

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
APRIL 26, 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: Talimma Billips, Brad Burns, Connie Giarmo, Tim Haagsma, Ronnie Rober, Lani Thomas, Brad Waayenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT: NONE

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Sisson, AICP, Township Planner
Matt McKernan, Assistant Planner

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

No Changes

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

March 22, 2018 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Rober to approve the minutes for the March 22, 2018 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Waayenberg explained that his place of employment had been contracted to do work for the Meijer Pharmacy portion of the request, not Panda. Would like to abstain from Meijer vote.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

VI. New Business

1. Advertised Public Hearings

a. Hidden Waters Plat, 7448 Eastern Avenue SE (RL-14)

Tentative preliminary approval for Hidden Waters, a 28 lot single-family platted subdivision with connections to Eastern Avenue & Jamie Lane.

Don DeGroot, Exxel Engineering Company

DeGroot presented the request on behalf of the applicant, Timsed Holdings. The applicant is seeking tentative preliminary plat approval for a 28 lot plat on 20+ acres located at the corner of Eastern Avenue and 76th Street. The plat will connect the stub at the end of Jamie Lane to Eastern Avenue. The street

extension will be built to Kent County Road Commission standards. The plat features reduced minimum lot sizes and widths in accordance with the open-space preservation development standards for the RL-14 district. DeGroot addressed several of the issues raised in the staff report:

- The staff report states that open space preservation developments are required to provide a mixture of active and passive recreational opportunities. The applicant contends that the site would be better served if the open-space areas remained untouched and thus would like permission to provide only passive recreational opportunities. The developer could install a small “tot-lot” or a wood chip exercise path if the Planning Commission requires active recreation in the open space area.
- The developer does not wish to install sidewalks in front of the existing house as this will not be part of the plat. The sidewalk network on the east side of Eastern Avenue is largely incomplete. The Township should install sidewalk in front of the existing home on Eastern Avenue if and when they decide to complete the sidewalk network in this area.

Planner Sisson responded to DeGroot’s comments and provided further details on the request. The proposed lots meet the size and width requirements for open space developments in the RL-14 district. All lots will have direct access to the open space area. The zoning ordinance makes clear that the open space must contain both passive and active recreational elements to qualify for reduced lot sizes and widths. The Planning Commission should discuss what types of active recreational activities should be added to the site. Sisson explained that not requiring the applicant to construct sidewalk in front of the existing house would leave a significant gap in an expanding sidewalk network along the east side of Eastern Avenue.

Chair Giarmo entered letters received from Brian Matz and Jeffrey Valery into the public record and opened the public hearing at 7:15 pm.

Joel DeYoung 1005 76th Street.

Concerned about the potential of the development creating additional traffic along 76th street. Also concerned that the development will lower the water table. Would not like to see a park in the southeast corner of the development if the Planning Commission decides to require active play areas in the development.

Jeffrey Valery, 7524 Jamie Lane

Valery spoke on behalf of several of his neighbors who wished for the proposed development not to connect to the stub at the end of Jamie Lane. The neighbors contend that cul-de-sacs improve home values. The neighbors feel there is no need to connect the streets due because the utilities will come in from Eastern Avenue. The neighbors would like to retain the existing character of Jamie Lane and feel that connecting to the proposed development will be detrimental to that goal.

Kurt Burner, 7525 Jamie Lane

Seconded Valery’s comments. Agreed with DeYoung that any potential park areas should be kept out of the southeast corner of the site.

Brian Matz, 7511 Jamie Lane

Matz lives in a home on the north end of Jamie Lane adjacent to the proposed development. Matz explained that his mailbox and underground sprinkling system are located in the right-of-way of the

temporary cul-de-sac at the end of Jamie Lane. Matz requested clarification on how the relocation of his mailbox and underground sprinkling system would be paid for.

Peter DeJong, 1001 76th Street

DeJong lives on the unnamed private street that runs parallel with Jamie Lane. DeJong is concerned about how the development will impact the water table. DeJong requested that the Planning Commission take into account that the residents of the private street built their homes in the 1970s when the area was still rural with the expectation that it would remain rural.

Charles Litton, 995 76th Street

Concerned about how the development will impact the water flow in the creek.

Chad Ignatowski, 7530 Melinda Ct

Interested in the housing types and price points for homes in the neighborhood.

Linda Litton, 995 76th Street

Litton agreed with the issues raised by previous speakers and asked for clarification on what was meant by “passive” and “active” recreational activities.

Kyle Hofman, 7373 Azalea Avenue

Concerned that the development might make flooding in the wetlands worse.

Mike Ozinga 997 76th Street

Reiterated previous concerns over the development’s impact on the water table. Also curious as to whether or not this development will lead to residents of the private drive being forced to hookup to water and sewer at some point.

Chair Giarmo closed public hearing at 7:27 pm.

Giarmo requested that Township Engineer Jeff Gritter address the resident’s questions and concerns. Gritter stated that he would look into the questions related to the water table as he had not been previously aware of any existing issues. The Kent County Drain Commission will review to the plat for issues related to the creek. Wetland issues would most likely preclude any kind of park being constructed along the eastern property line. Utilities will be brought into the development from Eastern Avenue.

Chair Giarmo agreed with the Planner’s interpretation that Planning Commission didn’t have the ability to waive the active recreation requirement for open space developments. Giarmo asked DeGroot to explain how many lots they would lose if they weren’t able to utilize the reduced lot sizes for open space developments.

Member Haagsma suggested that lots 1 & 2 should be required to face Jamie Lane. It will be important to ensure that the developer pays for sidewalk connections to the existing paths on Jamie Lane once the temporary cul-de-sac is removed. The Kent County Road Commission will require the applicant to replace the sections of the driveway that will be torn out to facilitate the road connection. Planner Sisson added that the developer should also be encouraged to help accommodate the relocation of underground sprinkling systems that will be have to be torn out in front of the homes at the end of Jamie Lane.

DeGroot responded to questions posed by residents and Planning Commission members. DeGroot estimated the development would lose 3-4 lots if they weren't able to utilize the reduced lot sizes available for open space preservation developments. DeGroot anticipated they would be able to provide some type of active recreation within the open space area, which would allow the development to retain their current layout. A "tot-lot" could likely be built in the area adjacent to the detention pond to satisfy this requirement. DeGroot stated that the applicant will provide housing model samples during the final site plan review

Planner Sisson responded to the comments received pertaining to the connection to the existing portion of Jamie Lane. Sisson explained to the audience that the Township supports the Kent County Road Commission's requirement that new streets connect to existing public stub streets whenever possible. The connection will allow for an expansion to the existing sidewalk network on Jamie Lane and give the residents of both neighborhoods an additional egress point. The KCRC's policy promotes walkability and reduces the strain on arterial streets by diverting some traffic to local streets.

Motion: By Member Rober supported by Member Thomas to forward a recommendation of approval of the Tentative Preliminary Plat for Hidden Waters to the Township Board. The recommendation of approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. That elevation drawings depicting at least four house plan models, plans must be submitted as part of a final preliminary plat review process.
2. Street lights, street trees, sidewalks and a Type I buffer are required.
3. Applicant shall submit detailed plans pertaining to housing models, street trees, street lights, sidewalks, landscaping, and the provision of utilities for final site plan approval by the Planning Commission before construction on the development can commence.
4. A soil erosion permit, any applicable wetland permits and all engineering requirements of the Township Engineer and Fire Chief and all other agencies having jurisdictional authority must be met prior to commencement of construction.
5. The dedicated open space shall be permanently set aside by the developer through an irrevocable provision of the developments Master Deed stating in effect, the following :
 - The dedicated open space shall forever remain open space and further development, dividing, or subdivision of dedicated open space land or its use for other than recreation, or conservation purposes is prohibited, with the exception that easements for utilities are permitted.
6. All streets in the development shall be public, approved by and accepted by the Kent County Road Commission and in the configuration shown on the plan which indicates connection to the existing Jamie Lane.
7. Street lights shall be required. A petition for the creation of a special assessment district for street lights shall be submitted along with the application for final subdivision plan approval by the Township Board or prior to the sale of the first unit.
8. A copy of the deed restrictions pertaining to the development shall be submitted and approved by staff prior to final plat approval by the Township Board.
9. The proposed sidewalk network will be required to connect to the existing sidewalks on Jamie Lane and across the property containing the existing house at 7448 Eastern Avenue.
10. The proposed Open Space area must be revised to include an acceptable "active recreational component".
11. The driveways for Lots 1 & 2 will be required to face Jamie Lane and not Eastern Avenue.

Discussion: None
Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Thomas, Rober, Waayenberg
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Motion: Passed

2. Site Plan Review

a. Meijer, 1801 Marketplace Drive SE (Gaines Marketplace PUD)

Continued discussion pertaining to a two part major amendment to the Gaines Marketplace PUD to allow (1) a reconfiguration of the layout of the Meijer pharmacy drive-thru and garden center; and (2) to redevelop a section of the parking lot in the southeast corner of the site as a Panda Express restaurant.

Amy Conti, Norr Architects & Rachel Smith, PEA Inc.

Conti and Smith, the architect and engineer respectively for Panda Express gave a brief overview of the request. Panda Express is a fast-casual Asian restaurant with a drive-thru. It will be located on a 0.92 acre out lot that will be split from the Meijer parking lot.

Craig Armstrong

Armstrong explained that Meijer has provided a letter of intent from Mid-America indicating their intention to repair Marketplace drive. Mid-America owns the drive and requires that all other landowners contribute to the repairs. In the event that the Panda Express restaurant is approved, Meijer will continue to pay its 52% share of maintenance costs for Marketplace Drive and charge Panda Express for their portion directly. The repairs for Marketplace Drive will begin very shortly and likely would have already been underway if not for the snowfall last week.

Mark Sisson, AICP, Township Planner

Planner Sisson explained that Panda Express had provided the parking/traffic study for Marketplace Drive and Kalamazoo Avenue. The study indicates that the current conditions are acceptable if not ideal. The report indicates the proposed development will not exacerbate existing traffic problems in the area as the restaurant is expected to draw half of its customers from existing traffic on Marketplace Drive.

Matt McKernan, Assistant Township Planner

Assistant Planner McKernan explained that he had miscalculated the amount of proposed signage for Panda Express in the staff report. The gross amount of wall signage is 109 square feet and not 101 as stated in the report. The 109 square feet is still consistent with what has been approved for other restaurants within the PUD.

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Rober to approve a minor amendment to the Gaines Marketplace PUD for a reconfiguration of the Meijer Pharmacy Drive-Thru and Garden Center.

Discussion: None
Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Thomas, Rober
Nays: None
Abstain: Waayenberg
Motion: Passed

Planning Commission members agreed with the Planner's assessment that allowing a Panda Express restaurant to be constructed should not significantly impact existing traffic conditions along Marketplace and Meijer Drives due to the design of the site and the expected level of traffic generation. The Planning Commission asked the applicants to speak about the lighting plan for Panda Express as illumination levels within the PUD has been a concern in the past. Conti explained that the lighting levels generated by the Panda Express restaurant will dissipate to 0 foot candles at the property line and thus the restaurant will not create additional lighting nuisances to the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Burns to direct to draft a resolution recommending approval of the Major Amendment for Panda Express to the Township Board.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

b. Project Rapids, ~4500 68th Street SE (Steelcase PUD-LSP)

Site plan review for a large warehouse and distribution facility within approximately 97 acres located in the NE 1/4 of Section 12.

Larry Spysinski, Seefried Industrial Properties

Spysinski introduced the members of the development team to the Planning Commission.

Tony Mourand, FTCH

Mourand, the civil engineer for Project Rapids, gave an overview of the site plan:

- The detention pond will hold 5 million gallons of stormwater.
- Project Rapids is proposing a 10 foot wide multi-purpose trail along the south side of 68th Street from Patterson Avenue to East Paris Avenue in exchange for a waiver for the required sidewalks south of the northern entrance drives on Patterson Avenue and the new public street on the west side of the property.
- The parking lot will be oversized to account for seasonal employment needs.
- A traffic signal will be installed at the main entrance on 68th Street.
- The lighting plan for Project Rapids was designed according to Model Lighting Ordinance standards developed by the International Dark Sky Association.
- The berm in the northeast corner of the property will be approximately 4 feet tall to allow for a clear line of site at the intersection of Patterson and 68th Street. The berm south of the entrance drive will be 17-18 feet tall. The southeast corner of the property is the highpoint on the site and thus only a 10 foot tall berm is necessary. All but the top of the building should be obscured from view once the landscaping is installed along the berm.
- The emergency exit in the southeast corner of the site has been relocated so to that it faces an empty lot owned by the Township of Caledonia. This will allow the Project Rapids site to be completely buffered from all homes on the east side of Patterson Avenue.

Kelly Beaudreau, B.L. Companies

Beaudreau is the architect for Project Rapids. The building has been designed with a varied color scheme to create interest and aid in wayfinding. Windows have been placed in locations that make sense to allow natural light into the building. Beaudreau gave an overview of the internal layout of the building and showed the Planning Commission photos of a similar building that was recently constructed near Chicago.

Julie Kroll, Fleis & VandenBrink

Kroll is the traffic engineer for Project Rapids. Kroll stated that the traffic study indicates that all affected roadways currently operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS D or above). Kroll gave the Planning Commission of the proposed improvements to the road network required to maintain an acceptable LOS D on all impacted roads.

Planner Sisson explained that the landscape architect would be adding additional landscaping near the entrance to the building to address the concerns raised by Chair Giarmo at the previous meeting. Sisson agreed with Mouran’s assessment that the taller light poles make sense given the scale of the building. Sisson stated that the installation of a multi-purpose trail on the south side of 68th Street is desirable because it will connect the Paul Henry Trail to burgeoning trail sidewalk/networks in Caledonia Township.

Members Burns, Rober, and Waayenberg recently participated in a site visit to a similar facility located near Chicago. The members found the building to be visually appealing and the site to be well designed. The landscaping within the interior of the site helped to soften the effect of the large parking area. The 40 foot tall light poles did feel out of place when taken in context with the size of the building. Based on their experience visiting the site, Members felt that Project Rapids will have minimal impact on the overall character of the area once the landscaping and berms are installed.

Planner Sisson explained that the resolution that has been presented to the Planning Commission includes waivers for deviations from signage, landscaping, and lighting standards. There have been several small revisions to the document since it was first distributed to the Planning Commission the previous week. The Planning Commission should make a motion to approve the resolution with the additional condition that “final approval/effectiveness of the Project Rapids Final Planned Unit Development/Site plan is subject to closure on the purchase of the property from Steelcase Inc.”

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Rober to approve the proposed “Final PUD Site Deployment Plan” for Project Rapids based on the findings and conditions of approval embodied in PC Resolution 18-02-PC. Final approval/effectiveness of the Project Rapids Final Planned Unit Development/Site plan is subject to closure on the purchase of the property from Steelcase Inc.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

c. Micro Manufacturing, 6900 Dutton Industrial Drive SE (I-2)

25,000 Square foot expansion of an existing precision machining services operation.

Don DeGroot, Exxel Engineering

The request is for an expansion to the west side of an existing machining operation on Dutton Industrial Drive. The site plan has been revised to include a fire access drive on the north side of the property. The only pertinent discussion point raised in the staff report was whether or not to require the installation of a Type II Buffer on the north side of the existing building to bring the site into compliance with current I-2 standards. The applicant doesn't think the installation of a Type II Buffer would be serve any purpose and is asking the Planning Commission to waive this requirement. The property owner clear cuts the brush in the area along the north side of the building every spring for fire safety purposes. The owner leaves always leaves a small amount of brush as a buffer. The Micro Manufacturing building is separated from Dutton Elementary School by over 500 feet.

Planning Commission members agreed with the applicant's contention that a Type II Buffer along the north side of the building is unnecessary. The Planning Commission stated that the playground for Dutton Elementary School likely generates more noise than the industrial building does. The school shares another unbuffered property line with the gravel operation to the east, which creates much more noise and disturbance than the Micro Manufacturing facility.

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Waayenberg to approve the site plan for the 25,000 square foot building addition. The Planning Commission does not find cause to require the installation of a Type II Buffer along the north side of the property. Site plan approval is subject to the following condition:

1. All requirements of the Township Engineer & Dutton Fire Chief shall be met.

Discussion: None
Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Thomas, Rober, Waayenberg
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Motion: Passed

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VIII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. **Discussion on Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments Caledonia Township Master Plan Update**
Assistant Planner McKernan informed the Planning Commission that the Township had received notice from Caledonia Township of their intent to update their master plan.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Rober to adjourn the meeting.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the April 26, 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronnie Rober". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ronnie Rober, Vice Chair
Gaines Charter Township
Planning Commission

Dated: May 24, 2018