

**GRAND RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
May 10, 2016**

A regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:00 pm with the following present; Greg Timmer (filling in as Chair), Secretary Jim Kubicek and Lee VanPopering. Also present were Township Attorney Jim Scales and Planning/Zoning Assistant Kara Hammond.

1. Approval of the April 12, 2016 minutes.

Lee VanPopering, seconded by **Jim Kubicek**, moved to approve the minutes with no changes. **Motion approved unanimously, 3-0.**

2. #2016-02 - Jack & Kathy Crothers - 2240 Leffingwell Ave NE - The applicant is requesting a variance to allow construction of a solar panel array to be located in front of the principal building.

Kathy & Jack Crothers, owners and applicant, gave a brief presentation;

- a gentleman from a solar company came out and said the front yard was the best placement
- thick woods and wooded on both the side and rear yards
- 18 neighbors/signatures saying they would rather the solar panels be in the front yard
- 106 feet from house, 125 feet from road, 140 feet from north property line and 250 feet from south property line
- property is heavily wooded and would like to keep the back portion of their lot that way
- very serious about renewable energy

Lee VanPopering asked if the applicant will have to cut down any trees in the front in order to make the solar panel work there. The applicants stated they have already moved 4 apple trees but there is at least 20 plus trees from where the solar panel would be placed to the road.

VanPopering asked the applicant about the actual size of the panels; the applicant stated they would actually need 11 panels versus the 8 shown on the proposed plan.

Lee VanPopering asked the applicant if there was every any thought of putting the panels on the garage. The applicants said yes, but noted the solar panels would be on a bracket facing the road and would be an eye soar for anyone who looks at their home from the road.

Lee VanPopering said he is not totally against this request; he just needs to see the plans to full scale before voting on it.

Jim Kubicek, seconded by **Lee VanPopering**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:15 pm. **Motion approved unanimously, 3-0.**

Steve Renkema, 2181 Leffingwell Ave NE;

- ♦ neighbor, lives directly across the street from the applicant
- ♦ would impact him more than any other neighbor and he supports the applicant's request

Reid Morris, 2885 North New Town Dr NE;

- ♦ in support of the request and commented on the Township's overall support for renewable energy sources for allowing the applicant this opportunity (versus completely denying the request)
- ♦ noted the proposed improvement would go largely unnoticed and no obstruction to any passer-byer

Patricia Hornick, 2150 New Town Dr NE;

- ♦ supporter of solar energy
- ♦ understands the need for some clarifications of dimensions and placement, but is here in support of the request.

Lee **VanPopering**, seconded by **Jim Kubicek**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:22 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 3-0.

Jim Kubicek said his main problem is that there are no specifications on solar energy in the Ordinance and feels it is something that should be addressed as it may be an ongoing item; as it does not qualify as a building or accessory building, in his opinion.

Lee VanPopering would like to see the requested solar panel array drawn to scale and professionally, that way there will not be a question on what will be approved to be built.

Greg Timmer reiterated the fact that the applicant needs to make sure to submit accurate plans; to scale, with correct dimensions, for the June meeting.

Lee **VanPopering**, seconded by **Jim Kubicek**, moved to table the variance request to allow construction of a solar panel array to be located in the front of the principle building at 2240 Leffingwell Ave NE.

Motion approved unanimously, 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Kubicek