

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS  
Minutes of the February 24, 2004, Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, February 24, 2004, at 7:30 p.m.

Present were Chair Michael J. Fuller, Vice-chair Susan Molhoek, Secretary Susan B. Lovell, Commissioners David A. VanDyke, Wayne A. Harrall, Stephen C. Fry, and James Saalfeld. Also present was Township Planner Susan Thomas.

1. Approve minutes of the regular meeting of January 27, 2004.

Wayne Harrall, seconded by Stephen Fry, moved to approve the minutes with three typo corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approve minutes of the special meeting of February 10, 2004.

Wayne Harrall, seconded by James Saalfeld, moved to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Letter from Kevin Einfeld regarding development at 3 Mile Road and the East Beltline Avenue.

Michael Fuller read to the Commission a letter written by Kevin Einfeld regarding future development.

4. Continued consideration of the County of Kent's and the John Ball Zoological Society's request for a Special Land Use to establish a wildlife animal park and ancillary uses.

Michael Fuller stated the areas of concern that have been previously received from the Township residents.

Time was given to the public to address the Planning Commission. Public Comments were as such:

Tom Briggs, Belmont resident, stated that he owns a camp ground and asked the Commission to prevent RV camping on the wildlife animal park premises.

Kay McDonough, 4535 Leonard Street, spoke in opposition to the wildlife animal park and asked how can this area be rezoned when the public has not yet voted on the issue.

Larry McDonough, 4535 Leonard Street, stated that he had called about the traffic study and stated that the study did not include the Township Park that is across the street from the proposed wildlife animal park.

Sue Thomas summarized a staff report dated February 19, 2004, prepared by Township Planning Consultant Mark Sisson.

Susan Molhoek stated that she has property that abuts Leonard Street and asked the Commissioners if they felt there was a conflict of interest. The consensus of the Commissioners was that it was not a conflict.

The Commissioners discussed the outline of identified concerns. Items of discussion were: construction phases; traffic to the park; buffers/physical improvements; surface water quality; odors; Township ordinance compliance; ancillary uses; property values; hours of operation; and security of the park.

The Commissioners discussed putting together a Park Plan Review Committee to review the future proposed wildlife park plan. The committee will consist of three members of the Planning Commission and one or two appointed ex-officio neighborhood representatives.

The Commissioners discussed Section 24.11 (General Standards) of the new Zoning Ordinance to formulate a decision on a special land use permit for this applicant. Items of discussion were: size, location and character of the proposed project; vehicular and pedestrian traffic; if the development would unreasonably impact surrounding properties; if the special land use would interfere with development of adjacent land; what the property is planned for in the Master Plan; unreasonably burden the capacity of public services; and operation so that the public health will be protected.

Susan Lovell, seconded by Susan Molhoek, approved the special land use subject to the following conditions:

#### **Conditions of Approval for the Kent County Wildlife Park**

The special use permit for the Kent County Wildlife Park as to be located and operated on the following described property includes the following as conditions of approval.

##### Legal Description

Part of the Northeast one-quarter Section 23 and the Northwest one-quarter Section 24, Town 7 North, Range 11 West, Grand Rapids Township, Kent County, Michigan, described as: **BEGINNING** at the North one-quarter of said Section 24; thence South 00°56'21" West 2345.17 feet along the North-South one-quarter line of said Section 24; thence North 89°03'39" West 210.35 feet; thence South 00°56'21" West 113.00 feet; thence South 01°49'21" West 169.75 feet; thence North 88°10'54" West 510.01 feet along the East-West one-quarter line of said Section 24; thence North 01°49'06" East 213.00 feet; thence North 88°10'54" West 1405.00 feet; thence South 01°49'06" West 213.00 feet; thence North 88°10'54" West 545.12 feet along said East-West one-

quarter line to the West one-quarter corner of said Section 24; thence South 89°43'23" West 581.09 feet along the East-West one-quarter line of said Section 23; thence North 00°51'15" East 1314.19 feet along the East line of the West 750 feet of the Southeast one-quarter, Northeast one-quarter of said Section 23; thence North 89°20'30" East 410.17 feet; thence North 00°51'15" East 1283.84 feet; thence North 88°57'50" East 182.72 feet along the South line of the North 33.00 feet of said Northeast one-quarter of Section 23; thence South 01°06'39" West 293.82 feet along the West line of said Section 24; thence South 88°03'56" East 1333.14 feet along the South line of the North 10 acres of the Northwest one-quarter, Northwest one-quarter of said Section 24; thence North 01°01'31" East 326.85 feet along the East line of the Northwest one-quarter, Northwest one-quarter of said Section 24; thence South 88°03'56" East 1332.65 feet along the North line of said Section 24 to the point of beginning.

**EXCEPT** commencing at the North one-quarter corner of said Section 24; thence South 00°56'30" West 98.68 feet along the North-South one-quarter line of said Section 24; thence North 89°03'30" West 30.40 feet to the point of beginning; thence North 89°03'30" West 2.60 feet; thence North 43°40'30" West 94.13 feet; thence South 88°22'30" East 68.00 feet; thence South 00°01'30" West 66.00 feet to the point of beginning.

**ALSO EXCEPT** the West 160 feet of the East 250 feet of the South 10 feet of the North 43 feet of the Northwest one-quarter of said Section 24.

**ALSO EXCEPT** the South 110 feet of the North 290 feet of the West 10 feet of the East 43 feet of the Northwest one-quarter of said Section 24.

Subject to restrictions, easements and rights of way of record.

165.95 acres

### Conditions of Approval

#### 1. General Use

The general and primary nature of Wildlife Park shall consist of natural and man-made wildlife and wildlife habitat and displays developed and operated for the enjoyment and education of the general public. Facilities may include those listed and described in the Preliminary Concept Plan dated 22, November 2002 and other support material submitted as part of the special use permit applications. These facilities may include but are not limited to an entry pavilion, an education building, administrative offices, a restaurant, an animal hospital, a gift shop, and a variety of feature animal attractions, and support facilities. Future construction and development plans shall adhere to the April 2003 Kent County Wildlife Park Impact Study.

2. Conceptual Plan

The Concept Plan hand-dated February 18, 2004 (*the most recent Concept Plan is erroneously still dated January 2004. The date should be corrected and a new drawing included in the record*) shall serve as the general plan to which approval of the special use permit is granted. The representations on the Concept Plan including primary access and secondary access points and the relationships of structures and denoted attractions, activity areas, parking and support facilities shall generally govern the more detailed Preliminary Development Plans that are required to be presented and approved by the Township under the provisions below.

3. Preliminary Development Plans

Prior to commencement of the development, a detailed preliminary development plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Commission after review and recommendation of Wildlife Park Review Committee (3 Planning Commission members and 1 or 2 appointed ex-officio neighborhood representatives). The Preliminary Development Plan shall contain the following information, unless specifically waived by the Planning Commission:

- a. Date, north arrow, and scale which shall not be less than 1" = 100'.
- c. Final Legal description of property.
- d. Size of parcel.
- e. All lot or property lines with dimensions.
- f. Location of all buildings within 100 feet of the property lines.
- g. Location and dimensioned footprints of all proposed structures and activity areas to be located on the on the site.
- h. Location and dimensions of all existing and proposed streets, sidewalks or other pedestrian walkways, driveways, parking areas, including total number of spaces and typical dimensions.
- i. Size, location, and uses of all areas devoted to open space.
- j. Existing vegetation and proposed landscaped areas and buffer strips.
- k. All wetland areas or bodies of water.
- l. Existing topographical contours at a minimum of 2-foot intervals.
- m. Delineation of areas of cutting and filling.
- n. Scaled and accurate cross-sectional and profile views of the park facilities representing the proposed site lines at various locations around the perimeter of the site. Unless otherwise indicated or required by the Planning Commission at the time of preliminary plan approval these views shall be provided for the site lines indicated on the attached "Figure 16, Site Line Summary" as originally included in the Kent County Wildlife Park Impact Study and the following additional locations.
  1. Leonard Street, 200 feet west of Crahen in a south, southeast direction.
  2. Leonard Street 800 feet west of Crahen in a due south direction.
  3. Other locations as determined necessary by the Planning Commission to evaluate the appropriateness of proposed screening and facility orientation.

- o. A development phasing plan describing initial and subsequent phases and the facilities to be installed in each phase both internal and external to the site. Phase 1 shall at a minimum include all necessary off site improvements identified herein.

The Preliminary Development Plan shall adhere to the following general and specific site design standards.

- a. Perimeter setbacks, screening, buffering, and transitioning of internal uses and facilities for the purposes of eliminating and preventing noises, odors and other nuisances from having impacts on adjoining properties.
- b. Well separated internal walkways buffered from internal and external traffic hazards and linkages that will integrate the facility with existing and proposed external walkways.
- c. The preservation of significant natural features and the utilization of methods to integrate and harmonize natural features with signs, lighting, landscaping and construction materials.
- d. Off-street parking, loading, refuse, and other service areas shall be located and screened by natural and man-made site features that minimize the emission of noise, glare, vibration, and odors.
- e. A "build-out" scenario illustrating future development areas that may be used to support long term expansion of facilities shall be provided. Areas that will be dedicated as perpetual open spaces for the purpose of avoiding overcrowding of on site facilities and activity areas in both the initial and final phases of development shall also be indicated.
- f. Environmentally appropriate methods and practices utilized in the application and storage of pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals and in the management of animal wastes and other bi-products of the facility, including limited composting operations.
- g. Detailed site and perimeter safety, security, and emergency measures to be employed for the protection of both animals and humans in and surrounding the facility. Routine measures as well as measures to be employed during special events shall be provided.
- h. Facility phasing plans and approaches to design and construction will minimize future negative impacts and disruptions on surrounding properties and the community at large as phases and expansions are initiated.
- i. Perimeter Features and Setbacks
  1. Perimeter Fencing: An eight-foot non-climbable fence shall enclose the entire perimeter. The fence shall be located a minimum of 100 feet from the property line or street right of way, behind the required perimeter screening. The fence shall have decorative characteristics at entrance areas and other points where screening must be interrupted and where the fence will be highly visible to residents and passersby. The Township may authorize the use of barbed wire as part of the perimeter fencing in areas where the added security is appropriate.

2. Animal containment areas: All animal containment areas shall be located at least 175 feet from the perimeter property line or street right of way.
3. Buildings: No buildings or structures shall be located within 200 feet of the property line or street right of way.
4. Parking loading and support areas: No parking and loading or maintenance or support areas shall be located within 150 feet of the property line or street right of way.
5. Service Road A service road may be provided near the perimeter of the site as generally indicated on the concept plan. This service road will be internal to the security fence and external to all other site improvements with the exception of the a portion of the main entrance drive.
6. Pathway. A pedestrian pathway shall be constructed encircling the Wildlife Park. The majority of the pathway will be within the public street right-of-way. Along portions of Leonard Street, Crahen, and Bradford, and elsewhere where the Park property does not directly abut the public right-of-way, the pedestrian path will be provided within the park boundary between private properties and the perimeter fence. The pathway will be constructed to the specifications used by the Grand Rapids Township or as otherwise stipulated by the Planning Commission at the time of Preliminary Development Plan approval.
7. Buffer strip and perimeter screening A buffer strip shall surround the entire perimeter of the site. The buffer strip shall have a minimum depth of 100 feet as measured from the park property line or adjacent public street right of way line. At the time of preliminary development plan approval the depth of the buffer strip will be increased as necessary, as determined by the Planning Commission, to provide the appropriate screening affect at critical locations around the perimeter. Within buffer strip will be constructed and planted a combination of drift or serpentine berms and planted and maintained vegetation as generally depicted in the drawing labeled "Edge Treatment at Property Line". *(The drawing now reads "Potential edge treatment at Property line". The word potential should be removed and a new drawing included in the record.)*

The berms and plantings will be located, sized and arranged so as to provide optimal visual relief for nearby residents and passersby. Special emphasis will be given to screening the operations and support areas and to obstructing site lines of light sources (both fixtures and headlights), structures, parking and service areas located internally. Where park structures, activity or features are located on or within prominent internal areas and perimeter screening is not able to provide an effective screen, internal screening a may also be required

internally along the view line, adjacent to the structure or feature of concern.

- j. Off-street Visitor Parking. Off-street parking areas shall be located in the areas of the site a generally illustrated on the concept plan. The number of spaces provided shall be commensurate with parking demand based on the expected occupancy loads and capacity of the park's cultural facilities and auxiliary uses. The Planning Commission may also establish or confirm parking requirements by making the determination that the proposed facilities either individually or collectively are similar in parking requirements to a use or uses listed in Section 28.7 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission may also refer to engineering or planning manuals, publications and reports, or to the parking requirements used by other municipalities in order to establish minimum parking requirements or to confirm the adequacy of the parking proposed on the preliminary development plan.  
The design, location, and construction requirements of Section 28.5 of the Zoning ordinance shall also apply unless specific conditions of this special use permit imposes a greater standard.
4. Final Site Plans  
Subsequent to Preliminary Development Plan approval and prior to construction of individual plan elements, final site plans shall be prepared and submitted for review and approval of each structure and on-site improvement identified on the preliminary development plan to the Wildlife Park Review Committee for recommendation to the Planning Commission for final review and approval. Final Site plans shall be prepared to the specifications and standards for site plans as outlined in Chapter 26 of the Grand Rapids Charter Township Zoning Ordinance.
5. Necessary Off-Site Improvements  
The County of Kent has offered to install certain off-site improvements necessary to accommodate the proposed Wildlife Park. The Planning Commission acknowledges and accepts such improvements as integral components of the approved special use. The improvements will be funded by the County of Kent through appropriate arrangements with Grand Rapids Charter Township Board. The improvements will include at a minimum:
  - a. The reconstruction of Leonard Street to include a boulevard cross-section extending from the East Beltline to the Wildlife Park, the design of which shall be approved by the Kent County Road Commission.
  - b. Public water main, public sanitary sewer, drainage and private utility improvements as identified in the April 2003 Impact Study or otherwise identified during the final design.
  - c. A pedestrian pathway encircling the Wildlife Park. The majority of the pathway will be within the public street right-of-way. Along portions of

Leonard Street, Crahen Avenue, and Bradford Street, and elsewhere where the Park property does not directly abut the public right-of-way, the pedestrian path will be provided within the park boundary between private properties and the perimeter fence.

6. Hours of Operation

Normal public operating hours for the Wildlife Park for general visitation may be 10 am to 4 pm from mid-September to mid-May and 10 am to 6 pm from mid-May to mid-September.

- a. Restaurant and Gift Shop Hours The Restaurant and Gift Shop may be open to serve the general public from 10 am to 7 pm from mid-September to mid-May and from 10 am to 9 pm from mid-May to mid-September. These hours may be extended for special events and rental groups between the hours of 7 am and 11 pm, provided that the Township is notified at least 48-72 hours in advance.
- b. Outdoor Evening Rental or Outdoor Special Event Hours. Normal hours of operation will be 8 am to 9 pm daily. Any outdoor event likely to extend past 9 p.m. which involves 100 people or more must be approved by the Township Board at least 14 days in advance.
- c. Indoor Evening and Indoor Special Event Hours. Indoor evening or indoor special event hours may extend until 11 pm. The one annual RendeZoo event may extend to midnight, subject to annual authorization by the Township Board.

7. Special Events

The Special Events authorized to occur within the Park shall be as follows unless specifically authorized in advance by the Township Board. An outdoor special event that is to occur before 6 am or after 9 pm and which involves 100 people or more must be approved by the Township Board. The Township Board shall establish appropriate hour limits in such cases.

- a. RendeZoo – Annual Fund raiser. Estimated Attendance: 1,400
- b. Members Night and Special Members Previews Estimated Attendance: 300 to 3,000
- c. After Hours Rentals: Rental of portions of the Park to corporate clients and individuals for company picnics or client gatherings.
- d. Zoo Extravaganza: Two weekends each year. Family-orientated, cultural presentation, entertainers, and animal programs. Estimated Attendance: 2,000 each day
- e. Christmas with the Animals: Saturday daytime event. Estimated Attendance: 500+1,200.
- f. Migratory Bird Day: Saturday event during regular hours



- g. Free Days: Three to five free (no admission charge) each summer, 10 am to 6 pm. Estimated Attendance: 5,000 to 12,000 throughout each day
      - h. Jump Nights: Two nights annually. School children and their families bussed from selected Kent County Schools.
      - i. Overnight: Families and organized groups of 15-25 that campout and do guided nocturnal zoo tours.
      - j. Other Events: Additional events expected to generate more than 1,000 persons may be permitted when authorized by the Review Committee at least 14 days in advance of the event.
8. Traffic Controls and Security  
All special events expected to significantly impact normal daily traffic shall be coordinated with the Kent County Sheriff Department and shall involve additional staffing for traffic management and security.
9. Timing of Events  
Major events shall be coordinated with other nearby institutions such as Forest Hills Schools and Meijer Gardens to avoid, when possible, concurrent scheduling of major events.
10. Review Committee  
For purposes of review and monitoring of the special use a review committee may be established consisting of the Grand Rapids Charter Township Site Plan Review Committee and one resident of the immediate wildlife park vicinity as appointed by the Chairperson of the Full Planning Commission. It will be the responsibility of the review committee to
  - a. Review and approval of requests for unanticipated special events.
  - b. Minor adjustments in the hours of operation allowed for special events.
  - c. Review of formal complaints or concerns. (Violation of conditions, unauthorized activities, or unanticipated issues in need of resolution)
11. Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan.  
The Kent County Wildlife Animal Park is consistent with the Grand Rapids Charter Township Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan.
12. Commitments.  
Construction and development plans shall adhere to representations and commitments made in the Kent County Wildlife Park Impact Study dated April 2003.
13. Construction Hours.  
Construction hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday shall be strictly enforced and any deviation shall first be brought back to the Planning Commission.

14. Expiration of Special Land Use Permit.  
Construction on the Kent County Wildlife Animal Park authorized in this Special Land Use Permit shall commence within three years from the date of issuance, February 24, 2004

Motion passed 5-1.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

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Susan B. Lovell