

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON March 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, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg, Billips

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: David Jirousek, AICP, Planning Consultant
Jeff Gritter, P.E., Township Engineer
Steven Blaine, Dave Van Putten, Jeff Rogers, Jennifer Jager, Kevin Willis,
David Contant, Jeff Rogers, Nate Meyer, Kevin Einfield, Chris Vander
Hoff, Jim Swanson, Todd Bell, Greg Pilbeam, Logan Meyer, Michael Brew,
Brian Cedarquist, Denis Johnson, Andy McLeod, William Johnson, Brentt
Smith, Ryan Vander Hoff, Kim Triplett

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

No modifications.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

1. February 25th, 2021– Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion: By Member Rober supported by Member Waayenberg, to approve the minutes for the February 25th, 2021, Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0).

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jeff Rogers from Land & Company read a letter from Dan Hibma concerning disapproval for the 3500 & 3540 60th St. project. (Exhibit 1)

VI. New Business

1. Public Hearings

a. 1171 & 1175 68th St SE Addington Place

Chair Giarmo called for the applicant to comment on the project.

Kevin Willis and Andy McLeod, representing MCAP, give an overview to the site plans.

Planning Consultant David Jirousek commented on the amendment on behalf of Township. Overall the PUD amendment review shows consistency with the intent of the Master Plan and planning zoning ordinances. The fire department has concerns that are being addressed. The project can be managed by a minor resolution with conditions and staff recommends crafting a resolution and it submitting to the Township Board.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:14 pm. There were no public comments.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:14 pm.

Fireman Van Putten spoke on behalf of the fire department. The discussions between the developer and fire department are favorable and fire access concerns are being resolved.

Member Waayenberg, Rober and Thomas express support for the project.

Motion: By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Rober, to send resolution number 21-03-25-01 PC as submitted by staff with conditions for applicant to finalize plans by coordinated with Township engineering, Byron Gaines Utility Authority, Kent County Road Commission and Kent County Drain Commission to the Township Board of Trustees for consideration. (Exhibit 2)

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

b. 2307 68th St- Preliminary Plat Request for Kentwood Public Schools

Chair Giarmo request developer to speak on the project.

Todd Bell from Kentwood Public Schools presents the preliminary request.

Planning Consultant Jirousek commented on behalf of the Township. The lots are compliant with zoning. Staff would need to ensure variation of two housing models and one canopy tree presence. Planner is unsure if the three lots are part of the existing street light district, if not the recommendation is for a street light district to be established in similarity to the surrounding lots. Overall staff recommends a resolution is created to approve the preliminary plat.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:23 pm. Chair Giarmo announced there was favorable public comment from the neighbors Cronsby submitted by email. (Exhibit 3). There were no additional public comments.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:23 pm.

Chair Giarmo inquires on the street light district. Administrative assistant Kim Triplett submits that street light district is not in place yet but can be done administratively.

Member Haagsma shared support of the project.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Billips, to approve preliminary request and pass resolution 21-03-025-02 PC on to Board of Trustees with conditions submitted by staff. (Exhibit 4)

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

c. 9499 East Paris – Special Use Permit

Chair Giarmo invites Nate Meyer to speak on behalf of the project. Mr. Meyer is present but unavailable for comment.

Planning Consultant Jirousek commented on behalf of the township view on the special use permit and recommends approval with 60 ft. side setback.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:31 pm. There were no public comments.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:32 pm.

Member Haagsma and Giarmo gave consent.

Member Waayenberg expresses a desire to have the 30 ft. setback as application requested.

Member Rober inquires how much of property is vacant. Vacancy of property was confirmed Chair Giarmo.

Planner Jirousek points out that approval of the 30 ft. setback is an option for the Planning Commission.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Thomas, to approve the request for a special use permit with the additional stipulations that 1) size and setback requirements are met as submitted and confirmed by applicant, including a 30 ft. northern side yard setback and 2) the purpose of the project is residential and personal storage, not commercial .

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Waayenberg, Thomas
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Decision: Passed (7-0)

2. Site Plan Review

None

3. Items not requiring a Public Hearing

a. 2410 68th St – Land Division 4:1 ratio waiver

Chair Giarmo request description on content of waiver.

Planning consultant Jirousek summarized waiver based on previous denial of land division. He has no concerns about granting this waiver and preparing a resolution.

Developer Chris Vander Hoff speaks on behalf of the project. He address the concerns of duplexes with high traffic areas by placing turn arounds in the driveways. The developer desires to move on this project for profit margin.

Member Haagsma points out that the current ordinance allow for duplexes and only the 4:1 waiver is stopping the project from moving forward. He is not enamored by the duplex on a major road but asserts there is not a good reason not to allow it and hopes the applicant would make the driveways wide for turnaround capabilities.

Member Waayenberg does not appreciate the pressure from the developer and encourages the commissioners to due diligence and business the way we want to be treated.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Burns, to grant request for ratio waiver and have staff prepare a resolution regarding the waiver to send to the Township Board.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

b. 3500 & 3540 60th ST – Preliminary PUD Rezone Request – Gaines Town Center

Chair Giarmo asks for a representative for the development to speak.

Kevin Einfeld explains the project. He begins with pointing out the shortfall of residential units available in the township as reported by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and showcases River Birch Apartment Homes. Denis Johnson from BDR INC expounds on the

project footprint, noting that eliminating the space between buildings, generally 10 feet is beneficial to aesthetics and maintenance.

Planning consultant Jirousek directs that a preliminary plan approval is the next step before public hearing.

Member Burns questions the fire department access to the backside to the building. Fireman Van Putten needs to see the dimensions of the building to confirm access. Developer Denis Johnson ensures that they have met with the fire marshal and is willing to do analytics to meet criteria.

Member Waayenberg is pleased with the reasoning and renderings of the project specially the buildings in a contiguous line. He agrees that narrow spaces between buildings can lead to mischief, leaves and trouble.

Member Billips expresses this is a good fit and likes the amenities

Member Thomas states the exterior and interior are wonderful.

Member Haagsma is not pleased with the height of the buildings and straight line appearance. Over two thirds of the buildings are rendered three stories not two stories and that increases density concerns. Member Haagsma points out that he has given feedback on these issues before. The small spaces between buildings being problematic could be remedied by increase the spacing to 50 or 75 feet apart instead of contiguous buildings with a straight line presence. He would also like to see where the wetlands lie.

Chair Giarmo confirms the concern about three story building and would like to see less. Other developers have asked and the Planning Commission has maintained the standard of two stories predominantly. She suggests potentially half the buildings be two story.

Member Rober thinks they should all be two stories according to the ordinance.

Member Billips agrees that too many of the buildings are three stories.

Member Thomas concurs and encourages staying consistent with the ordinance.

Motion: By Member Rober, supported by Member Waayenberg, to table project until a revised plan can be submitted with four directives 1) the three story height eliminated 2) clear wetland delineation in plans 3) less straight line appearance 4) and space between buildings.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

VII. General Discussion

1) Duplex Access Memo

Planner Jirousek explains the Township staff concerns that duplex housing standards are inadequate to service the growth in the township. Five options are presented to address this inadequacy in the memo.

Chair Giarmo suggests another option to allow duplexes by right in R-3 and special use permit in R-10. Avoidance of direct access to primary arterial roads in R-3 may be warranted.

Planning Consultant Jirousek suggests assessing good and bad examples in the Township and developing design criteria.

Member Haagsma likes the shared driveway to street option, perhaps a design criteria on how to proceed. Corner lots on subdivision could be a good location for duplexes.

Planner Jirousek comments that Planned Unit Developments (PUD) allow for negotiated access for duplexes. He inquires if a subcommittee should be formed or if Planner Wells & he should work on this.

Member Rober asserts that no subcommittee is needed.

2) Apartment Guidance

Discussion is requested to be held when Planner Dan Wells is present.

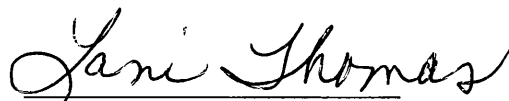
VIII. Adjournment

Motion: By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Thomas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 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 March 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: April 22, 2021, 2021