

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON January 28, 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 7:03 pm by Chair Giarmo. A quorum was present.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Wells, Community Development Director
David Jirousek, AICP, Planning Consultant
Jeff Gritter, P.E., Township Engineer
Leon Pratt, Doug Tepper, Dave Van Putten, Steven Blaine, Jeff Rogers,
Jennifer Jager, Mike Snyder, Pat Snyder, Tara Griesmer, Michael McGraw,
David Contant, Mike Sysma, Mike Speedy, Steve Witte, B Walker, Kevin
Einfield, David Moore, Chris VanderHoff, Erik Wierenga, Lucas Matthew,
Randy Sportel, Michael Clark, Kevin Van Popering, Rick Hayward

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

No modifications.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

1. December 17th, 2020– Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion: By Member Rober supported by Member Thomas, to approve the minutes for the December 17th, 2020, Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0).

2. January 11, 2021 – Joint Planning Commission and Board of Trustees Meeting

Motion: By Member Waayenburg, supported by Member Rober, to approve the minutes for the January 11, 2021, Joint Planning Commission and Board of Trustees 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 in response to the questions of age on the rental units in Woodfield and Woodfield East presented in the Joint Planning Commission and Township Board meeting January 11, 2021. Hibma also submitted a letter to the planning commission concerning 60th St development dated from December 17, 2020 (Exhibit 1).

VI. New Business

1. Public Hearings

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

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

Mike McGraw, representing Eastbrook Homes & Signature Land Development, reviewed changes to the site plans. The changes include soften the streetscape, mixing of unit types to increase resale value, adding play equipment, and modifying the cul-de-sac. Overall the changes increase the efficiency of the layout.

Planning Consultant David Jirousek commented on the amendment on behalf of township. He highlighted the increase in single family units, decrease in townhome units, increase green space and street names have changed. There is no anticipation of any negative impact on the aesthetic value due to the changes. Overall the PUD amendment review shows consistency with the intent of the master planning zoning ordinance. The fire department has concerns with narrow alleyways and turn radius and Engineer Jirousek requests that those concerns be resolved.

Fireman Van Putten speaks on behalf of the fire department. The islands in the middle of cul-de-sacs are not ideal for ladder trucks. The alleyway near townhomes 9 & 10 are narrow and limit access for fire fighters. The new street names are appreciated.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:27 pm. There were no public comments.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:28 pm.

Motion: By Member Waayenburg, supported by Member Thomas, for staff to prepare a resolution to approve of the major PUD amendment and that staff and developer work with the fire department to address the concerns discussed.

Discussion: None

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

b. 2410 68th St- Preliminary Plat Request for Hoffman Meadows – Phase 1

Chair Giarmo request developer to speak on the project.

Chris Vander Hoff from Bosco Construction presents the preliminary request. The initial plans are changing involving removing duplexes and two lots. Their engineer is working with the drain commission. The project is waiting on road commission information before determining street tree plans, sidewalks and square footage on lots.

Planning consultant Jirousek commented on behalf of the township. The initial phase is 15 acres, just under 40 lots. Duplex component went out on public notice but now are excluded from the plan. The 42 single lots are now reduced to 40 single family lots. The public record and packet reflect that. Plans are compliant with development standards and current ordinances but lot areas need to be recorded on plans. Due to potential change of housing variety from what was submitted by developer, staff would need to ensure variation of housing mix will be met administratively. Township engineer expressed concern that the county drain commissioner's comments were not completely addressed and could affect the development layout.

Engineer Jeff Gritter expounds that the county drain commissioner did not like retention pond near lots 52-59 and he anticipates a high volume of complaints due to impact on back yard of those lots.

Community Development Coordinator Dan Wells inquires if the developer has researched for wetlands on the property. Developer Chris Vander Hoff asserts no formal survey done because there is no evidence of wetlands.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:56 pm.

Resident Doug Tepper, 6586 Gracepoint Dr., voices traffic concerns with the approval of this development and inquires on ordinances about traffic flow. Member Haagsma states the township has no authority to set speed limits on a county road or put in a traffic light. Traffic signals increase the number of traffic accidents. Traffic volume and traffic light spacing could warrant a traffic light. Resident Tepper inquires if duplexes along 68th St could happen. Chair Giarmo and Planner Wells confirms they are allowed if they are within ordinance.

Resident David Moore, 6845 Terra Cotta, states concern that wetlands are present. He has put a trench on his property for drainage and still sees pooling. He suggests a thorough wetlands study.

Resident Leon Pratt, 2490 Crystal Meadows, expresses concerns with how much water will be present in the collection pond. He also raises public safety concerns with traffic near the elementary school and day care. There are no near crosswalks, Hanna Lake and Kalamazoo Ave are the nearest. He inquires if there is sewer connection. Engineer Gritter confirms sanitary sewer connection.

Resident Pat Snyder, 6690 Passons Court, asks to see an example of the developer's previous building projects. Developer Chris Vander Hoff sites Jasonville Farms east section and Wildflower Creek across from Bailey's Grove with a price point \$ 300,000--350,000 range.

Resident Tara Griesmer, 6907 Terra Cotta, expresses concerns with drainage of development and how it will affect her property.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 8:20 pm.

Member Haagsma shared concerns with approval of phase one without drain commissioner clarification and would like drainage package for the enter development established. Engineer Gritter shares concern yet asserts it can be worked out. Members Rober, Thomas and Burns are concerned with drainage also. Planner Wells will submit additional public comment received by mail and email in minutes (Exhibit 2).

Motion: By Member Rober, supported by Member Thomas, to table preliminary request until a complete drainage plan is submitted by developer.

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. 6658 E Paris- PUD Amendment – Consideration of Resolution

Chair Giarmo request description on content of resolution.

Planning consultant Jirousek summarized resolution that road access to East Paris be granted (Exhibit 3).

Motion: By Member Waayenburg, supported by Member Rober, to send resolution number 21-01-28 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 a representative for the development to speak.

Mike Speedy with American Kendall Properties explains changes in preliminary plans. Two apartment buildings close to single family homes were removed and utilities and traffic impact are being addressed.

Chair Giarmo requests utility discussions. Planner Wells explains cost estimates are being gathered to Engineer Gritter.

Member Waayenberg & Thomas comment high density apartments are not ideal in this area. Chair Giarmo and Planner Wells remind commissioners how the Joint Planning Commission & Township Board meeting shows there is a strong demand for all types of housing. Member Thomas comments on low number of townhomes available. Developer Speedy responds that retail and park sections would not be feasible without the diversity in housing proposed. Member Burns clarifies apartments are not bad if style is good. Member Billips reminds that township design standards should give value to and refers to the need for stepping stones in housing to lead to ownership but cautions apartments have a stigma. Chair Giarmo requests design and interior images. Developer Speedy shares interior images. Member Thomas has seen the developers work and attests it is high quality with a target to younger, transient professionals.

c. 3500 60th St – Primary PUD Rezone Request

Chair Giarmo requests background information on the project.

Developer Kevin Enfield highlights changes to plan in modified heights and asks for final thoughts before presentation.

Chair Giarmo recommends provide interior and exterior images, and what two units look like together. Member Haagsma comment that he would like to see what buildings really look like with color and texture. There will not likely be a traffic light provided nor a need for a traffic impact study. Also noted that Paul Henry Trail could connect to this development through sidewalk for bicyclists and pedestrians. Member Waayenburg supports three story building height if it blends in with the sight line from the street and asks if length is a potential problem. Planner Wells submits that adequate fire access is imperative but the length of the building does not matter. Member Waayenburg thinks it a good space for high density.

d. Planning Department 2020 Annual Report

Chair Giarmo questioned how much population has grown after reviewing report. Planner Wells will provide population statistics. A population spike occurred this year, not as significant as in years past. Annual report includes ordinance updates and rezoning from the year. Maps will be updated in eREGIS to be accurate online. Master Plan updates will be attained. Planning Department gained Planning and Zoning Assistant Jenn Jager. Parks and recreation are looking to increase green space and perhaps acquire funds to buy land for open space and make improvements to parks. Planner Wells request information of any opportunity. Code enforcement is happening. Deputy Vander Molen has helped and he and Supervisor DeWard are working with Planner Wells on a revised ticketing system. Administration & meeting attendance was great despite pandemic. Planner Wells is grateful to have an experienced and efficient planning commission. Zoning board of appeals variance summaries are included in annual report. Consultants are doing an excellent job, Engineer Gritter and Planning Consultant Jirousek. Budget has increased slightly but in the general township budget the share is smaller. As training for Planning Commissioners arise Planner Wells will inform commissioners. Chair Giarmo confirmed that the report needs to pass the Zoning Board of Appeals and be submitted to the Township Board.

Motion: By Member Rober, supported by Member Waayenburg, to submit 2020 Annual report to the Township Board.

Discussion: None

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed (7-0)

e. Draft Planning Commission Schedule and Membership

Chair Giarmo says planning commission schedule looks good. Member Haagsma submits we keep officers the same.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Waayenberg, to keep the same officers on the planning commission

Discussion: None

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 Rober, supported by Member Haagsma, to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 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 January 28, 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: February 25, 2021