

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2017  
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 Acting Chair Haagsma. A quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Talimma Billips, Brad Burns, Tim Haagsma, Lani Thomas, Ronnie Rober  
Louis Waayenberg

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Connie Giarmo (With Notice)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Matt McKernan, Assistant Planner

**II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA**

No Changes

**III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES**

August 24, 2017 – Regular Meeting Minutes

**Motion:** By Member Thomas supported by Member Burns to approve the minutes for the August 24, 2017 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion:** Passed

**IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None

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

**Gary Merritt, 2950 76<sup>th</sup> Street**

Merritt began by thanking Assistant Planner McKernan for meeting with the neighbors of 2901 76<sup>th</sup> Street earlier that afternoon. The meeting pertained to a greenhouse development being proposed under the Right to Farm Act at 2901 76<sup>th</sup> Street. Merritt explained that he was aware that Michigan's Right to Farm Act exempts farming operations from many local regulations, but he and his neighbors were still concerned with the perceived secrecy regarding the development. The first phase will be an 80,000 square foot greenhouse that will grow tilapia and lettuce in a self-contained aquaponics system. The neighbors are concerned with the amount of electricity and water this development will consume. Drainage and stormwater runoff was another area of concern. 76<sup>th</sup> Street is characterized by rural development and the neighbors feel like the greenhouse operation is more of a business than a farm. The neighbors are concerned this will negatively impact their property values. They have been in contact with one of the developers and would like to know how best to continue to coordinate with the Township to ensure this development doesn't negatively impact the area.

Acting Chair Haagsma thanked the neighbors for attending the meeting. Haagsma explained that he had been briefed about the issue prior to the meeting and that it is his understanding that the Planning Commission will not have any jurisdiction to oversee development at this site. Haagsma recommended that the neighbors of 2901 76<sup>th</sup> Street continue to communicate with the Township Engineer on drainage concerns and with the Planning Department regarding the Township's ability to regulate the development under the Right to Farm Act.

**VI. New Business**

**1. Advertised Public Hearing Items**

**a. 7471 Sunview Drive SE (RL-10)**

Special Use Permit Request to allow a single-family residence to be used as a Group Child Day Care Home (7-12 children).

**Nicole Spencer, 7471 Sunview**

Spencer currently operates a licensed Family Day Care operation out of her home. This allows her to care for up to 6 children simultaneously. Spencer has decided to expand her business and is seeking a special use permit to allow her residence to be used as a Group Child Day Care home. This license would allow her to care for up to 12 children including her own simultaneously. However, Spencer doesn't anticipate caring for any more than 10 non-related children as two spots must be reserved for Spencer and her assistant's two school age children in the event of snow days etc.

Assistant Planner McKernan explained that Spencer's current operation is permitted by right in the RL-10 district. State law mandates that local municipalities review Group Child Day Care Homes through the special use permitting process. The Planning Commission should review the site plan and determine if allowing the applicant to expand her current operation will negatively impact neighbors.

Acting Chair Haagsma opened the public hearing at 7:15 pm.

**Bob Dorr, 7466 Sunview Drive SE**

Dorr expressed that Spencer is a wonderful neighbor and that allowing her business to expand would be an asset to the neighborhood.

Acting Chair Haagsma closed the public hearing at 7:17 pm.

Spencer explained to the Planning Commission that the inspection report for her current operation was unavailable because the state licensing consultant had postponed her appointment until mid-October. Acting Chair Haagsma asked that the applicant be required to submit the results of this inspection as a condition of approval for the special use permit.

**Motion:**

By Member Billips supported by Member Rober to approve the special use permit for a Group Child Day Care Home at 7471 Sunview Drive, subject to the following conditions:

1. That the applicant comply with all standards for Group Child Day Care Homes as required by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.
2. That the applicant comply with all recommendations for fencing following inspection of the site by a state licensing consultant in October 2017.

3. That the applicant provide a copy of the inspection report from her licensing consultant to Township Staff following her inspection in October 2017.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion:** Passed

**b.Preservation Lakes Phase 2- Preliminary Plat (PUD)**

Approval of the preliminary plat of Preservation Lakes Estates Phase 2. Proposed development is a 30 lot single-family platted subdivision, having received prior conceptual approval within the Preservation Lakes PUD.

**Mike McGraw, Eastbrook Homes**

The first phase of Preservation Lakes has been very successful, and Eastbrook Homes is now looking to continue with the next phase of development. Phase 2 of Preservation Lakes is consistent with the approved PUD plans for the development. The lots in Phase 2 will be of a similar size to Phase 1 and will maintain the same housing types. McGraw gave an overview of the existing berms and landscaping. The landscaping in Phase 2 will be consistent with what was approved for the PUD, with landscaped berms being installed along Eastern Avenue and 100<sup>th</sup> Street.

Acting Chair Haagsma opened and closed the public hearing at 7:30 PM.

Assistant Planner McKernan explained that the applicant has supplied enough information to recommend approval of the Tentative Preliminary Plat for Preservation Lakes Phase 2. The applicant will need to submit a more detailed landscaping plan prior to the approval of Final Tentative Plat.

**Motion:** By Member Burns supported by Member Thomas to recommend to the Township Board "Tentative Preliminary Plat approval" with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall comply with the 7 conditions and instructions listed in the Staff Report dated September 21, 2017.
2. The applicant shall comply with the recommendations and conditions of the Township Engineer's report dated 9-5-17.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion:** Passed

## 2. Site Plan Review

### a. Dutton Christian Middle School (RL-10)

Site Plan Review for a 14,336 addition to the north side of Dutton Christian Middle School at 6729 Hanna Lake Avenue.

Assistant Planner McKernan gave an overview of the outstanding issues related to the Dutton Christian Middle School's (DCMS) request to add 9 classrooms to the northwest corner of the building. The two most pertinent issues relate to the photometric and landscaping plans:

- The Planning Commission will need to determine whether they would like to approve the site plan with the condition that the applicant work with Staff to address these issues or postpone a decision until October meeting. The school received a dimensional variance from the ZBA in February 2017 to allow a rear yard setback of 17 feet, with one of the requirements being that no lights be installed within 20 feet of the expansion. The photometric plan submitted by the applicant includes a light on the west side of the new addition, which will need to be removed. The plan also indicates the presence of two light poles along the south property line that create illumination in excess of 2 foot candles at the property line. Section 18.6 of GCTZO specifies a maximum illumination level of 0.2 foot candles when bordering properties in the RL-10 District. A new photometric plan will need to be submitted that addresses both of these issues.
- The landscaping plan submitted by the applicant was inadequate. As such, Staff was not able to evaluate the proposed landscaping on the site. A new plan will need to be submitted that shows precisely what existing landscaping will remain and what new landscaping is being proposed for the required rear yard buffer, parking area, and Hanna Lake Avenue frontage.

Other items of significance:

- The new site plan shows that DCMS intends to install a sidewalk along Hanna Lake Avenue. The question remains as to whether or not they intend to maintain the sidewalk connecting to the American Reformed Church property.
- DCMS has submitted a signage plan showing a network of internal directional signs that will help direct car and bus traffic.
- The applicant has proposed a total of 122 parking spaces, which is a 33% increase over the minimum parking standards. The Planning Commission is permitted to allow the applicant to exceed the minimum parking space requirement by more than 25% if they are able to demonstrate a need for the additional parking. The applicant has indicated that they are expecting to add an additional three 8th and 9th grade class rooms on the south side of the building by the fall of 2021. The parking requirements at that time would most likely be at least 98 spaces (based on the addition of 3 classrooms and 3 teachers). The Planning Commission will need to determine whether or not to accept the number of proposed parking spaces or require the applicant to remove 7 spaces.

### Joe Geelhoed, Dan Vos Construction

There are some challenges with installing the sidewalk along Hanna Lake Avenue related to the existing culvert. DCMS will coordinate with the Township Engineer and the Kent County Road Commission to address these issues. Geelhoed gave an overview of the internal vehicle circulation on the site. Buses will

enter through the northern drive and park along the north side of the parking lot. Cars will enter through the northern driveway and turn left into the parking lot and drop off children in front of the school. Parents can be trained to create a line that weaves through the parking areas if lines become an issue. Cars will exit through an exit-only drive on the south side of the property. This should be an improvement over the current configuration of the parking lot, which has only one driveway. The light on the west side of the addition is above an emergency exit and can most likely be removed without issue. The two light poles on the south side of the property can be moved to make the site compliant with Township lighting requirements. DCMS is working with the Township Engineer to address issues with the water main. DCMS intends to retain the existing sidewalk between the school and the American Reformed Church as they often share parking facilities.

Members Rober and Thomas expressed that they had driven by the school during pickup/drop-off times and were impressed with how efficiently it was managed.

Acting Chair Haagsma explained to the Planning Commission that they had the option to approve the site plan with the condition that the applicants work with Staff to address the outstanding issues or postpone a decision until October when updated plans could be evaluated. Members of the Planning Commission expressed a general approval of the site plan, including the number of parking spaces. A decision was made to approve the site plan with the condition that the applicants work with Staff to address the outstanding issues related to the photometric and landscaping plans.

**Motion:** By Member Rober supported by Member Thomas to approve the site plan for a 14,336 addition to the north side of Dutton Christian Middle School, with the proposed 122 parking spaces indicated on the site plan. The approval is subject to the following conditions.

1. All requirements and conditions required by the Township Engineer shall be met.
2. That the applicant submit updated landscaping and photometric plans for review and approval by Township Staff.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion:** Passed

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**VIII. GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Assistant Planner McKernan informed the Planning Commission that there would be public hearings for Tentative Preliminary Plats for Explorer Estates on Peerpoint Drive and Hash Tag Acres off of Eastern Avenue at the October Planning Commission meeting.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion:** By Member Thomas supported by Member Burns to adjourn the meeting.
- Discussion:** None
- Ayes:** Billips, Burns, Haagsma, Thomas, Rober, Waayenberg
- Nays:** None
- Abstain:** None
- Motion:** Passed

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the September 28, 2017 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lani Thomas".

Lani Thomas, Secretary  
Gaines Charter Township  
Planning Commission

Dated: October 26, 2017