

MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON
JUNE 9, 2016
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 7:05 p.m. by Chairman DeWard. A quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brad Burns, Robert DeWard, Connie Giarmo, Ronnie Rober,
Lani Thomas, Louis Waayenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tim Haagsma (with notice)

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Sisson, Township Planner / Zoning Administrator,
Matt McKernan, Assistant Planner

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

No changes

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

May 26, 2016 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion: By Member Giarmo supported by Member Rober to approve the minutes for
the May 26, 2016 Regular Meeting.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Brad Burns, Robert DeWard, Connie Giarmo, Ronnie Rober, Lani Thomas,
Louis Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

VI. New Business

1. General Discussion Items

a. Cascade Die Casting Site Plan Review

Rob Berends from Fleis & VanDenBrink presented the site plan for Cascade Die Casting. They are proposing 2 additions to an existing die casting facility; an approximately 2000 square foot employee locker room/breakroom area and a 5000 square foot truck dock/melting area.

Chair DeWard inquired as to the nature of the business. Dick Evans, manager of Cascade Die Casting, stated that they were a zinc die casting firm. The only item delivered on-site are the raw materials necessary for the die casting process. Once the dies are created, they are moved off-site to a secondary location. He stated that the building located across the service drive from the main die casting facility is used for storage.

Berends continued his presentation. He stated that he had discussions with Staff regarding the number of parking spaces permitted on-site. The additional spaces were needed due to staffing levels of 50 people per shift, with an overlap period at midday.

Evans stated that the current employee breakroom will be converted to another purpose, once the addition is built.

It was noted that the facility would be permitted 60 spaces by right, but the applicant is asking for 72. Berends noted that the spaces on the north side of the building are not currently utilized as parking spaces. Many people park across the service drive and walk across to work. By allowing the extra spaces on the south side of the building, it will make parking more convenient and safer.

DeWard asked Berends for an explanation of the lighting plan for the site. Berends responded that there are no plans for light poles on the site. The only additions to site lighting will come in the form of wall lights. He stated that the applicant would be happy to provide specifications on wall lighting for staff approval.

DeWard asked Planner Sisson if he was satisfied with a waiver for front yard landscaping due to a lack of space created by the mandatory sidewalk expansion on the east side of the site. Sisson answered that he was satisfied.

DeWard asked if the Fire Chief and Township Engineer had reviewed the plans for Cascade Die Casting. Assistant Planner McKernan answered that he had not, but would make sure he had a chance to review and give input on the plan. Berends stated that he had been working with the Township Engineer and would submit revised site plans that addressed all of the issues raised by the Engineer's Report.

Planner Sisson advised the Commission to discuss a waiver to rear landscaping standards that would have required Cascade Die Casting to install a Type 1 Buffer on the east side of the property. Planner Sisson suggested that this requirement was not necessary due to the size of the existing wooded area and the large distance between the building and the adjacent residential site. DeWard concurred.

Motion: By Member Giarmo supported by Member Rober to approve the site plan with the following conditions:

1. All requirements and conditions required by the Township Engineer & Fire Chief shall be met.
2. A photometric plan be submitted for staff approval.
3. The requirements for front yard landscaping and the installation of a Type 1 Buffer on the east side of the property are waived.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Brad Burns, Robert DeWard, Connie Giarmo, Lani Thomas, Louis Waayenberg, Ronnie Rober

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VIII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Planner Sisson gave an overview on several development topics occurring in the Township.

1. 240 84th Street

Everett's Landscaping wants to buy site along 84th across from Brewer Park. The property is zoned RL-14 on the northern portion of the site and A-R on the south side. They want to open a tree nursery, which is not be permitted by right in a RL-14. Staff had met with the developer and proposed that he request a conditional rezoning of the whole parcel to C-2. The conditional rezoning could stipulate outdoor sales would be the only C-2 use permitted on the site. Another option would be to rezone the entire site to A-R and have him request a special use permit for a landscaping business. This option is less desirable as it is more time-consuming and perhaps offers less flexibility.

DeWard asked if the applicant could create a PUD. Sisson responded that while it is possible for the developer to ask for a rezoning to PUD, it might be difficult because the request lacks concrete plans at this point. A rezoning to C-2 or A-R allows more flexibility. The conditional zoning is attractive because the 84th Street and Kalamazoo Sub-Area plan's future land use map doesn't provide justification for rezoning to a full C-2 this far down 84th Street.

2. Leisure Creek

The Planning Department has had preliminary discussions about the possible development of 2945 68th Street SE. The site is approximately 33 acres and located directly east from the Leisure Creek Neighborhood. There had been a petition to the Kent County Road Commission to abandon Valley Spring, which is a stub street that could eventually connect to a potential development at 2945 68th Street. The Township argued against this request and the Road Commission eventually denied it.

The Planning Department had an initial meeting about the potential development of the site. The site would feature 52 single family homes on the south side of the site and a preserved wetlands/flood plain area on the north side of the site, which would feature hiking trails. Staff presented an illustration of the possible site plan to Commission members. The 52 proposed lots would utilize open space preservation provisions within the Zoning Ordinance to allow for smaller lot sizes than generally permitted in RL-10 zoning districts. This is generally a by right request, but due to the deep, narrow layout of the site many of the homes are further than the maximum 660 foot distance to qualify for open space preservation status by right, and more work on the plan needs to be done.

DeWard asked about the status of the property to the east of 2945 68th Street. Sisson stated that the lot was currently vacant, and that the Planning Commission should consider requiring a stub street be added to the plans, similar to the one they would be utilizing off of Leisure Creek, to alleviate traffic off of 68th Street. Sisson added that the development would be a site condominium with public streets.

Sisson concluded by asking the Planning Commission if they informally approved of the concept of classifying the proposed walking trails as parks for the sake of satisfying the provisions of the open space. Chair DeWard expressed approval for the idea. Member Giarmo followed by stating she liked that the concept addressed both the open space provisions of the ordinance, as well as potentially alleviating the concerns of neighboring developments. Sisson explained that he advised the developer to meet with the Leisure Creek Home Owner's association to discuss his plans for the property.

3. Other Developments

Member Giarmo informed the Planning Commission that the Zoning Board of Appeals had met the previous night and denied a request for a front yard accessory building in a RL-14 district. Sisson added that the board had struggled with the concept of self-created hardships, and that staff would provide members with literature on the topic for future meetings.

Sisson gave the members an update on the Switch Data Center. The county had applied to create a Renaissance Zone for the property, which would exempt Switch from personal property taxes and allow them to utilize payment in lieu of taxes to reimburse the Township for public services related to the development. The proposed tax incentives are comparable to what Switch was being offered in other states. Sisson concluded by stating that improvements to the Pyramid are ongoing, but he doesn't anticipate new construction on the site until 2017 at the earliest.

Member Giarmo inquired as to whether or not the Dutton Sub-Area Plan should be revisited. Sisson stated that Township Staff had recently met with Switch officials and were able to ask what types of impacts Gaines Township could expect. Sisson stated that Switch could lead to "piggy-backing" companies that want to be located near the data center. Switch officials had indicated to Township staff that they had inquiries from other companies about why they chosen to locate in West Michigan. Sisson concluded by saying that in addition to larger businesses moving in, he expects that smaller ones such as coffee shops and restaurants will likely try to locate near the facility. This will require a reevaluation of our Future Land Use and Zoning to accommodate the types of development, which was unforeseen at the time of the Dutton Sub-Area Plan.

Sisson informed the Planning Commission that the Township Board had approved the Chick-fil-A PUD Amendment and that it had gone into effect in May. He added that the developer had intended to begin construction in June and they were still on track to make that happen.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: By Member Waayenberg supported by Member Giarmo to adjourn the meeting.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Brad Burns, Robert DeWard, Connie Giarmo, Ronnie Rober, Lani Thomas,
Louis Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the June 9, 2016 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,



Lani Thomas, Secretary
Gaines Charter Township
Planning Commission

Dated: June 30, 2016