are like a trailer that all your local garbage is hauled in once the garbage trucks take it to a central site and load it up and take it to a landfill that's what a walking trailer. Looks like a van trailer except the floor moves inside the trailer by itself to unload.

Wagamon: Okay. Okay. Thank you very much and everything else I had had already been asked and answered so that's it for me.

M. Toft: Thank you.

Hanegraaf: Thanks Steve, I didn't know what that was either. We'll go onto Kris.

King: Good Evening Chad and Megan. I'm Kris with the Planning Commission and I do have a couple questions. I too am a little confused because when I was reading the packet and looking at your front landscape plan with the pavers and the fire pit and all that. I thought it was more aimed towards retail homeowners. Just because the way it laid out and what was stated in the packet. I know you say that its you were trying to cover everything, but that part does kind of concern me because I didn't believe it was a distribution center in a sense. So, your plan is still to have all the landscaping out front and what did you have a kitchen area and a fire pit and the pavers and all that.

M. Toft: Megan again. Yes. So, I in particular like everything to look pretty. I don't like anything; I don't like it to look dirty. I don't like piles of stuff and I like it clean. Where we're at in Elk River our next-door neighbor is Plaisted. They sell primarily the same business we do, contractors. And they have gorgeous displays. The displays themselves are for the contractors. To help them visualize when their doing a project, what new product that they can sell to the homeowner. What they can try and craft or put together. If they're on a budget from the homeowner, they want to see the different pavers. They want to see what's new for retaining wall block. So, it is used for the contractor for them to look at. Or all them to visualize. And what they do then, is they send the homeowner to check out the displays. And the homeowners come and say, "oh, I like this one" or "I like that" and they go back to the contractor who then purchases it from us.

King: Okay, so you want to be set up like a Patio Town, where it is retail and its open to the public where people just come in. I know you said that was kind of secondary. And again, I'm just kind of confused. Because when I was reading this, I was kind of believing it was more in that fashion. So, your kind of explaining something that was different than what I thought. Thank you, Megan. Barb brought up the diesel tank. And I know you guys said that there is no fire protection that's needed. Will the NFPA and all that with combustible liquids in that, is there any type of preventative fire protection or that is needed by combustible liquid by that? I know the state and

the fire chief kind of govern this but I'm just kind of curious if that kind of plays a part in your plan for safety.

C. Toft: This is Chad here. Our fuel systems, how they put the tank in, there's a double wall fuel tank. And then put a contaminate barrier inside (unintelligible). There's no gas stored on site (unintelligible) if that's what your asking.

King: I am. And thank you Chad. Kris again. Ben I would assume our fire chief looks at all this and its all got to be on condition of passing state and local rules?

Gutknecht: Ben. Correct. I realized no one could see me nod. Yes, that is correct.

King: So, then I want to touch on your noise. Because from my understanding I believe our city statute or ordinances go back to the state statute, Ben, for decibel levels? That we follow state guidelines?

Gutknecht: Also correct.

King: Have you checked in to that? I kind of did pull just a quick thing this morning and I notice the numbers your giving seem lower, or not lower, higher I'm sorry, than what the state statutes are showing. And I'm really concerned then what the levels are when your grinding. So, has anybody checked on the state statutes to see where you fall in with what your saying is your levels?

M. Toft: Megan again. We actually have had decibel testing done at our facility in Elk River, for safety for our guys. And some one from Met council who does, the same person who does the airport testing, for the Met council. And that's something that we can provide, it was done 2 and a half years ago. So, it was for testing hearing protection, insurance, that has been done by the same agency that governs the airport in Minneapolis and St Paul.

King: Thank you Megan. This is Kris again, and this would be a City question. With our noise ordinance, how does that compare to what Megan is talking about?

Gutknecht: I think most of our ordinance or actually if Dean, you would like to take this.

Johnson: I'm Dean. I'm a Planning Consultant with the City. We have no authority over noise standards. That's regulated by the federal government. (unintelligible) if there were concerns (unintelligible). It has to fall within those standards from the government entity. We don't have separate regulations.

King: No, we depend on the state and federal level. Which I did pull those, and I was looking at it and they have different noise area classifications. But we could request their documentation of their test? And hopefully Megan you could provide that to us so we could just compare?

M. Toft: Megan. Yep. That's no problem.

King: And when you have done that. Has that been through the grinding process?

M. Toft: Yes, that encompassed everything that we have in Elk River. Loaders, grinders, coloring machines, and most of that equipment we won't have on this site. So, it would be more than what would be at the Columbus location.

King: Okay, thank you Megan. Kris again. I know you mentioned the loaders and that. And I see your start time during that week is 7am. And we do have residents that are around there. You get the loaders going, you get the backup beepers going. That's kind of funny, I sat through a meeting up here one day where a gentleman brought up a backup beeper, because of another company that was in around residents. There's no way in the world I would want to listen to that. So how much are you willing to work with the residents around you to prevent starting any type of noises like that at 7 o'clock in the morning and have a certain time set and or on the weekends at 8. Because if I was a resident it would be kind of irritating.

M. Toft: Megan again. We do not have backup beepers on our equipment. We have backup lights. So, there a blue light on our equipment. They shine on the ground in our opinion are quite a bit better. We have a lot of people that work early who come in and out. They for us have helped in Elk River for our drivers to see who are in a truck they can see; they can't hear but they do see that the loaders are moving. So, we don't have the noise issues with the residents for that. You would have more noise off of Lake DR. and other semis and cars that are going up and down there, than you would off of a front loader starting up.

King: Oh, that's good to know. Thank you, Megan.

M. Toft: Thank you.

King: And I know those do exist. And its good to hear that you are using them and I'm sure our residents would like that. You talk about Columbus residents being able to drop off what they cut and stuff like that. Is there going to be a charge to Columbus residents or is this all going to be a free service?

C. Toft: Chad here. It will be a free service, except stumps. I will not take stumps free of charge. We'll charge \$30 a yard to drop off stumps. Stumps are really hard on grinders. (unintelligible) I prefer not to take stumps, but I will take them, but I will charge for them. I will not take any grass clippings or leaves. They'll have to go to a Washington county site or something else to drop off that.

King: Okay thank you. I'm just kind of looking at my notes, bear with me. One of the questions that was asked was, the pile of logs, wood, brush, that's being dropped off. How big of a pile that gets. How tall it gets; how wide it gets. And I know you said, how many truckloads but can you give us kind of an idea of size in height and width?

C. Toft: Loaders only can push it up, our loader height top out at about 15 feet so to get a foot or two above that. Even it comes out (unintelligible) higher than that. (unintelligible) Size is really, I mean if you guys want me to clean the piles out more and have the grinder over there more, I can keep them small. If you want me to do less grinding, I will let the pile build up more I can do that

and make a bigger pile. The building on that side of it I just have to make it economically (unintelligible) so 20 trucks to 30 trucks is the bare minimum to get out of there. So, it's really up to you guys. I would rather take it out more often. But its up to you guys how (unintelligible).

King: Okay thank you. I'm just looking to see if I have any...

C. Toft: Chad here again. If you guys are worried about the brush pile being there, I can grind it every other week if that's that what you guys want. I mean we could get it done super-fast if that's what you guys want. But I'm trying to be conservative on the neighbors (unintelligible) on that side of it too, like every other week. So, it's give and take. You can either have a little bit more of a pile or you can have nothing back there and have me do it every 2 weeks. (unintelligible) really, I wanted to talk with the neighbor behind me. I wasn't going to go meet with them, I got their phone numbers off a couple or 3 places. I never had got anywhere with that and the phone numbers and with COVID I didn't want to go knock on their door. I would be more willing to talk with them because their right next to it and what they would like me to have. More of a pile or no pile at all and just grind it out. (unintelligible)

King: I'm sure chad that they would appreciate, this is Kris again, knowing that. And I would think that type of conversation would be very helpful with the residents that are around there. Something just stuck in my brain and now I can't remember. Maybe it will come back to me. So, I think I'm good for now. I'm sure as we go forward more items will come up. But thank you very much for answering our questions.

M. Toft: Thank you.

Hanegraaf: Is there anybody on the staff that would like to ask a question? Elizabeth out there any questions you would like to ask?

Mursko: Elizabeth Mursko. I don't have any questions at this time.

Hanegraaf: Thank you. Well we're going to go on right now. So just Megan and Chad, were going to open up the public hearing, but we'd like to reserve the right to come back to you, if further questions should come up. And also, if you have any comments to make concerning the testimony we take from the public. So, if you just hang on. We're going to open it up to the public. And when the publics done talking, we'll get right back to you. Okay we're going to open it up to the public. Anyone who has any interest in this matter and wants to present testimony as evidence on this issue, please acknowledge themselves by stating their name and address, after which you have the floor to speak. To make this kind of an easier process we'll go again, maybe why don't we go to the people that are the closest. Mr. Rob, who lives right next door to you. Would you like to speak?

R. Osterberg: Hi, sure Rob Osterberg its 14063 Lake DR. Megan and Chad (unintelligible) those guys in the front yard so. (unintelligible) I just had a few questions. I understand the point that you want to move east of Elk River, over on this side of the Twin Cities, but why are you looking to come to Columbus?

Hanegraaf: We're not going to answer any questions. You're not asking any questions of them. You are just making a statement.

R. Osterberg: Okay. Alright.

Hanegraaf: What was, really, what did you say, the question you had?

R. Osterberg: I guess, I guess, here's what I would like to say, I would like to thank you guys on the Planning Commission. Those were some great questions you asked. I really appreciate that. But I am going to have some concerns about the amount of traffic. The number they were giving, didn't jive with what they kept on saying as far as everything. I visited their site in Elk River, and where this residence is that's west of them, I did not see. It must be way past the other side of the great big pit, is the only place that I did see. Anyways, I guess that's all I had.

K. Osterberg: This is Kathy, his wife. I have one concern in regard to our driveway. When they were talking, they really didn't talk much about the, the picture that I'm looking at page 21, there's several of them that (unintelligible) page 21 looks like a gate, that doesn't clearly state, that would appear to me blocking our entrance into our home. So that is going to be a concern. Along with, is their ground asphalt? Or is it gravel? With all the trucks going back and forth I'm concerned with dust flying and dirt flying. I have to wash my deck and stuff already way too often and I can see that I will have to do this weekly if there's a lot of dirt flying and dust flying. So those are my 2 biggest concerns.

Hanegraaf: Okay, Kathy, Rob thank you. Is that all you have to say?

R. Osterberg: I guess my other concern were the hours. It states 7am to 5pm. But then Megan was talking about trucks coming in early to get loaded. So, does that 7am go to 5am? So how early are we talking?

K. Osterberg: Because contractors like to start early.

R. Osterberg: Yeah. Contractors like to get going very early. I guess our concerns were about the traffic. Megan mentioned Plaisteds which is right next to them, which is kind of what I'm gathering they are trying to be like to will cater more on wholesale. Plaisteds is (unintelligible) next to them with a lot of trucks coming and going. We're just concerned with the amount of traffic and the dust. And the noise obviously. All the stuff concerning the (unintelligible). That's all I had.

Hanegraaf: Thank you. Thank you, Rob. Thank you, Kathy. I guess we...

Hovorka: Hi, John Hovorka here.

Hanegraaf: I'm sorry, one more time. Hold on a minute.

Hovorka: I'm the next-door neighbor.

Hanegraaf: Sir, can you just hold on a minute here. Can you say your name one more time? Slowly.

Hovorka: John Hovorka.

Hanegraaf: We didn't have you on the attendance, did we? Can you spell your last name?

Hovorka: H-O-V-O-R-K-A.

Hanegraaf: And what's your address?

Hovorka: 14113 Lake Dr. I am the house right next to his driveway.

Hanegraaf: Okay, all right.

Hovorka: I've been in construction for work. I know that I got North Pine, Cemstone, down the road. And I do dump stuff at the Brooklyn Park location, not their location but another location. And its complete industrial. There's no one around to hear that grinding, going on, when I just dumped a huge truck load off. And I guess my concern is, especially when there's kids around, especially spending time outside with your family. I think the last thing we would like to hear is consistent noise. I mean, I can hear North Pine up the road, when they get up and they load up their trucks at 3-4 o'clock in the morning. Because I get up at 4. So, how would you limit the noise. Especially when you have loaders running, bobcats running, trucks moving in and out. Especially end-dumps, especially dump trucks. When your dumping the doors are slamming back and forth. How would you guys keep the noise ordinance down? Because right up the road at Waldoch's it says loud pipes and loud noises are enforced.

Hanegraaf: Well, I don't know how to answer that question. You're making a statement. And I guess its just something we will have to deal with, when we get moving on here. It seems like everybody is pointing towards noise.

Hovorka: I guess it depreciates the houses around us, for the fact that, who wants to live next to a large industrial company. And walking them up every morning.

Hanegraaf: Well, I can understand your concerns, sir. I don't know what to really say to you right now, but that's why we have this process, the public hearing.

Hovorka: Yeah, like they talk about the Welch's up like across the street from me. I don't hear him whatsoever. He's respectful. You don't even hear nothing running. And its, everybody, it's a community around here, we all take care of each other (unintelligible) move next to me. Because I can see them, I'm literally next to their driveway. I got the storage unit next door; I can hear them moving around super early. Thank you, sir.

Hanegraaf: Okay, we'll make note of that. Thank you. I'm trying to do this kind of orderly. Is Mike Welch, are you there? Would you like to make a comment?

M. Welch: Yeah, I'm here. Mike Welch. 14146 Lake Drive, Forest Lake MN. Hey, a couple things he's talked about, wholesale and retail, and as far as contractors come in with pickup trucks, that sounds like more of residential people coming in to buy product with pickup trucks, which is my concern for our business. They back up alarms on loaders and stuff, I don't know how OSHA allows it to not have backup alarms on them loaders. Because there isn't no gravel pit, I've been in ever that has never had a backup alarm on their loaders, and they are pretty loud. Noise concerning. Stocking big piles of mulch and stuff, Tree Technology has had umpteen fires at the Forest Lake, just before they moved out of there. You know, so I again you guys are talking about fire control and stuff like that, you get a mulch fire started up, you aren't putting it out with no garden hose. And we're just concerned about is this residential, or I mean wholesale or retail. And they're leaning towards being all wholesale, but it sure sounds like retail to me. You know, granted they do that, I'm pretty much out of business. So, we are concerned about the noise, dust, (unintelligible) is it going to be blacktop or gravel over there. If its gravel, there is definitely dust. You know anybody that has been around a dirt road you know its going to. So that's pretty much what I got to say.

Hanegraaf: Okay, thank you. Does your wife want to say anything?

B. Welch: Pretty much, just what Mike said. Yeah, that's all.

Hanegraaf: Thank you. Now there's other people out there that would like to make a statement or add testimony to this hearing. We will start from A-H. Anybody in those with the last name, that would like to make a comment A-H.

Copeland: Sue Copeland.

Hanegraaf: Okay, Sue you have the floor.

Copeland: I'm actually, I actually have the most common property with this property. I have 436 feet of my property bordering this property. So, I did have some concerns. I don't, I don't want to tell anyone that they can't be in business for themselves. Because I have been in business for myself. I know how hard it is to start a business. I know how hard it is to maintain a business. Especially in Columbus. But there are still some things I would like to address. First of all, many years ago, my husband and I brought in shavings to make an area where we walked our dogs. And we were told that we couldn't bring shavings onto Columbus property, because those trees were not indigenous to Columbus. So, I am kind of wondering, where is that going to lay with all, wherever these woodchips are coming from, whether they were treated, what are their areas. They're bringing them on, into Columbus. We had a huge oak wilt problem for many years, we had our own arborist. So, I'm not quite sure where we would be heading in that direction. As far, I did not see a site plan. I must have not heard that one was available. All I did was get the meeting notes. But I am concerned about the containment of the dyed material. Is it all going to be inside? And on what surface? I did hear the testimony from Chad, I believe that is a liquid dye. But I am a health compromised person and I would like to know, how that is going to be contained. As for the dust, from the chipping piles, I would like to know if they have a watering plan. If there's any kind of dust control or watering plan that they plan to use for those days that they're chipping. I heard firewood and I'm guessing; I'm thinking of those stacks of 5 or 6 piece that they sell at

Holiday or wherever. That concerns me a little bit for storage. Is it going to be stored outside, or inside? Because woodpiles bring rodents. They bring other diseases for vegetation. And I'm just wondering where we're going to be keeping that stuff. The second one the floor for the diesel fuel storage. Like I said, I have not seen a site plan, so I'm not sure what they have in mind but that would be one of my concerns. And it's already very dusty, just from the neighbors in the back driving back and forth and back and forth. I mean I have enough dust to last me forever. So, I can imagine that these bigger trucks are going to be coming in 20 plus per day, I'm going to be choking it down, all day long. And I just would like to know if there's going to be any plan for that. Also, with the increased traffic, that has been unbelievable on Lake Dr. I have worked many many many hours at the office, for the last 4 or 5 years, not being home during the day but I have been working from home because of the virus. I feel like that traffic is coming right through my front window, 50-60% of the day. The trucks are louder. The highway is louder. Its more dangerous. The speeds are higher. As far as where these trucks for this business are entering and exiting the property, I think we need to really address the safety issue. Many times, just in the last year. I have been almost completely totaled. Like when I make my right-hand turn into my driveway, somebody from behind doesn't want to wait, and will come along the shoulder and try to pass everyone. Well if I hadn't been watching my mirrors, I wouldn't have seen that car coming. But this is a weekly, a monthly basis. It's getting worse all the time. Now I have my grandchildren who are here quite a bit. And between the extra traffic, from what they are proposing to go in next-door, with what we already have is a very dangerous area. I would like to see a streetlight. This is a very dark corner. This is so dangerous. We are on the corner of 141st and lake drive or here on the corner of where the Osterberg's driveway come out to the road. Somewhere in there, there's already a light post but there's no light on it. We need to increase the safety on this intersection. And having 20 more trucks per day, right at this intersection to me is going to be a pretty big issue. And I just don't want to see anyone get hurt.

Hanegraaf: Sue, I don't think we do either. And I think as far as the lights on that intersection sounds like you need them now or whatever. It's something that should be brought up to the City or whatever.

Copeland: That's what I'm doing.

Hanegraaf: I thank you. And in the beginning, you didn't give your address. Could you give your address?

Copeland: Sure, I'm 14115 Lake Dr. Like I said, I have about 436 feet of adjoining property line with the property next door. So, we will be getting a good brunt of the noise and the activity.

Hanegraaf: Okay Sue. Well we thank you for coming forth. But the stuff on, that's a county road up there. So, it's a county issue. Buts that another way we can deal with it is through the county. So, I thank you very much for stepping forward here and giving your testimony.

Copeland: Thank you for listening.

Hanegraaf: Is there anybody else A-H?

Houghe: This is James. I'm at 14113. I live next to Rob and Sue. I guess my concern is, its really the same as theirs. The dust, the noise, if this is going to run, how many hours a day. What time of day that day starts at? If the machines are going to be inside or outside. The other portion is, concern is, you know, when I walk out my door, from my house, the side of my house, to the other side of Robs driveway, is about 200 feet 200 something feet. So, you know, I know this is going to be up front, they're going to have the building more upfront. But how is the back going to look? Is it going to be organized? Is it going to be pallets all over? Is there going to be rock and stuff dumped all over the place. You know we want to continue the value of our property in itself. Again, the noise is a big one. Something is going to happen no matter what. You have machines driving and trucks coming through. That is inevitable. I mean unless it's all paved. And also, what time will the machines be able to be started? How long will the run? How loud are they? How far away is it going to be from our houses? Is there going to be a barrier of some sort to reduce noise and to reduce dust? Like others have said, is there going to be a watering system to help with dust. Whether it be from trucks coming in or the product itself. Again, there's a concern of how much traffic is really going to come through there. Is the public or retail or whatnot, how is that, what's the vision? And how big is that going to get? And how quick is that going to get? Like Sue sad, we got already a lot of vehicles and traffic on Lake Dr. How are you going to adjust a light or something to minimize the potential hazard?

Hanegraaf: Okay, thank you. I wish a lot of these people would have had the packets that we have. There's a lot of the answers sitting in there. But we will go on. I thank you very much. Is there anybody else A-H. Hearing there's nobody from A-H, how about I-P? I-P anybody there? How about P-Z? Anybody left that would like to make a statement to add to the testimony of this hearing? Hearing none were going to close the public hearing then.

At this time Chair Hanegraaf closed the Public Hearing. Hearing closed at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Rochelle Busch, Recording Secretary