

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
December 28, 2018  
AT THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP OFFICES  
8555 KALAMAZOO AVENUE SE CALEDONIA, MICHIGAN 49316**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Giarmo. A quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mark Sisson, AICP, Township Planner  
Matt McKernan, Assistant Planner  
Robin Haaksma, Recording Secretary

**II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA**

No Changes

**III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES**

November 15, 2018 – Regular Meeting Minutes

**Motion:** By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Waayenberg to approve the minutes for the November 15, 2018 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

**Discussion:** None

**Ayes:** Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

**IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Advertised Public Hearings**

**a. 2451 76<sup>th</sup> Street – Major PUD Amendment (RL-14 & PUD Rezoning)**

*Proposed residential PUD encompassing 147 acres at 2451 76<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed PUD is to contain 218 single family homes and 46 multi-unit buildings supporting 178 townhouse and attached condominium units.*

**Mike and Mick McGraw of Eastbrook Homes** presented the proposed project. The development will have large areas of green space, private lots that do not back up to each

other and a variety of homes types similar to their Preservation Lake and Cooks Crossing projects.

Planner Sisson explained the acquisition of additional land is allowing this development to be expanded because traffic can disperse to multiple exits. He clarified there are no rental properties within the proposal.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:10 pm

**Al Post of 2810 76<sup>th</sup> Street SE** is worried about the extra run off that will occur from adding homes, roads and driveways. The property is already wet and tiled. He also expressed concern if the proposed sewer lift station fails.

**Joe Iacovoni of 2350 Hidden Knoll Ct SE** would like to keep a large buffer of trees between the single-family homes on Hidden Knoll and the new proposed project. He also inquired about the time line of the phases and whether it is necessary for it to be connected to the Crystal Springs neighborhood.

**Karryn DeHaan of 2552 Crystal Meadows Street SE** asked if environmental or traffic studies have been done. She is concerned about increased traffic and safety of small children in the neighborhood. She asked if the bridge over Plaster Creek needs to be there because it makes it possible for more vehicles to exit to 68<sup>th</sup> St.

**Iuga Ioan of 7082 Terra Cotta Avenue SE** is concerned about additional traffic taking neighborhood roads to get to the businesses on 68th St.

**David Lotterman of 6950 Sienna Drive SE** believes it is dishonest to existing home owners to rezone the land around them to higher density. He is worried about traffic and the wetness of the land.

**Mike Illikainen of 2840 76<sup>th</sup> Street SE** feels 76<sup>th</sup> St. is too narrow and not in an appropriate condition to handle the extra traffic that will be generated by this development. He is also concerned about potential storm water runoff onto his property.

**Ben Kerkstra of 2571 76<sup>th</sup> Street SE** inquired about water and sewer utilities and asked what will happen to the existing drain tiles.

**Jason Schautz of 2411 76<sup>th</sup> Street SE** asked about traffic and drainage. He does not like the smaller lots with houses on top of each other. His property is already wet and he fears that runoff from the new lots will add to the problem. He also does not feel 76<sup>th</sup> Street is suited for the additional traffic that will be generated by this project.

**Philip Stoutjesdyk of 2715 76<sup>th</sup> Street SE** asked about water runoff and safety. He also expressed concern about abandoned buildings on the property and stated 76<sup>th</sup> St. is a dangerous road and cannot handle extra traffic.

**Vince Verduin owner of 2451 76<sup>th</sup> Street SE** shared with residents that he cannot afford to keep farming the property. He believes it is better for land use to have a higher density of homes where utilities are available to preserve farm land in other areas.

**Leon Pratt of 2490 Crystal Meadows Street SE** asked how water and sewer are being expanded. He shared a story about how the number of responsible drivers is decreasing. He is worried for the safety of residents with extra traffic. He asked if the bridge can be eliminated to shift traffic to 76<sup>th</sup> St.

**Kim Diephouse of 2508 Crystal Meadows Street SE** does not like attached condo units and would prefer single-family homes throughout the development.

**Chris Koebel of 7029 Terra Cotta Avenue SE** would like single family homes throughout and would like more exits. He asked about the bridge over the wetlands, where sidewalks will be on one side or both sides of the street, and can the current sewer system handle the added load.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 8:30 pm.

The Planning commission clarified that the current request is to rezone the property to a PUD and that each phase of the development will be subject to further review. Storm water management will be reviewed by the Township Engineer. The MDEQ and Kent County Drain Commission will evaluate impacts to the wetlands and Plaster Creek. The Kent County Road Commission has final approval over connections to existing public roads.

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed attached condominium units. The Planning Commission was not especially concerned with the two-story and single-story condominiums that abut the eastern property line as they do not border an existing neighborhood. The Planning Commission was somewhat concerned about how the proposed single-story ranch condos on the north side of the development would integrate with the existing homes off of Terra Cotta Avenue. The Planning Commission indicated that they would like a landscape buffer between the condos and the existing homes and would like the rear yard setback to be increased to at least 35 feet in this area.

Planner Sisson gave a brief overview of the expected traffic volumes in the proposed development. Staff estimates that the proposed mix of townhomes and single-family homes will net 100 additional units than if the property was developed in a similar layout with only single-family homes. The traffic generated by the additional units will be offset by the fact that attached condominiums generate 50% less traffic than single-family homes and that traffic is often generated during non-peak hours. It can be expected that most of the traffic in the development will utilize 76<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed connection to Terra Cotta Avenue will not occur until Phase 5.

Mike McGraw explained that the proposed connection of Terra Cotta Avenue to 76<sup>th</sup> Street is a requirement of the Kent County Road Commission. McGraw explained that it is difficult to predict a timeline of when the project will be completed because it will be built according to market demand, which Eastbrook has little control over. McGraw stated that there was a

mistake with regard to the number of sidewalks on the overall PUD plan and that the actual number of sidewalks is more in line with staff's recommendations.

The Planning Commission expressed general approval for the proposed sidewalk plan and requested that crosswalks be located at various points along streets with sidewalks on only one side of the street.

Planner Sisson asked Mike McGraw to clarify whether or not the development would have specific standards for accessory buildings. McGraw stated that Eastbrook allows accessory buildings for single-family homes but not for townhomes. Accessory buildings in Eastbrook developments must be architecturally compatible with their associated homes and would generally be smaller than what the Township would allow by right. Sisson explained that it would not be necessary to create PUD standards for accessory buildings because Eastbrook standards are more restrictive than the Township's.

**Motion:** By Member Rober, supported by Member Waayenberg to postpone a decision on the proposed PUD rezoning at 2451 76<sup>th</sup> St.

**Discussion:** None

**Ayes:** Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

**b. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Recreational Marijuana**

*Proposed zoning text amendments to prohibit marijuana establishments and facilities within the boundaries of Gaines Charter Township.*

Planner Sisson explained that the successful ballot initiative to legalize recreational marijuana in Michigan has created uncertainty for local governments on how marijuana businesses will be regulated. On the advice on legal counsel, the Township has decided to opt out of allowing recreational marijuana establishments until there is a clearer regulatory picture. This would not preclude the Township from allowing marijuana businesses in the future if it so chooses. The Township Board approved a police power ordinance banning recreational marijuana businesses in December. The Planning Commission is reviewing a similar amendment to the zoning ordinance which would also prohibit marijuana businesses. If the Planning Commission is satisfied with the proposed amendment, it is recommended that they forward a recommendation of approval to the Township Board.

Chair Giarmo opened and closed the public hearing at 9:35 pm.

The Planning Commission agreed with the findings of the staff report and felt that it would be best to wait for a more certain regulatory framework to be established for recreational marijuana establishments before possibly allowing them within the Township.

**Motion:** By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Rober to approve the proposed zoning ordinance amendment as written, based on the findings of the staff report.

**Discussion:** None

**Ayes:** Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

## 2. Site Plan Review

### a. Explorer Estates Final Preliminary Plat/Site Plan Approval, 2326 Peerpoint Avenue (RL-10)

*Review and a recommendation of approval for a revised tentative preliminary plat consisting of 7 single family platted lots along Peerpoint Drive SE. The plat will be created out of residual school land located north of Explorer Elementary School.*

**Robb Lamer of Exxel Engineering** stated that Kentwood Public Schools are considering an expansion to Explorer Elementary that has necessitated changes to the Explorer Estates plat that had been proposed on the north side of the Explorer property. A proposed water main will run between Lots 3 & 4 from Peerpoint Avenue. This requires the elimination of one lot from the plat and will allow for the proposed sidewalk connection to be moved to the center of the plat which will eliminate the majority of concerns raised by neighbors during the initial review of the site.

The Planning commission likes the revisions to the plan and are happy with the looks of the first completed home within the plat.

**Motion:** By Member Rober, supported by Member Billips to forward a recommendation of final preliminary plat approval to the township board for Explorer Estates.

**Discussion:** None

**Ayes:** Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

## VIII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

None

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm.

**Discussion:** None

**Ayes:** Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the December 20, 2018 Regular Meeting of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission held at the time and place mentioned above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lani Thomas, Secretary  
Gaines Charter Township  
Planning Commission

Dated: January 24, 2019