

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes March 22, 2011**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 7:01 pm.

Present were Vice Chair Wayne Harrall, Secretary David VanDyke, Commissioners; Stephen Fry, Edward J. Robinette, Mark Prein, Dave Pierangeli and Beverly Wall. Also present were Township attorney James R. Brown and Clerical Assistant Kara Ronda.

Vice Chair Wayne Harrall officially welcomed Dave Pierangeli as the newest Planning Commission member.

1. Approve minutes of January 25, 2011.

Steve Fry, seconded by **Dave VanDyke**, moved to approve the minutes with the following changes:

- p. 2, item #4, change all 'Forest Hills' to 'Forest Hill'
- p. 2, 5th bullet under item #4, insert the word 'sign' between 'Walgreen's' and 'will'
- p. 3, 6th bullet from the bottom, change 'business of' to 'traffic volume on'
- p. 4, 3rd bullet under Mark Prein, change 'is another' to 'will highlight the'
- p. 5, 4th paragraph down starting with Mark Prein, insert the word 'township' between 'the' and 'engineer'
- p. 6, 2nd paragraph from the bottom insert the word 'plat' after 'Apple Valley'
- p. 7, 1st paragraph, insert the word 'it' between 'if' and 'was'
- p. 7, 2nd paragraph, change the word 'mobile' to 'mowable'

Motion approved unanimously.

2. Recognition and thanks to Sue Molhoek. Election of officers.

Wayne Harrall recognized, and thanked for many years of service, the resignation of Sue Molhoek as Planning Commission Chair. Dave VanDyke nominated Wayne Harrall as Chair and Steve Fry as Vice Chair. Ed Robinette nominated Dave VanDyke to remain as Secretary.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by **Ed Robinette**, made the motion to approve the election of officers.

Motion approved unanimously.

3. Public Hearing – Rainbow Child Development Center – rezoning request at 2571 East Beltline Ave.

Dale Van Kooten, a consulting engineer from Medema, Van Kooten & Assoc, representing Rainbow Child Development Center, presented the revised plan:

- Rainbow Child Development Center is a Michigan based business
- ages of children at center range from 6 weeks to 12 years old
- hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 7am-6pm
- close proximity to local elementary schools
- Kent County Drain Commission asked them to update the existing storm water retention pond to the north to the current standards (cross-access easement)
- removed the fencing along front and put alarms on all doors to the toddler rooms
- explained Kent County Drain Commission refused to release any of the easement along the west property line and will not allow buffering within the drain easement
- noted no disagreement with the current proposed ordinance

Ed Robinette asked the applicant if they were going to comply with the Drain Commission's refusal. The applicant replied they thought about pushing the buffer down the hill but that would not work because the trees would be on the property line. The applicant noted there is some existing vegetation. Ed Robinette asked if they are required to re-grade the easement. The applicant stated there would be a retaining wall along the easement.

Wayne Harrall questioned if the Drain Commission's policy states no trees or no structures. The applicant stated either way, they are not willing to go against the Drain Commission. Wayne also noted the existing vegetation may be subject to removal by the Drain Commission.

Steve Fry asked how many children the center will serve. The applicant replied 100 children. Steve questioned why the sidewalk on the East Beltline does not make it all the way to the south property line. The applicant replied it was due to a substantial grade difference.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the staff report.

Wayne Harrall referenced the letter submitted by the Township's Deputy Chief regarding insufficient room to turn the Fire Department's apparatus around and exit forward onto the East Beltline. Steve Fry asked Jim Brown for the required amount of parking spaces. Jim Brown replied 25.

Ed Robinette, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:21 pm. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Jane Johnson, 2537 McIntosh Ave NE, is for the proposed project and agrees it fits the master plan, but asked the commissioners to think about the people on McIntosh in regards to the fencing and what the neighbors will have to look at.

Steve Fry, seconded by **Ed Robinette**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:23 pm.
Motion passed unanimously.

Steve Fry asked Jim Brown to verify the sign setback is 10 ft. from the property line. Jim Brown replied it is a 5 ft. setback per the overlay district and the sign must comply with the ordinance. Jim also noted no sign plan had been submitted.

Dave VanDyke asked the applicant to clarify the fence at the retaining wall would be a chain-link fence. The applicant stated that is correct.

Steve Fry asked the applicant if they had considered lowering the elevation of the building. The applicant stated they had but in order to meet the Drain Commission requirements it would not be applicable.

Wayne Harrall noted there was a letter submitted by the Office of the Drain Commission. Wayne also referenced a letter dated 3/8/11 from the township engineer which stated the Drain Commission will not accept the proposed landscape. Wayne asked the applicant about buffering or screening. The applicant replied they would plant the trees and keep them as close to the property line as possible.

Steve Fry stated he does not see a problem with the use for this site but believes there is a better way to design the parking lot. Steve explained the number of spaces is not as important as the flow of the lot. The applicant replied the parents are not allowed to just drop their kids off. He explained the parents are required to park, bring the child in or out and check the child in or out.

Steve Fry recommended a deeper throat at the end of the turn-around. The applicant explained the length if the drop off time is 5-10 minutes. Drop off times vary, unlike elementary schools.

Dave VanDyke explained his concern in needing to provide for future connection at the south end. Dave also stated the dumpster location is not conducive for future cross-connection and believes there needs to be some provisions to add connectivity within the properties.

Steve Fry asked the applicant if the proposed sidewalk to the East Beltline is handicap accessible and explained it needs to meet code. The applicant replied it is.

Mark Prein asked if there are lights on the back of the building. The applicant stated there are lights on the back of the building over the doors. Mark verified there are 6 lights. The applicant stated that is correct.

Steve Fry referred to the proposed landscaping along the East Beltline stating it may be a case where it does more bad than good to berm everything. Steve stated it is looking a little forced because of the slope that is already there and does not see the need to force the center up so high. Ed Robinette agreed and said it is above the cars on the East Beltline anyway. Steve recommended dropping the berm down 2-3 ft. Dave VanDyke agreed and added to landscape within that slope.

Wayne Harrall asked about moving the retaining wall in the backyard 5 ft. The applicant explained they are trying to utilize as much flat area as possible for the kids. Wayne stated he would like to see more landscaping in the west area, for the kids and the neighbors on McIntosh.

Dave VanDyke asked the applicant what kind of material they intend to use for the retaining wall. The applicant replied landscape block wall.

Steve Fry, seconded by **Ed Robinette**, moved to forward the rezoning request at 2571 East Beltline Avenue on to the Site Plan Review committee and the Township Board with the following provisions/recommendations:

- extend the sidewalk to south property line
- waive lighting plan as long as it meets the township's ordinance
- berming in front to be lowered 2-4 ft.
- revised plan to reallocate trees in back
- extend driveway per Deputy Chief's recommendation and consider alternative means of turning around at end of parking lot
- incorporate all language into ordinance
- p.3 (d) (1) of proposed ordinance, change 'Kent County Road Commission' to 'MDOT'
- p.9 (2) of proposed ordinance, change 'planning director' to 'staff'

Motion approved unanimously.

4. Discussion – Ada Bible Church – conceptual development review for a Special Land Use request within R-1 district which includes a church.

Edward Shepard, a pastor at Ada Bible Church, explained they have been renting space at the Hanson Center to hold their services and are now ready to build a place of their own.

Wayne Harrall noted the Kent County Road Commission is proposing to do some realignment work at this particular intersection and the realignment will require a non-motorized trail easement.

Steve Fry asked if the applicant has plans for the existing barns. The applicant explained one barn will be removed and the other one will be used for storage only. Steve asked if they intended to keep the barn in the state of disrepair it is currently in. The applicant replied no.

Todd Myers, of Williams & Works, is the engineer for the Ada Bible Church project and addressed some pertinent issues:

- In reference to the township engineer regarding sanitary sewer, their intent is and will be serviced with public sanitary sewer in conjunction with the property owners to the north.
- As far as drainage, they intend to follow the township guidelines and have no problem with that.
- Todd noted they are going to try and keep the storm sewer out of sight and are in talks with the property development to the north for a shared storm system.

Bev Wall asked the applicant how many people they have attending the Hanson Center. The applicant stated about 1,000. Bev noted the proposed building has a capacity of 750 people. The applicant replied they will be holding two services.

Dave VanDyke asked how much activity will be going on during the week at the proposed location. The applicant explained not too much goes on during the week, only a handful of Bible studies.

Wayne Harrall asked if the applicant currently owned the property. The applicant stated they do not.

Wayne Harrall noted the KCRC gave conceptual approval to both locations of the requested driveways.

Steve Fry stated it is understandable the parking lot is in front of the building but recommended the applicant focus on landscaping in order to break the parking lot up. Steve suggested an island for every 10 parking spaces.

Steve Fry noted the existing natural vegetation in the back and suggested transferring some landscaping to the front along the parking lot and road side to balance the landscaping plan in the back.

Wayne Harrall explained there may be some delays with the sanitary sewer because the proposed property is currently not within the sewer district.

The applicant noted they would like to use the existing well as irrigation, otherwise it will be abandoned.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the staff report.

Steve Fry explained he does not want to see two signs. He would like to see the sign be tastefully done and stated it needs to be subtle from a height standpoint.

5. Discussion – Early Advantage Day Care – conceptual development review for PUD-3 rezoning at 1515 East Beltline Ave which includes a Daycare Center.

Steve Witte, of Nederveld Inc. representing Early Advantage Day Care, presented the plan:

- the day care will be a part of KISD, located at the far SE corner of the property
- stated the proposed project is in accordance with the township's master plan
- the proposed building is 12,000 square feet and will house 168 children
- hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 6:00am-6:00pm
- the main entrance will be the existing southern driveway
- the proposed parking lot contains 48 parking spaces
- the proposed outdoor play area is 24,000 square feet
- there is a pond on site for storm water
- sanitary sewer is already available for proposed location
- the building is attractive
- slope of ground at northeast side is steep (1:2)
- property is wooded to the west and south, proposing to use existing landscape
- will comply with the township ordinance regarding their lighting plan
- proposing one ground mounted sign and an identification sign out in front

Attorney Jim Brown gave the staff report.

Steve Fry asked the applicant if eventually it will be a separate lot. The applicant replied it is a long term land agreement/lease.

Wayne Harrall noted the proposed location does not have a separate address and explored the possibility of turning that drive into a private street. Wayne explained he is concerned about people knowing where they are going. Dave VanDyke added the commissioners would allow the address and street name, but no business name on a roadside sign. Wayne encouraged the applicant to investigate the possibility of making that drive a private street.

Wayne Harrall asked about hydrant location. The applicant explained they still need to talk with the Grand Rapids Township Fire Department.

Wayne Harrall requested the applicant have an updated flagging done in regards to the wetland area. The applicant agreed and stated a site visit does need to be done. Wayne asked if KISD is the property owner to the west. The applicant replied yes they are. Wayne asked if the property owners are on board and aware of the proposed storm sewer piping. The applicant stated it is the same property owner, they are aware and agree.

Steve Fry noted the circulation on the parking lot is good and suggested the applicant take advantage of the existing landscape and requested they be more specific with their landscape plan. Steve stated the fence at the front is awful close to the property line/road and feels it is a little aggressive.

Wayne Harrall asked if there was a critical reason the fence is placed so close to the road. The applicant stated there is not, they just wanted to utilize more area but do not have a problem moving the fence placement.

The applicant asked the Planning Commission what they would like him to do regarding the road situation. Wayne Harrall suggested talking to KISD first, then contacting KCRC. Ed Robinette stressed the safety concern factor.

6. Chase Bank – consideration of request to increase signage size within the NE Beltline overlay district.

Bernie Wade, from Advanced Signs, is representing Chase Bank and presented the request:

- increase the size of the monument sign to be more visible on the corner
- move the monument sign a little closer to the road and raise the sign up
- visibility is a concern, want to give people a chance to see the sign and pull into the East Beltline Avenue drive

Dave VanDyke asked how close the proposed ground sign to the road is. Ed Robinette stated it is 5 ft. from the sidewalk. Wayne Harrall explained they are proposing to move the ground sign south and closer to the sidewalk and road.

Dave VanDyke questioned why the applicant wants to make the ground sign bigger. The bank manager explained as the corners become more and more developed customers are missing the bank and he wants to make sure the customers know where they are located.

Wayne Harrall asked the applicant if it made sense to move the ground sign more to the south. The applicant stated it would be for the opposing traffic.

Steve Fry stated a 7 ft. high ground sign would be sufficient. Steve explained he is not objecting to the size but rather the height of the proposed ground sign. Wayne Harrall added considering the surrounding signage their proposal is minimal but shares the same feeling as Steve.

Ed Robinette, seconded by **Bev Wall**, moved to approve the ground signage size increase with the following conditions:

- max height of 7 ft. with brick (base reduced from 4 ft. high to 3 ft.)
- p.2, 1. on attorney's resolution, change '37' to '30-32'

Motion approved unanimously.

7. General Public Comment.

No Township residents were present for Public Comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.

David VanDyke – Secretary