

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS  
Minutes January 26, 2016**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, January 26, 2016.

Present were Chair Wayne Harrall, Vice Chair Bev Wall, Secretary Dave Van Dyke, Commissioners; Scott Conners, Mark Prein, Bill Culhane and Doug Kochneff. Also present were Township Attorney Ross Leisman and Planning Assistant Kara Hammond.

**1. Approve minutes of November 24, 2015 meeting.**

**Bev Wall**, seconded by **Bill Culhane**, moved to approve the minutes with the following correction;

- p.2, 2nd paragraph, last sentences to read; "Conners said he would like to see more than a *simple* 100 year *detention* plan. *Incorporate some low impact development techniques.*"

**Motion approved unanimously, 7-0.**

**2. Public Hearing - PVL Investments, LLC - Request for a Special Land Use, for a home for the elderly or retired, to be located at 730 Forest Hill Ave SE.**

Due to a conflict of interest, chair Wayne Harrall recused himself from this item.

Dave Baylis, of Provision Living, gave the presentation and power point;

- ♦ brief recap and explained the proposed project they would like to build on the current YMCA site
- ♦ here (in GRT), sees a need for this type of facility
- ♦ goal is to be a good neighbor and part of the community
- ♦ only 80 licensed beds here in GRT, that compares to the type of beds they provide
- ♦ they are a small business; hands on, privately held -
- ♦ been in business for 10 years, proud of what they do and the services they provide
- ♦ all about taking care of seniors within communities, creating a caring environment, radiant environment for them
- ♦ assisted living and independent living; 2 story, 90,000 sq. ft., 114 residential apartments -- reduced original proposed size by 20%
- ♦ now within the 100 ft. setback
- ♦ provided 100 year storm water plan
- ♦ feels the proposal now fits within the criteria and in compliance with all requirements
- ♦ provide the best amenities, and provide transportation -- making their residents continue to be part of the community, environment they like to provide
- ♦ currently there is a senior networking within the FH Aquatic Center
- ♦ no longer connecting to the drive to the north (with the school)
- ♦ pride themselves on the ability to match and be a part of the community; regarding elevations, building materials, -- focus on the community and make sure the building reflects the surrounding community and "fits" within the area
- ♦ smallest apartment would be 400 sq. ft.
- ♦ from an ordinance standpoint; they meet all the requirements
- ♦ senior housing, is often used as transitional areas, and feel very strongly that this is a great use for that property location (between residential to the north and "commercial" to the south)

- ◊ noted the applicant has reached out to the two residents, living along Ada Drive, and stated they both are in support of the proposed use
- ◊ there has been a discussion of "senior living" within the Township; but those include all spectrums of the scope, there are only 80 comparable beds in the Township and they are all full
- ◊ building height is lower than the performing arts building (46-63ft) and the church (61 ft), stated the height will be very appropriate and conducive for that area

Attorney Ross Leisman gave the legal report.

Bill Culhane asked the applicant for clarification about the six proposed structures. Dave Baylis said that is indeed a future expansion plan, but right now they are focusing on just the main building. Dave Van Dyke stated the number of beds dropped by 34 beds and asked the applicant for clarification on the total square footage. Dave Baylis said the actual footprint is now 90,000 sq. ft.

Dave Van Dyke verified they need 10 acres to meet the Special Land Use requirement and asked about the 1+ acre located on Ada drive. Dave Baylis said they will most likely end up selling that portion of land. Van Dyke said he wants to make sure the applicant is planning on keeping the minimum requirement of land; 10 acres. Van Dyke asked the applicant to clarify 'HFA'. Dave Baylis explained it is, "Home For Aged" -- facilities for 21 and higher and have a different licensure. Baylis stated it is a licensure type; licensed to take care of age population, regulated under specific licensure -- different stages/beds and care is different. Bill Culhane asked if there are nurses on staff or licensed care givers. Baylis replied nurses.

The applicant noted the Fire Department required they provide two hydrants on site. Scott Conners said he would like to stick to the 24 ft. minimum drive width, for safety reasons, and feels it is important not to budge on that number. Bill Culhane asked about medical call volume. Dave Baylis said they average around 3 per month. Baylis explained they staff to their need, which they are allowed to do because of the way they are licensed.

Dave Van Dyke asked if all 116 are HFA beds. Dave Baylis said 104 are HFA beds.

Scott Conners stated the layout has changed quite a bit, and was curious if there was any particular reason. Dave Baylis said they went to a building that really made more sense for the site, explaining they reconfigured the layout to fit. Bill Culhane asked what portion of beds will be designated to memory. Dave Baylis stated 30 beds.

Doug Kochneff said the detention area looks to be 5 ft. deep and does not notice any landscaping, asked how that will be cared for. The applicants engineer stated the water is divided and goes two ways, preserving that flow. Bill Culhane asked if they have reached out to the school district in regards to the water area to the northeast of the property. Mark Prein stated the utility use would need to be addressed; an easement would be required from the school.

**Scott Conners**, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:44 pm.  
**Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.**

Ken Ruehrdanz, 612 Arrowhead Ave SE;

- ⊞ 25 year resident of the Township, lives approx. a block away from the location
- ⊞ Very pleased about the proposal, supports the idea 100%
- ⊞ Make one suggestion and asked that the speed limit be lowered on Forest Hill Ave

Tom Lawrence, 820 & 850 Forest Hill Ave SE;

- ▣ pleased to see the reduction in building size
- ▣ One concern; storm water coming down Forest Hills Ave - despite the significant improvements the Township and Kent County did years ago, they still get a significant amount of flooding at the 820 property and the Marco property -- concerned about taking a lot of green area and putting all the runoff into Forest Hills Ave
- ▣ Other than that, supports the proposal -- agrees with the "transitional" statement of the building

Jacquelyn Brayman, 585 Carnoustie Ave SE;

- ▣ suggest that this proposal is the third option on the list; 1-Twp buy it and turn it into a park 2-FH buy it and use it for the school's needs. -- seeing as how those first two are not options, she supports the proposal
- ▣ wonderful use of the property, so long as the purpose is to make sure the residents have a high quality of living in this domicile -- wants the dignity of elderly people to be preserved
- ▣ likes the fact the applicant is very community orientated

**Doug Kochneff**, seconded by **Dave Van Dyke**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:52 pm.

**Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.**

Dave Van Dyke stated he is quite pleased with the revised plan that was submitted explaining it is done on a much better scale and commends the applicant. Van Dyke continued stating that he recommends, despite what the Fire Department said, that the drive should and will be a minimum of 24 feet. Van Dyke (talking in regards to the SLU standards) touched base on whether the use would be a burden to the surrounding community, rethought the process and stated he is happy with the 3 calls on average a month.

Bill Culhane stated he too feels strongly about the 24 ft. minimum width, regardless of what the Fire Department says, bottom line it is a matter of safety. Culhane said he too would like to see some landscaping and natural plantings around the detention basin.

Scott Connors suggested having the applicant submit a more detailed landscape plan providing the suggested items to the Site Plan Review committee. Doug Kochneff stated he is having a hard time with the Fine Arts Center being so visible and sees the need to focus on some landscaping to the north of the property as well. Dave Van Dyke suggested the applicant work directly with Bob Bruggink, Township Engineer, in order to figure out the detention issues, etc. Mark Prein brought up the landscaping to the east; understands that area is part of Phase 2, but feels that area still needs to be addressed. Prein also noted his apprehension about the lack of water on the property; pertaining to the hydrants, 8 in verses 16 in water main.

Dave Van Dyke stated as far as the other 7 standards for the SLU, after the changes to the site plan that has been submitted; the applicant meets all 7.

**Mark Prein**, seconded by **Scott Connors**, moved to approve the Special Land Use request for a home for the elderly or retired to be located at 730 Forest Hill Ave SE with the following conditions;

- ◆ 24 ft. minimum drives
- ◆ Landscape (to be submitted for Site Plan Review Committee approval)
  - ▣ eastside
  - ▣ inside ring road

- ✦ Integrate NW storm basins; with plantings, meet Township Engineer's requirements
- ✦ Appropriate easements
- ✦ Work with Township Engineer to address storm water
- ✦ Loop water main
- ✦ Trail connection/access by foot

**Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.**

**3. Informal Discussion - Continental Properties - Request to amend the existing HC-PUD to include the proposed residential site plan (*Springs at Knapp's Corner*) consisting of 14, two-story apartment buildings on 28.5 acre parcels located at 2500-2570 East Beltline Ave NE.**

Erik Hahn & Bridget O'Meara, with Continental Properties, gave a power point presentation;

- ▣ Milwaukee based developer of hospitality, apartment and retail properties throughout the US
- ▣ Privately held
- ▣ Developed properties over 16 different states
- ▣ Brief overview; consistent with HC-PUD zoning
- ▣ Respect the integrity of the single-family residential to the east through significant buffering along Dunnigan Ave
- ▣ 14 buildings, 280 units
- ▣ Studios-950/mo -- 3 bedroom-2,000/mo
- ▣ Only entry point will be along the East Beltline
- ▣ 1.8 acre detention pond on northeast area of site
- ▣ 2 story with ground level entry -- attached and detached garages will be available
- ▣ Clubhouse will be 4,000 sq. ft.
- ▣ Amenities; fitness center, pet playground, clubhouse kitchen, car care center, workout facility, pool and lounge area
- ▣ Second demographic renters are 50 years old and up
- ▣ Over 6,400 new households will be created within Kent County in the next 3 years
- ▣ 59% of those new households will be rental households, meaning that 3,827 will be looking for housing
- ▣ Resident screening is rigorous -- analyzed by income, payment history, criminal history, fraud alerts, must provide 300% of monthly rent rate
- ▣ Only 4.7% of residents are school age children (age 5-17)
- ▣ 52% are young adults
- ▣ Per Capita Income; GRT \$41,300 (vs the highest at \$64,000)
- ▣ Class-A multifamily developments DO NOT HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACTS on adjacent home values (backed with charts, analysis, etc...)
- ▣ Respects natural features of the land by preserving over 8 acres of wooded natural area, including wetlands -- advantage with the proposed cluster buildings
- ▣ Limits any impacts to existing single-family housing by providing a significant buffer along Dunnigan Ave (no buildings within 200 ft. of Dunnigan)
- ▣ All vehicular traffic has access to the East Beltline, preventing intrusion of vehicular traffic into residential areas
- ▣ Class-A market rate, upscale apartment complex

Scott Connors asked how the applicant plans on keeping the natural area preserved. Erik Hahn stated they will not touch or develop that land without coming back to the Planning Commission or Township Board. Dave Van Dyke asked about getting a pedestrian path from Dunnigan to the East Beltline, thus

providing access for all residents. Erik Hahn stated the site contains significant topography and considering there is a rather substantial DOT retaining wall, and if it's a compliant route it will have to comply with ADA requirements, and looking at it right now it is going to be a large financial expense but they will continue to work on making some type of pathway work.

Scott Connors asked the applicant if they have looked at the grades and actually started mapping the building footprints out. Erik Hahn stated they just started.

Doug Kochneff asked the applicant to clarify the area is indeed gated and fenced. Erik Hahn stated yes it is.

Erik Hahn said Stonefall of Ada and the Ridges of Cascade are about the only two comparisons to what they are proposing in the area.

Mark Prein asked, with the current proposed building configuration, what they predict the population to be. Erik Hahn replied 466 up to 475, possibly.

Attorney Ross Leisman gave the legal report.

Wayne Harrall said the biggest issue is going to be creating a decent buffer for the residents along Dunnigan Ave. Harrall suggested the applicant reconfigure the buildings to be further away than 200 ft. as he stated he is a little concerned with the density and the building locations. Harrall said he understands there is a need, and the buildings look nice, the access to the East Beltline is sufficient and likes that they provide another emergency access, but the overall density is a concern.

Scott Connors stated he is concerned with the fact there is only one access point out to the busiest street in the Township.

Erik Hahn asked about the density and would like some feedback from the Planning Commission. Dave Van Dyke said he would feel more comfortable if it fit the actual requirements, at or under the allowed density. Bev Wall agreed and said she too would like to see the applicant come in with a lower unit count.

Scott Connors said it puts the Planning Commission in an awkward position -- having a developer asking for more density for them to have more financial stability with their proposed project.

Wayne Harrall opened the floor for public comment/input at 8:58pm.

Dan Banister, owns homes (single family homes) along Dunnigan; asking the Planning Commission to help keep his investment safe, concerned that they met so much resistance from Byron Township, read the master plan stating he is their buffer between the property and Dunnigan Ave and asked the Planning Commission to take everything and everyone in to consideration.

Martin Andree thinks the use is fine for this but thinks the project could be better, said the three properties will become eye sores and encourages the Planning Commission to take a long look at this and encourage the application to include the three parcels.

Bill Culhane said the density is a key point; he likes the fact that there are two key elements of green space, but said it means they just squeezed everything else.

The applicant asked if it is the density or sheer magnitude of the proposed project. Dave Van Dyke said it is the density they are proposing; and would like to see the applicant try and get their proposal to fit within the Grand Rapids Township Zoning Ordinance requirements and calculate up to the ten maximum.

**Dave Van Dyke**, seconded by **Scott Conners**, moved to set a Public Hearing for the February 23, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting in addition to a text amendment regarding studio apartment sizing and parcels along Dunnigan Avenue.

**Motion approved unanimously, 7-0.**

**4. General Public Comment.**

No persons were present for the Public Comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.



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David A. Van Dyke, Secretary