

# Board grants special use permit to Stoneville business

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STONEVILLE - The Stoneville Planning and Zoning Board voted Monday night to grant Southern Finishing Co. owner Ed Brown a special use permit for his plant on Henry Street after it was determined that he had met the criteria for an earlier special use permit.

The permit was granted with the stipulation that Brown pave the upper entrance to the employee parking lot. Brown had voiced concerns about the safety of employees leaving the parking lot, and stated that one employee had already been injured in an accident.

Brown had originally asked the board for the permit at their February 28 meeting, but the request was tabled after homeowners who live near the plant complained of noise, sawdust, and spray booths which had not been included in the original permit. Brown's new request asked that he be allowed to operate the plant until midnight and that an additional spray booth be added to the four already in operation.

Brown said that he had taken steps to meet the requirements of the original permit and that he had received no complaints from neighbors since the last meeting.

Brown and several of his employees brought photos to the meeting detailing the changes they had made, including insulating an air compressor to reduce noise and installing a six foot privacy fence. Brown had also installed a new sawdust monitoring system.

The original special use permit

was granted on June 28, 1999 and stipulated that Brown was to limit hours of operation, insulate an air compressor for noise, and complete a system for sawdust control. He was also to prohibit parking in front of the building, remove a business sign from the front of the building, construct a privacy fence along one side of his property, and stop all plant operations at 8:00 p.m. The permit was necessary to move part of Brown's business operations from Plant No. 7, which had been destroyed by a March 1998 tornado, to Plant No. 10. Brown suffered a further setback in January, when Plant No. 7 was destroyed again, this time by fire.

Rockingham County Planning Director Faye Searce said she had contacted the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Air Quality regarding whether spray booths were covered in the original permit. Searce said she couldn't find proof that the spray booths had been in Plant No. 7, but that records had not been kept before the early 90's, after the building had been built. Brown said that he had a fire inspection from 1990 that mentioned the spray booths.

Neighbors made their initial complaints at December's town council meeting. They reported that plant operations were continuing after 8:00 p.m. and that the plant was emitting large amounts of sawdust. In February the planning and zoning board gave Brown until the March 27 meeting of the town council to meet the requirements of the original permit.

**PERMIT, SEE PAGE 5**