

MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

February 25, 2021

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 7:00 pm by Chair Giarmo. A quorum was present.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rober (entered late)

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Wells, Community Development Director
David Jirousek, AICP, Planning Consultant
Jeff Gritter, P.E., Township Engineer
Greg Chandler with Sun & News, Jeff Rogers, David Blickle, Robert Vander Meer, Chris Vander Hoff, Mike Speedy, Kevin Willis, Steve Blain, Robert DeWard, Laurie Lemke, Fireman Dave Van Putten, Josh Manion, Nick LaCroix, Shannon Midgley, Kevin Jacot, Kyle Schott, Andy McLeod, Ryan Wilson

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

New agenda submitted by Planner Wells. Items 3a and 3e removed from agenda.

Motion: By Haagsma, supported by Thomas, to accept the new agenda

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (6-0)

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES - JANUARY 28TH, 2021 – REGULAR MEETING

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Thomas, to approve the minutes for the January 28th, 2021 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (6-0)

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jeff Rogers from F&S Realty read a letter from Dan Hibma, discussing 3500 60th site eligibility as a PUD (Exhibit 1).

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearings

a. 866 76th St – Special use permit request for additional accessory building square footage

Chair Giarmo invites applicant David Blicke to explain the request for special use permit.

David Blicke describes the need for a pole barn to store classic cars.

Planner Wells summarizes the application for extra 827 feet of accessory building. General standard of review is met for this request and it is consistent with the Master Plan guidance. Section 20.2(D).4 is reference for the increase in maximum allowed floor area. Commissioners will need to decide if the scale is appropriate for this location, specifically the visual impact.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:22 pm. No discussion ensued. Chair Giarmo close the public hearing at 7:24 pm.

Member Waayenburg does not think there will be a negative visual impact for this project.

Planner Wells interjects that Member Rober has entered the meeting.

Member Burns states that it is too large for the property.

Chair Giarmo would like to see some screening added on the west.

Motion: By Member Waayenburg supported by Member Haagsma, to approve the request for special use permit with the additional stipulations that 1) size and setback is as proposed in application, 2) the purpose of the project is residential and personal storage, not commercial and 3) screening from 3-4 shrubs at minimum two foot tall and growing to 6-8 feet to be added to the west side of the building with no exterior light on all night long.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: Burns

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (6-1)

b. 10241 Eastern Ave - Special use permit request for additional accessory building square footage

Chair Giarmo requests applicant Robert Vander Meer to present project.

Vander Meer expresses that he would like to add an accessory pole barn for personal storage. The location would be different than pictured in the planning commission memo. It would be directly behind the current barn.

Planner Wells asks if there would be 10 feet separation between the existing barn and proposed pole barn. Vander Meer confirms there would be separation space. Planner Wells summarizes the project under standards of review. The design meets standards of review and the intent of the Master Plan. Neighbor Russell Van Laan to the north contacted Planner Wells and approves the project. Planner Wells encourages a condition of approval that the building height be limited to 20 feet.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:42 pm. No discussion ensued. Chair Giarmo close the public hearing at 7:43 pm.

Chair Giarmo expresses concern on the site plan not showing the building in the correct location. Planner Wells refers to the building permits to validate the location of the new building.

Motion: By Member Haagsma supported by Member Waayenburg, to approve the request for special use permit with the additional conditions in the planning commission memo that 1) size and setback is as proposed in application, 2) the purpose of the project is residential and personal storage, not commercial and 3) building height shall be limited to 20 feet.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

2. Site Plan Review

None

3. Items not requiring a public hearing

a. 1089 84th ST- Cooks Crossing PUD Amendment Request

Chair Giarmo asks Planning Consultant David Jirousek to explain the status of the project.

Consultant Jirousek recommends moving forward with the resolution for amendment. (Exhibit 2)

Chair Giarmo asks for further discussion and there is none.

Motion: By Member Rober, supported by Member Thomas, to send resolution number 21-02-25 PC as submitted to staff to the Township Board of Trustees.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

b. 8640 Kalamazoo Ave – Preliminary PUD Rezone Request – Gaines Town Center

Chair Giarmo asks for presentation of any changes and updates from the developer.

Mike Speedy from American Kendall Properties presents a detailed packet and highlights changes of increased townhomes and decreased apartments.

Planner Wells summarizes the project in light of standards of review and finds it compatible. The project is just above the medium density range for the Master Plan and will need to be decided if it is appropriate for this location. A traffic study has been done and suggestions of a traffic circle have been raised but funding would be needed. Utilities extension is still being discussed.

Developer Speedy responds that utility cost projection needs preliminary approval to proceed.

Planner Wells recommends that project preliminary approval be granted with conditions outlined in the memo.

Member Giarmo and Member Haagsma express hesitation on the cost and feasibility of utilities.

Member Waayenburg speaks on concerns with traffic, safety, and high density housing.

Member Burns has no negative comments.

Member Thomas has no problems with what is presented with the exception of utilities.

Member Billips states that if we are going to have apartments the developer has done a great job meeting standards making them aesthetically pleasing.

Member Rober likes the project but does not like that many apartments.

Developer Speedy asserts that the apartment density is needed to support the commercial and recreational aspects of the project.

Member Rober inquires what phase retail will be developed. Developer Speedy states that retail will come in the initial phase.

Planner Wells suggests a phasing plan to be included in the conditions.

Motion: By Member Burns, supported by Member Haagsma, to grant preliminary approval to set public hearing with the following conditions for the developer to provide 1) a residential unit count based on zoning, 2) a parking study for the adequacy of the final plan, 3) finalized agreements with the Township concerning utility extension, 4) a specific trail plan and 5) a phasing plan.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: Waayenburg

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (6-1)

c. 1171 and 1175 68th ST – Crystal Manor PUD Amendment – Preliminary Review

Chair Giarmo requests the developer to discuss updates on project.

Kevin Willis from MCAP Grand Rapids Propco introduces his company to the community since purchasing Crystal Manor. Developer Willis proposes a lobby connector addition, general updates and renovation. Developer Willis respectfully requests waiving the public hearing.

Planner Wells clarifies that the developer is requesting for the resolution to be prepared for consideration at the next meeting at the public hearing pending no major concerns raised. The project meets standards of review. Fire department and Township engineering will need to review project. Engineer Jeff Gritter expounds that this projects is outside of some ordinance requirements but can be workable. Engineer Gritter requests that for water and sewer concerns the two plumbing systems remain separated and kitchen remodel will need to be reviewed by the water and sewer authority. Fireman Dave Van Putten expresses concern on the limited access for the fire department in running fire hose and the ladder fire truck turn radius.

Member Haagsma expresses support for the project and preparing the resolution in conjunction with the public hearing.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Waayenburg, to pass preliminary review of the project and prepare a resolution for PUD amendment.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

d. 2410 68th ST - Preliminary Plat Request for Hoffman Meadows Phase 1

Chair Giarmo asks Developer Chris Vander Hoff to give updates on project.

Chris Vander Hoff asks for consideration and fairness from the Township. He also requests a waiver for the 4:1 ratio local ordinance and expresses frustration that it is not on the agenda.

Planner Wells reads communication between Developer Vander Hoff and Planner Wells and explains the 4:1 ratio between parcel width and length. He explains that the Planning Commission can waive that ratio but there was not time to address that this month.

Planner Jirousek reviews the project. Changes include the storm water pond is shifted to the south east, and a street realigned based on engineering feedback. Action is needed from Planning Commission to meet the 90 day deadline of Land Division Act. The resolution with four conditions is recommended.

Motion: By Member Waayenburg, supported by Member Thomas, to send tentative preliminary plat approval with conditions as submitted to staff to the Township Board of Trustees.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

e. 4495 68th ST – Steelcase PUD – Preliminary Site Plan Review

Chair Giarmo asks the applicant to explain the project.

Kyle Schott from Ryan Companies describes the project with two facilities for industrial distribution use.

Chair Giarmo inquires on number of parking spots and employees on site. The developer answers the average will be 340 vans during the day and hundreds of full and part time jobs added to the community.

Planner Jirousek gives an overview of the project. The project is compatible with the Master Plan and appears consistent with the original Steelcase PUD plan. Confirmation from the Planning Commission is needed that no PUD amendment is required and that no public hearing will take place. Traffic study and County Road Commission feedback is requested.

Chair Giarmo asks the Planning Commissioners to respond on the lack of public hearing for this project.

Member Haagsma assumed there would be a public hearing due to the size of the project but does not assert that a public hearing is needed.

Chair Giarmo suggests having the traffic study completed and reported on if a public hearing takes place.

Member Waayenburg suggests a public hearing would be good.

Member Billips agrees the public hearing would give residents the right to voice concerns and transparency.

Member Thomas supports having a public hearing.

Member Burns and Member Rober are satisfied with or without a public hearing.

Chair Giarmo explains the public should know what is happening in the Township in case future issues arise that will need public input. If a simple site plan review suffices for the project instead of a major PUD amendment a public hearing is needed.

Member Haagsma expounds on traffic impact. Past traffic studies are being used to forecast future needs. COVID also affected traffic volume in 2020. Semi-tractor parking along Rapid Dr as they wait to enter the Amazon warehouse is an example of a traffic problem. Member Haagsma wants to see a place for the tractors to stage off the road without disturbing the community.

Applicant Schott addresses the semi-tractor traffic concerns. Extra tractor parking has been added. An alternate site plan for tractor parking can be provided too resulting 59 additional parking spots.

Planner Wells inquires if this additional tractor parking is sufficient.

Shannon Midgley from AMZL delivery stations affirms that the output of the facility will not increase with time.

Motion: By Member Billips, supported by Member Haagsma, to provide a public hearing for the project as part of the site plan review.

Discussion: Member Haagsma requests the traffic study be available at the public hearing.

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

VII. General Discussion

None

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: By Member Thomas, supported by Member Rober, to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 pm.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None
Decision: Passed (7-0)

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the February 25, 2021, Planning Commission 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: March 25, 2021