

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION FOR  
THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
September 24, 2020  
Via Zoom  
GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
8555 KALAMAZOO AVENUE SE CALEDONIA, MICHIGAN 49316**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Chair Giarmo. A quorum was present.

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dan Wells, Community Development Director  
Jeff Gritter, P.E., Township Engineer  
David Jirousek, AICP, Planning Consultant

**II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA**

Changes were recommended to remove agenda items VII 1-2, which included a presentation of 3500 60th Street Apartments Concept Plan and a presentation of 3304 60th Street Apartments Concept Plan from the agenda. An addition of a new project proposal by Corey Johnson was added as item VII. 1.

**III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES**

August 27, 2020– Regular Meeting Minutes. Chair Giarmo mentioned two changes, first to revise the term “straight forward” to “straightforward,” and second to add a comma after the word “neighbors.”

**Motion:** By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Waayenburg, to approve the minutes for the August 24, 2020, Planning Commission Regular Meeting with the above-mentioned changes.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

**Note:** Rober was temporarily unable to participate due to a poor internet connection when the vote was called for at 7:07 pm.

**IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None

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

None

**VI. New Business**

**Public Hearings**

**a. 8190 Division Ave, Clover Development Senior Housing Final Plan Review**

Chair Giarmo called for the applicant to comment on the project. Beth Ernat explained that there were no significant changes to the site plan, but engineering details were finalized. Ms. Ernat mentioned that Kent County Road Commission review is pending and welcomed questions from the Planning Commission.

Dan Wells mentioned that the applicant has made minor changes and is seeking final approval of the PUD plan.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:10 pm, and there were no public comments. Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:10 pm.

Chair Giarmo stated that most of the conditions were satisfied during the preliminary review. Chair Giarmo also mentioned that the project was questionable as it relates to the mixed-use designation of the Township Master Plan and stated that it was a great project but in the wrong area.

Ronnie Rober was concerned with pedestrian connectivity to other destinations, and Chair Giarmo agreed but felt the park connection was a positive aspect of the project.

Dan Wells stated that residents to the north asked if a sidewalk connection on Division could be made between the developments.

Jeff Gritter stated that the applicant has been responsive, and utilities are sized appropriately for the development. Chair Giarmo acknowledged the standard is met.

Chair Giarmo mentioned the parking, lighting, and landscaping requirements, and Dan Wells stated that there were no concerns with zoning compliance. Dan Wells recommended that site lighting include color temperatures of 4,000K or less. Chair Giarmo asked if this could be a condition of approval, and Dan Wells recommended that it be incorporated.

Tim Haagsma mentioned that the mixed-use designation in the Township Master Plan was too optimistic, but given the nearby industrial land uses in Byron Township, the proposed use is not a significant concern. Concern was also mentioned that there is nowhere to walk within the mixed-use designated area.

Brad Burns, Lani Thomas, and Brad Waayenberg concurred with Tim Haagsma's comments.

Chair Giarmo recognized that it was a build and stay company.

Chair Giarmo recognized Corey Johnson. Corey Johnson expressed support for the project.

**Motion:** By Member Brad Waayenberg, supported by Member Lani Thomas, to recommend that staff prepare a positive resolution regarding the final PUD site plan which references the nine conditions included in the staff report in addition to staff approval of the lighting fixtures.

**Discussion:** Dan Wells read the conditions aloud. Jeff Gritter mentioned that the second sentence of condition number nine in the staff report should be struck. The Planning Commission agreed with the change.

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

## VI. General Discussion

### 1. Presentation by Corey Johnson on 68<sup>th</sup> Street

Chair Giarmo stated that the Planning Commission could only give preliminary thoughts on the proposal, as it was intended to be presented for advisory purposes.

Dan Wells mentioned that the subject property is larger than nearby properties, and Corey Johnson wishes to store classic cars. The lot currently allows 790 square feet of accessory building square footage per the size of the lot and zoning district. A special land use permit may be considered for a larger building. Dan Wells showed a number of images provided by Corey Johnson to show the scale, size, and location of the proposed building.

Corey Johnson generally explained his proposal and that his intent is to store and work on classic cars in a larger accessory building. He also mentioned that he will be sensitive to neighboring property owners and that commercial activities are not proposed. Mr. Johnson also mentioned that the neighbors were generally supportive.

Chair Giarmo stated that the proposed 2,000 square foot building is significantly larger than allowable and is concerned with precedence. There was a general discussion regarding the size of accessory buildings on nearby properties.

Tim Haagsma mentioned there would be a greater visual impact from the neighboring property on Brooklyn within the subdivision when the leaves fall. The visual impact should be addressed.

Dan Wells recommended outreach to neighbors, and Chair Giarmo mentioned that screening and size were the greatest concerns.

### 2. Apartment Design Guidance

Dan Wells referenced the Draft Apartment Development Guidance recommendations provided within the Planning Commission packets. It was mentioned that the guidance

could be incorporated as guidelines or as zoning requirements. Planning Commission guidance was requested.

Chair Giarmo mentioned that the Township currently has a two-story limit, and Dan Wells said taller buildings could be approved through the PUD process.

Lani Thomas supported the proposed guidance, as it would provide a more detailed and attractive design of future buildings. Chair Giarmo and Lani Thomas both agreed that the roof pitches would have a more residential character under the proposed guidelines.

Ronnie Rober was supportive and felt that the guidance was very comprehensive.

Talimma Billips also agreed that flat roof apartments were not attractive, and a more residential and look was preferred. Brad Waayenberg agreed.

Chair Giarmo and Lani Thomas again mentioned that a more residential look and feel was preferred.

Brad Waayenberg supported more diversity and variation in the look and design of apartment buildings. Talimma Billips also agreed that the bar should be raised.

Developer Dan Hibma stated that he was attending to listen as he has a potential project on 60<sup>th</sup> Street.

Dan Wells mentioned the need for housing diversity and affordable housing, especially for new Amazon employees. Many Planning Commission members agreed.

Developer Kevin Einfeld mentioned that he plans a project at 3500 60<sup>th</sup> Street and was generally supportive of the guidance. One concern was that three-story buildings were desired, based on cost feasibility. It was also mentioned that two different building types could be incorporated into the project, with two stories near 60<sup>th</sup> Street and three stories near M-6. Mr. Einfeld also mentioned that the rent for Ridges of Cascade is over \$2,000 a month, so higher-end buildings result in greater rents.

Dan Wells asked about the current market, and Kevin Einfeld mentioned that housing is needed for young professionals. Dan Hibma stated that it is a good market with good schools.

Dan Wells mentioned that the design guidelines could be incorporated in a resolution. Dan asked if they should become requirements. Overall, these guidelines could help qualify projects for PUD development.

Tim Haagsma felt that the guidelines could serve as general guidance, but requirements would need to be formally adopted. Chair Giarmo agreed that the guidelines should not be adopted as requirements at this time.

Chair Giarmo and Tim Haagsma asked that the guidance be formalized and supplemented with sketches and additional narrative, and requirements can be developed at a later date.

**Motion:** By Member Tim Haagsma, supported by Member Brad Waayenberg, to direct staff to formalize the Apartment Design Guidance document for future use.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

**VII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** By Member Brad Waayenberg, supported by Member Tim Haagsma to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm.

**Discussion:** None

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

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Decision:** Passed

**Note:** Rober was temporarily unable to participate due to a poor internet connection when the vote was called for at 8:35 pm.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the September 24, 2020, 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: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020