CALL TO ORDER - SPECIAL USE HEARING OFFICER
At 7:00 p.m., Chairman Wally Werderich called the Special Use Hearing Officer meeting to order.

ROLL CALL
Members present: Walter Werderich

In the audience: Mark Caldwell

MINUTES
Wally Werderich motioned to approve the January 27, 2014 Special Use Hearing Officer Meeting minutes as written.

Chairman Werderich swore in all members of the audience that wished to talk about the special use.

PETITIONS
#14-02 Dickson Valley Ministries
Planner Angela Zubko did an overview of the request stating the property is located at 8250 Finnie Road on the north and south side of Finnie Road, 0.8 miles south of Finnie & Rogers Road. The petitioners are seeking approval of a major amendment to an existing Special Use Permit to modify the site plan and expand the special use to pin numbers 04-17-100-002 & 04-17-300-007. The entire property is 160 acres. The grounds are utilized all year long and their current special use is for a camp and retreat center. The center started in 1971, in the report is a lot of history of the property but Planner Zubko will not go over it at this time. Over the years the petitioners have updated their special use and have updated their site plan and conditions. The petitioners are looking to keep the lit sign which was the last amendment in 2002. The property currently has 3 access points off Finnie Road going south, 1 entrance to the Director’s Lodge, one going to the main grounds and one on the far eastern side of the property. The petitioner also has access off Finnie Road going north to an existing building. The petitioner is proposing one more access point north of Finnie Road for the remote camp parking. Most of the southern property is covered with wetlands and floodway, the area is also referred to as the Sedge Meadow and is a Illinois Natural Area Inventory Site and a Natural Heritage Landmark. The report shows where most of the floodplain exists which is most of the southern property. Through mostly donated funds and volunteer labor, the ministry of Dickson Valley plan to undertake the following projects which is a wish list and might not be completed for awhile due to timing and funding:

- Development of area with single cabins, housing up to 72 beds
- Year round Programs Lodging, two near front entrance
- Maintaining a lighted sign at the main Finnie Road entrance
- Addition to Directors Lodge/Front office
- Day camp area with open air pavilion and restrooms
- New road at west edge of lake accessing new parking area
- 400 seat Chapel pavilion
Small rustic campsite area only for churches wanting a little more remote setting
3-4 RV spots for volunteers and leaders only
Structures and storage areas at maintenance shop as needed
Remodels of current lodges (including but not limited to Whitaker Lodge, Acorn Lodge, Silver Fox Lodge and Dickson Lodge) providing additional housing up to 72 beds
Reforestation of some of the floodplain areas
Addition to Chrouser Lodge dining room if needed

Also in the report were previous conditions placed on the special use. The Township Board approved the special use and Planner Zubko stated Millbrook also recommended approval. In the packet is the site development plan and Mark Caldwell from the Dickson Valley Ministries is in attendance to answer any questions. Staff recommends approval of the requested major amendment to their special use with the recommended 5 conditions. ZPAC recommended approval and there were changes to the conditions during the Plan Commission which are reflected in the packet.

Mr. Caldwell introduced himself and stated he’s been with Dickson Valley since 1989 and he lives at the camp.

Mr. Werderich asked a couple questions with regards to the new site plan and where each proposed areas are to be located. Mr. Caldwell clarified those questions.

With no testimony Walter Werderich closed the public hearing.

Special Use Hearing Officer Werderich reviewed the Findings of Fact for a special use as follows:

§ 13.08.J of the Zoning Ordinance outlines findings that the Hearing Officer must make in order to grant a special use. The Petitioner has answered as follows:

*That the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare. Dickson Valley Ministries is formed only for the purpose to benefit the community, and has proved to be a very safe and people focused organization.*

That the special use will not be substantially injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood. The Zoning classification of property within the general area of the property in question shall be considered in determining consistency with this standard. The proposed use shall make adequate provisions for appropriate buffers, landscaping, fencing, lighting, building materials, open space and other improvements necessary to insure that the proposed use does not adversely impact adjacent uses and is compatible with the surrounding area and/or the County as a whole. **Dickson Valley has had great relationships with all neighbors, never causing any negative situations and quite often benefiting neighbors with the use of the land and resources.**

That adequate utilities, access roads and points of ingress and egress, drainage, and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided. **Of the 160 acres of mostly wooded land, only about 25% has been developed, leaving a lot of great natural resources. The township road has been updated and has always proved adequate for our traffic and still is a seldom traveled road.**
That the special use shall in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the County Board pursuant to the recommendation of the Hearing Officer. Dickson Valley has had 30+ years in the county with no problems in following regulations.

That the special use is consistent with the purpose and objectives of the Land Resource Management Plan and other adopted County or municipal plans and policies. Dickson Valley has worked with many local agencies on resource management and other plans and continues to follow through and work within them.

Wally Werderich made a favorable recommendation with the above findings of fact and the 5 conditions specified on the special use.

REVIEW OF PETITIONS THAT WENT TO COUNTY BOARD
13-26: Green Organics Inc. (On the County Board Agenda in March (waiting on SAO))
13-31 Candice Hadley: Passed on 2.18.14

NEW BUSINESS- None

OLD BUSINESS
Vote on changes to the By-laws regarding the notification process- will be discussed further next month.

ADJOURNMENT- Next meeting will be on March 31, 2014

Chairman Werderich adjourned the Special Use Hearing Officer meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Angela L. Zubko
Planning & Zoning Manager & Recording Secretary