

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 28th, 2023**

**GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
8555 KALAMAZOO AVENUE SE
CALEDONIA, MICHIGAN 49316**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Wells, Community Development Director; Natalie Davenport, Assistant Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Giarmo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

No changes to the agenda.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

Consideration of the August 24th, 2023, regular Planning Commission meeting minutes.

MOTION: Motion by Waayenberg, support by Thomas to approve the August 24th, 2023, regular Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion carried (7-0).

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Klugiewicz, 7215 Sundale Drive, spoke in opposition to Pine Rest, specifically the lighting, traffic, and noise. Loss of wildlife was also a concern. Concerns over property values decreasing.

Linda Cebula, 532 Sun Valley Court, expressed concern over the entrance to the site off 72nd Street. Sundale and 72nd Street have poor lighting as is; more street lights will need to be installed which will add more light pollution to the area. General concerns over traffic safety on adjacent residential streets.

Tim Olexa, 7243 Sundale Drive, stated that the roadways are not meant to service what is being proposed. Olexa stated that there is a need for this building but believes that there are consequences for what is being proposed regarding lighting, a lack of a buffer between the facility and residential homes, and traffic hazards on adjacent streets. Olexa asked for the maximum setbacks to be applied instead of the minimum setbacks.

Timothy Leugs, 7291 Sundale Drive, stated that he knows Pine Rest serves an important purpose in the community but believes that the new facility will remove the wildlife and nature that serve the patients of Pine Rest. Leugs expressed concern over traffic safety on adjacent streets, especially for kids who ride their bikes in the street.

Phillis Klugiewicz, 7215 Sundale Drive, stated that the fence on Pine Rest's property is falling down on her property. Klugiewicz stated that the new facility would be in her backyard and is opposed to the new construction in its current location. Klugiewicz said she is not opposed to mental health but believes the facility should be moved further south.

Jan Olexa, 7423 Sundale Drive, stated that the traffic increase on adjacent streets will be harmful to pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood. Olexa expressed concern over the loss of wildlife on the vacant parcel. Olexa questioned why the new facility is not being constructed further south.

Jim Tiesma, 7315 Sundale Drive, believes that this project will ruin the quality of life in the neighborhood. Tiesma expressed concern over the new facility being 200 feet from the houses on Sundale.

Wayne Midema, 465 72nd Street, expressed concern over a decrease in property values and potential traffic accidents on adjacent streets.

Jeff Bergeron, 547 72nd Street, believes the facility will serve an important purpose but the location is not ideal. Bergeron expressed concern over traffic hazards within the neighborhood.

Written public comment from 7243 Sundale Drive SE (See Exhibit 1).

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearings

- a. **990 Windrow Street SE – Special Use Permit (Parcel Number 41-22-08-151-032).** *Special Land Use request to allow for a 792 square-foot addition to an existing accessory building, for a total of 1,752 square feet of residential accessory buildings on the property, located in the Residential (RL-10) zoning district.*

Applicant Port stated that he would be using the garage as a hobby wood shop and for additional storage.

Planner Wells gave an overview of the staff briefing memo. The briefing memo meets all of the review standards and staff is recommending approval of the request.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:29 PM. No public comment was made. Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:30 PM.

Member Thomas asked if there was lighting on the building. Applicant Port stated that there would be a light by the door. Chair Giarmo asked if there would be water connections. Applicant Port stated that there is an existing faucet in the garage.

MOTION: Motion by Waayenberg, support by Wiersema to approve the Special Use Permit with the following conditions of approval:

1. The accessory building addition shall be architecturally similar to and the same color as the existing accessory building on the site.
2. The accessory building shall not be utilized for commercial use.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion carried (7-0).

- b. **2688 100th Street – Special Use Permit (Parcel Number 41-22-34-100-010).** *Special Land Use request to allow for a 1,200-square-foot addition to an existing accessory building,*

for a total of 2,800 square feet of residential accessory buildings on the property, located in the Agricultural/Agri-Business (A-B) zoning district.

Property owner Greg Kaiser stated that he is looking to add to his barn. The barn will be utilized for the storage of trucks and a horse. Some of the steel will be removed from the building and will look compatible when completed.

Planner Wells gave an overview of the staff briefing memo. Wells stated that his neighbors have signed in support of the accessory building addition.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:35 PM. No public comment was made. Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:36 PM.

MOTION: Motion by Billips, support by Waayenberg to approve the Special Use Permit with the following condition of approval:

1. The accessory building addition shall be architecturally similar to and the same color as the existing accessory building on the site.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion carried (7-0).

- c. **8735 East Paris Ave – Special Use Permit (Parcel Number 41-22- 23-200-036).** *Special Land Use request to allow for a 3,120-square-foot accessory building, for a total of 5,616 square feet of residential accessory buildings on the property, located in the Agricultural/Rural-Residential (A-R) zoning district.*

Applicant Koster gave an overview of the request. The proposed accessory building will be used as a barn. He is hoping to have the accessory building white or red, not gray.

Planner Wells gave an overview of the request.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:42 PM. No public comment was made. Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:42 PM.

Member Rober asked how many kinds of animals are being kept on the property. Applicant Koster stated that he has horses, steers, hogs, chickens, cats, dogs, turtles, and fish.

MOTION: Motion by Rober, support by Thomas to approve the Special Use Permit as presented.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma,
Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion carried (7-0).

2. Items not Requiring a Public Hearing

a. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – R-3 / R-4 Zoning Districts. *Zoning text amendment proposal to repeal Chapter 7 of the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance and replace it with a new Chapter 7.*

MOTION: Motion by Haagsma, support by Rober to remove the item from the table.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion carried (7-0).

Planner Wells explained that there are some handouts for the Planning Commissioners. The first is a letter of support for the zoning ordinance text amendment from Hanenburg Builders (See Exhibit 2); a letter of support for the zoning ordinance text amendment from Southwood Homes LLC (See Exhibit 3); a revised sliding scale for open space requirements (See Exhibit 4); and some images of neighborhoods in the Township and surrounding communities to show traditional development patterns (See Exhibit 5).

Planner Wells explained that he revised the open space requirements giving the option of requiring 0.025 acres of open space per housing unit versus 0.015 acres of open space per housing unit. This will be a sliding scale based on the unit counts of a specific project.

Planner Wells explained that duplex terminology will be removed in the new ordinance; it will either be single-family or multi-family.

Member Rober said she is on board with the smaller lot sizes, but believes the ordinance should require a variety of housing types like we do for plats.

Chair Giarmo stated that she is not on board with 4,000 square-foot lot sizes, but would be amenable to 6,000 square foot minimum lot sizes if landscaping requirements are increased to ensure that the appearance of multi-family developments is softened. Giarmo believes that landscaping is what differentiates

some of the more established neighborhoods, as seen in Cutlerville, compared to some of the newer developments that Planner Wells provided in the handout.

Planner Wells stated that the landscaping chapter of the zoning ordinance will be updated as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite later this year. Wells asked Chair Giarmo if she would like to see it as a part of Chapter 7 or in the general landscaping ordinance, to which Giarmo responded that she would like to see it in Chapter 7. Wells stated that the standards in the new landscaping ordinance would be applied to these developments, and it may be redundant to have them in two sections of the ordinance. Giarmo said that the requirements need to be strengthened and that we need to ensure that they apply to developments as permitted under Chapter 7.

Member Haagsma concurred that we need stricter landscaping requirements, but stated that street trees are not always the solution as they can cause other problems, particularly when streets become private and we accept narrower rights of way and narrower streets, which will leave little space for the trees to be planted, and eventually they will encroach on the street and cause issues for school buses, fire safety, and snow plows.

Planner Wells stated that we can address this by ensuring the right species are planted by specifying what trees are preferred to be street trees in the ordinance. Wells stated that we have required shrubbery or shade trees in the front yard within PUDs; when a home sells, the developer typically installs the landscaping. Chair Giarmo suggested adding a photo to the landscaping ordinance to give a graphic of what we want these developments to look like and then state what species we want to see. Wells stated that we are looking to integrate more graphics into the zoning ordinance rewrite that is currently ongoing.

Planner Wells stated that the issue is regulating the upkeep of private landscaping over time. Chair Giarmo concurred, but stated that if we require it upfront, most homeowners will likely decide to keep and maintain the landscaping.

Member Waayenberg stated that he is fine with smaller houses as they can be more affordable, and landscaping will help to make these neighborhoods more desirable. Waayenberg stated that he is fine with 6,000 S.F. lots approximately 50 feet in width and 120 feet in length.

Planner Wells stated that much of the feedback in the master plan process was ensuring smaller houses with less yard space not only for younger families but also for those going into retirement and looking to downsize.

The Planning Commission reached a consensus to move forward with 6,500 S.F. lots at a minimum lot width of 50 feet in the Village Neighborhood zoning district.

Member Wiersema stated that he likes the updated architectural standards for Village Neighborhood, and stated that perhaps we should consider requiring stone veneers on the facades of buildings in the commercial zoning districts.

Chair Giarmo asked if we should make it consistent and go with 6,500 S.F. in Section 7.5 for multi-family buildings.

Member Wiersema suggested that there needs to be a larger setback when 3-story multi-family buildings are adjacent to a park or other open space.

Member Haagsma suggested that the front yard setbacks for one to two-story homes are too short (at 15 feet) because it is difficult to park a car with a 15-foot front yard setback; we want to avoid cars hanging over sidewalks.

Planner Wells found that the title in Section 7.6 needs to be changed from “VR” to “VN.”

Planner Wells opened the discussion regarding open space requirements for Village Neighborhood. The previous draft of the ordinance required 0.025 acres of open space per housing unit. Wells suggested that this be scaled down to 0.015 acres per housing unit as this will allow the township to have open space while not deterring development.

Member Haagsma stated that he is in favor of 0.015 acres per housing unit rather than 0.025 acres per housing unit. Haagsma believes this is a reasonable trade-off for allowing smaller lot sizes of 6,500 S.F.

MOTION:	Motion by Waayenberg, support by Rober to table the discussion.
DISCUSSION:	None
AYES:	Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
DECISION:	Motion carried (7-0).

3. Site Plan Review

- a. **8190 Division Avenue SE – PUD Site Plan Review & Rezoning (Parcel Number 41-22-18-300-012).** *Site plan and Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning consideration for the construction of 35 townhome units, 156 apartment units, and 12 commercial units for one parcel currently split-zoned Residential (RL-10) and Single-Family Residential (RL-14).*

Applicant Stuive gave an overview of the proposed changes since the last Planning Commission meeting. More parking has been added near the

commercial and residential units toward the western end of the development. The two southeastern apartment buildings were scaled down to two stories at the southern end. Sign dimensions have been proposed. The landscaping plan was updated to include additional screening along the north adjacent to Brewer Park Place Condominiums. Trash compactor details were also provided.

Applicant Stuive stated that the Kent County Parks Department recently responded about establishing an easement on the southern access drive to connect Brewer Park to the development and ultimately to Division Avenue. The Kent County Parks Department will not pay for the construction or the maintenance of the ten-foot-wide shared-use pathway on the southern portion of the site at this time but is in support of it being constructed and connected to Brewer Park.

Planner Wells stated that the Kent County Parks Department is currently working with the property owner to establish a public easement over the southern access drive, which will be a private street, for public access to Brewer Park. Wells stated that once the private street is constructed and the public easement is established, the Kent County Parks Department will construct the entryway and drive to Brewer Park at the southern property boundary.

Member Haagsma clarified that the Kent County Parks Department would establish a public easement over the south access drive, a private street, for public access as well as an easement for the 10-foot-wide pathway to the south if and when the Kent County Parks Department has the funding to construct and maintain it. If it does not get built, it will remain green space. Applicant Stuive confirmed yes.

Member Haagsma stated that the easement should include the sidewalk to the north of the southern access drive for pedestrian use. Chair Giarmo concurred that the sidewalk should be included in the public easement.

Applicant Stuive stated that his only concern with widening the easement is having parking for the townhouses within the public easement.

Member Haagsma stated that he is okay with the current proposal showing the public connection from Division Avenue to Brewer Park being an established public easement over a private street.

Applicant Stuive read the communication from the Kent County Parks Department dated Thursday, September 28th, 2023: "While we are supportive of non-motorized connections, we currently do not have long-term-plans or funding to construct the proposed bike bath. We also have concerns there are not currently enough path users on Division to justify needing a pathway, and

would like to see long term connection plans before the investment is considered.”

Planner Wells stated that once this project is developed, surrounding parcels may become more attractive to developers and create the need for a nonmotorized pathway to the park.

Member Rober asked where this access drive would connect to Brewer Park. Applicant Burgess stated that it would connect to the parking lot for the soccer fields.

Planner Wells explained that a revised landscaping plan has been submitted.

Applicant Stuive stated that more trees have been added on the northern periphery of the development, abutting both Brewer Park Place Condominiums and the two single-family parcels to the northwest.

There were no issues with the revised landscaping plan.

Member Wiersema stated that he thought the end cap of the southeastern apartment building was going to be scaled down to two stories at the midpoint, not just the southern end cap. Wiersema is pleased with the side elevation renderings but would like to see the height reduced to two stories on the southeastern apartment building from the midpoint of the building south since it is directly adjacent to Brewer Park.

Applicant Stuive stated that the two southeastern apartment buildings were stepped down to two stories at the southern end caps prior to this meeting. Stuive asked if both buildings needed to be stepped down to two stories at the midpoint based on Wiersema’s comments.

Member Wiersema stated that his primary concern is the one apartment building adjacent to the park in the very southeastern corner of the development.

To clarify, Planner Wells stated that the southeastern apartment building needs to be scaled down to two stories at the midpoint, shown as the “18” Step” mark on the site plan.

MOTION: Motion by Haagsma, support by Rober, to recommend approval of the site plan and PUD rezoning to the Township Board of Trustees with the following conditions of approval:

1. Any fixture or luminaire with a lamp shall be a full cut-off type fixture.
2. The applicant shall provide a revised lighting plan showing the proposed setback distances of the light poles to the property lines to be reviewed and approved administratively.
3. The number of parking spaces indicated on the site plan is adequate to serve the site.
4. Bumper guards will not be required within the development.
5. Secure all Township department and outside agency approvals:
 - a. Township Engineer/BGUA.
 - b. Fire Department.
 - c. Kent County Road Commission.
 - d. Kent County Drain Commission.
 - e. Department of Energy, Great Lakes, and Environment (EGLE).
6. The southeast apartment building shall be stepped down to two stories from the midpoint of the building to the southern end of the building.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion carried (7-0).

- b. 377 76th Street SE & 410 72nd Street SE - Pine Rest Children's Hospital Site Plan Review (Parcel Numbers 41-22-07-376-001 & 41-22-07-407-001).** *Consideration of a site plan to allow for the construction of a 135,000-square-foot children's hospital with 66 beds, parking lot installation, lighting, and landscaping.*

Applicant Barr with Nederveld gave an overview of the staff briefing memo. Barr stated that the properties have been zoned O-S for several years.

Applicant Barr stated that the new building needs to have proximity to the existing building as staff will be shared. Barr stated that Pine Rest had considered moving the building further north but they would have to remove buildings and reduce services. Pine Rest also considered moving the building further south but then it would be too far away from the existing buildings. There is an existing retention pond to the west as well as a county drain.

Planner Wells gave an overview of the request. Pine Rest Mental Health Services is requesting approval of a site plan for a new 135,000 square foot (S.F.) Pediatric Behavioral Health Center treatment facility building. The hospital portions of the facility include 74,000 S.F. and 66 beds. Medical offices make up the other 61,000

S.F. Approximately 215 full-time staff will be employed at the facility; 72 beds will transfer from existing treatment facilities at Pine Rest. Lighting, landscaping, parking, and building dimensions were discussed.

Planner Wells explained that two monument signs are shown on the site plan, but only one will be permitted per the zoning ordinance. The lighting data sheets provided indicate LED temperatures at 4000K; staff recommends using soft white lights in the 3000K – 3500K range to reduce the negative effects of bright white light on neighboring properties. Wells stated that more evergreen trees should be planted along the eastern periphery to buffer the building from the adjacent neighborhood on Sundale Drive. Wells suggested that the Planning Commission give staff the authority to review a revised landscaping plan once the changes are made and if the project is approved. Overall, Staff has recommended approval of the project with the conditions listed in the staff report.

Wells stated that the Fire Department required a second access point off 72nd Street. Chair Giarmo asked if the access point on 72nd Street would be publicly accessible. Planner Wells stated that Pine Rest has high-security standards and does not want the public using this entrance, but it will not be gated.

Chair Giarmo suggested that we add conditions requiring a signage plan, landscaping along the eastern periphery, and a recommendation to soften the lighting. Giarmo urged Pine Rest to address neighborhood concerns about installing a fence along the eastern periphery.

Member Haagsma stated that a sidewalk should be installed along the property frontage where the property abuts 72nd Street. Haagsma stated that the landscape plan is difficult to read and does not show the road right-of-way in relation to the proposed landscaping; Haagsma believes the landscaping shown along 72nd Street is likely in the road right-of-way. Member Haagsma expressed concern over the trash and loading areas at the northwest corner of the building and its proximity to 72nd Street and Madison Avenue. Haagsma believes that additional screening should be provided so passersby on 72nd Street and Madison Avenue do not have negative visual impacts. Haagsma found the elevation drawings difficult to read and stated that he would like to see revised elevation drawings.

Member Wiersema concurred that trash and loading areas should be screened. Wiersema expressed concern over noise impacts on the adjacent neighborhood with the location of the courtyards. Wiersema agreed that the elevation drawings are difficult to read, and expressed concern over the height of the parapets on the three fingers. Wiersema believes the northern parking lot adjacent to 72nd Street and the southeast staff parking lot should be consolidated with the southwest parking area west of the proposed building. Wiersema stated that we need to confirm that Pine Rest will only have one monument sign.

Applicant Barr stated that activity in the courtyard is not similar to elementary school recess and that the children will be fully supervised. Barr stated that they proposed two locations for signage internal and external to the campus, which are more so directional signs to identify specific buildings, not monument signs. Barr stated that he would put together a signage plan.

Chair Giarmo asked about security in the new building. Robert Nycamp, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Pine Rest, stated that significant security personnel will be hired. Mary Wiersema, Facilities Manager at Pine Rest, stated that the pull stations will only be in the nurse's offices and in enclosed areas only accessible by staff.

MOTION: Motion by Haagsma, support by Waayenberg to table the request until a revised site plan reflecting the feedback given by the Planning Commission is submitted for review.

DISCUSSION: None

AYES: Thomas, Billips, Waayenberg, Giarmo, Rober, Haagsma, Wiersema

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

DECISION: Motion Carried (7-0).

VII. General Discussion

None.

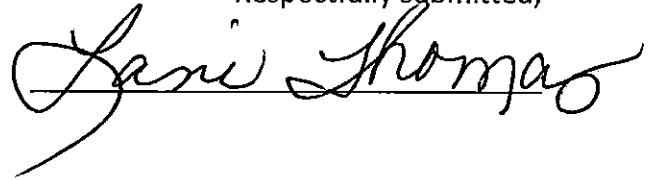
VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Haagsma, support by Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 PM.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the September 28th, 2023, 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lani Thomas". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Lani Thomas,
Secretary,
Gaines Charter Township
Planning Commission

Dated: October 27, 2023