

Hinkelman receives approval to open Bedford Auto Source

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Bedford Now

Bedford Auto Source can now open up shop in the old Mobil Station on Lewis Ave. in downtown Temperance.

After two hours of discussion March 3, the Bedford Township Board of Zoning Appeals approved a request by Dale Hinkelman of Temperance for a variance of the township's zoning code and an expansion of the property's legal non-conforming status. (Legal non-conforming allows someone to use a property for something other than what it is zoned for. In this case, the station is a C-3 business in an area zoned C-1.)

Both the expansion and variance were granted with a few binding restrictions — the most notable said that Hinkelman cannot have more than eight cars on the lot at one time and 50 percent of those must be classic or muscle cars.

Hinkelman had originally asked for permission to sell 12 cars, but board members said they were uncomfortable giving him approval to sell that many on such a small piece of land.

They worried that if Hinkelman eventually moved the next owner would turn it into a small, unsightly used car lot.

This was the second time Hinkelman appeared before the BZA.

He first requested the expansion and variance Feb. 3. At that time, the request was tabled after board members expressed concerns about whether or not the property, which was formerly owned by Cora Loga of Temperance, had maintained its prior legal non-conforming status after the business closed in 1993.

Many residents and business

owners came out to show support for Hinkelman.

The consensus among them was that Hinkelman's business would be beneficial for the entire downtown area.

"We should applaud Mr. Hinkelman for what he's trying to do rather than tying hands," said Brian Huner, an employee of Tom Huner Builders.

The only opposition came from Pat Keane — owner of Keane's Auto World on Lewis Ave. — his wife, Peggy, and sister-in-law, Gail.

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"We can't keep changing the rules for this person and that person depending on what you've done for the community, how much money you have, who's this was and who that was," said Gail Keane, who lives in

downtown Temperance.

"If you're going to change something that's going to become permanent. And if Hinkelman decides to bail-but out of here, then we're stuck with it."

Pat Keane argued that since his business had to follow the township's regulations, Hinkelman also must be subject to them.

Both Hinkelman and members of the BZA expressed relief when the process was complete.

"I'm happy that we got approved," Hinkelman said. "Their stipulations and their concerns were certainly valid, and I think we addressed them with the compromise."

In addition to selling used and classic cars, Hinkelman also plans to revitalize the station to its 1953 design. The BZA said he must submit a site plan with these changes and appear before the planning commission, where his business will be subject to the township's commercial zoning ordinances.