

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS  
Minutes March 26, 2013**

A regular scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, March 26, 2013 at 7:00pm.

Present were Chair Wayne Harrall, Secretary David A. VanDyke, Commissioners; Bev Wall, Dave Pierangeli, Mark Prein and Scott Conners. Also present were Township Attorney Jim Brown and Planning Assistant Kara Hammond. Vice Chair Stephen Fry was absent.

**1. Approve minutes of February 27, 2013 (rescheduled) meeting.**

**Bev Wall**, seconded by **Dave Pierangeli**, moved to approve the minutes with the following change:

- p.2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph under item#3, change 'PACIA' to read 'Plainfield Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority'

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**2. Public Hearing – Cornerstone University – Special Land Use request for renovations at 300 East Beltline Ave.**

Dennis Bekken with c2ae, representing Cornerstone, gave a brief overview of the proposal;

- Purchased the property at 300 East Beltline Ave for graduate studies which takes place at evenings and some online
- Ready to renovate entire three floors and adding two additions – one on the east side: stair tower and entrance from lower/garden level – second: adding stair and new south addition and lobby/entrance (new entrance will be moved to south)
- Modifying parking: eliminating some on the south for the addition and reconfiguring some spaces on the west side
- Proposing a masonry wall where the current white columns are
- Top floor is all administration offices, garden level includes 7 classrooms and library and lounge space
- Three potential modifications the application is requesting be changed from proposed resolution:
  - o P.6 of resolution – Site plan: in the future they may have a small addition and requesting that they would not have to go back through the entire planning process, but go just through site plan review
  - o Classroom capacity: change capacity of up to 9 classrooms
  - o Class schedule: any future change to the schedule could be accommodated by meeting with the Township Administrator – would like some flexibility of the future schedule
- Gave confirmation of parking agreement to Township Attorney Jim Brown (per his request in the Ordinance)

Jim Brown gave the legal report.

Dennis Bekken stated the proposed monument sign will have a stone face, similar to the building, and will be very attractive. Wayne Harrall asked about the proposed “wall” sign and its dimensions. Dennis said he is guessing it is 5x5, 25 sq. ft., but stated he would be willing to make sure the dimensions are included in the new site plan that needs to be submitted per Jim Brown’s request.

Wayne Harrall asked about drainage. Dennis Bekken stated they are proposing some new drainage because of the south addition, but not changing the drainage pattern. Dennis explained they actually calculated that they have less impervious area than they did before.

Wayne Harrall asked the applicant if the agreement for parking was just with 330 East Beltline. Dennis Bekken said no, it is 330 and 360 East Beltline.

Mark Prein stated he does not see sidewalks and feels (at night especially) everyone will have to walk in the lots and finds it to be a safety concern. Dennis Bekken stated they are doing a new sidewalk along north, and mentioned that the resolution requires the applicant to construct a sidewalk along the east side of the entrance, off the East Beltline.

Wayne Harrall explained the commissioners would like to see a sidewalk or pedestrian area in the northwest corner of their property. Dennis Bekken stated their intent is to expand it to the adjacent parking lot and the existing sidewalk will be expanded to the north most property line. Wayne Harrall asked the applicant if the property owners to the north gave them permission, would the applicant be willing to expand the sidewalk beyond the property line on to the neighbor’s property. Dennis explained he feels it is a highly unusual request to build a sidewalk on someone else’s property. Scott Conners explained even 20 additional ft would make a huge difference, if the property owner to the north will allow it. Dennis stated he is very skeptical of the request. Wayne Harrall said he would at least like the applicant to ask and get it in writing, either way, and submit the response to the Township. Dave VanDyke explained the request is for safety. Scott Conners added it would be a tremendous improvement. Dennis replied all they can do is ask.

Dennis Bekken stated the applicant is not adding any additional light poles to the site, just improving the lighting with led lights. Dennis also explained it is tough to meet landscaping requirements because of the site. He noted the trees closest to the building are the ones being proposed, the outlying trees are existing.

Scott Conners feels it is a fair compromise to put the project on the contingency that the property to the north allows the sidewalk.

Mark Prein, seconded by Bev Wall, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:37pm.

Hank Fuhs, 3848 Leonard St NE

- Honorable people, supports the proposed project

Dave Pierangeli, seconded by Bev Wall, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:38 pm.

**Dave VanDyke**, seconded by **Bev Wall**, moved to approve the Special Land Use request for renovations at 300 East Beltline with the following conditions;

- P.6(1), add language about going to Site Plan Review for future expansions
- P.6(2), not to exceed 9 classrooms, instead of 7
- P.6(3), clarify “daytime” classes
- New site plan must be submitted to reflect the correct walkway/sidewalk
- If possible, pending approval of neighbors to the north, the sidewalk will be extended approximately 25 ft. through the adjacent property – must show in writing and provide written approval and or denial, and must come back to the SPR Committee
- P.3(3)(e), change seven to nine

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Recommendation – Limited & Temporary Outdoor Sales – Zoning Ordinance Amendment recommendation to the Township Board.**

Wayne Harrall gave a brief overview of the proposed amendment.

Jim Brown gave the legal report and noted there are primarily four types of outdoor sales mentioned in the ordinance.

**Bev Wall**, seconded by **Scott Conners**, moved to schedule public hearing for April with the following changes;

- P.2.b. – add “and give administrator ability to allow a larger area” to end of last sentence
- P.2.2.c. – add “and/or other”
- P.2.2.d. – omit the word “flush”
- P.6.6. – add “Site Plan Review Committee”

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**Dave VanDyke**, seconded by **Dave Pierangeli**, moved to amend the agenda and switch item #4 and #5.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**4. General Public Comment.**

Hank Fuhs, 3848 Leonard St NE, Spoke about the YMCA:

- Appreciates the Planning Commission allowing the public to come in and make comments
- Expressed his big disappointment that the YMCA pulled so late last week, feels it is dishonest
- Talking about the YMCA with a site on Leonard St
- Safety – neighbors and kids are at risk – genuinely cares about kids
- Double yellow line down Leonard from EBL to Crahen – dangerous road
- Kids use bike bath for running
- Y is big business and does not belong on that street

- Goes to the Y, likes the Y, not supportive of their site selection
- Does not want to have a “valley of death”
- All they are asking for is fairness
- Meijer Gardens will be land-locked
- Wetlands are at risk
- Sewer cost – extra services
- YMCA is a huge business and does not pay any taxes
- Doesn’t matter where they put the Y on that street, it does not fit

Matt Hanlon, 1275 Trillium Trail NE, Spoke about the YMCA:

- 4 kids on the school campus (Forest Hills Northern)
- Traffic is already tight and very challenging
- 2 kids on cross country that run up and down Leonard every day
- Extremely concerned
- Loves the YMCA, but does not agree with the location

Larry McDonough, 4535 Leonard St NE, Spoke about the YMCA:

- Concerned with traffic and safety of the children
- Extremely proud of this area, but feels it has met its capacity
- Keep as a residential area

Chair Wayne Harrall read a letter submitted by a resident supporting the YMCA.

**5. Distribution – 2013 Supplement & Amendment to Township Comprehensive Plan – For consideration at April’s Planning Commission Meeting.**

Jim Brown gave a brief overview;

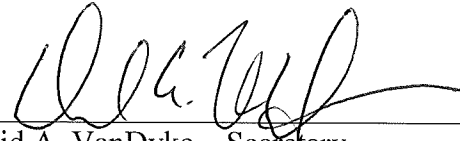
- P.10, Chapter 5 – will be the chapter/area that will be worked on throughout the next several months
- East Gardens Area – example of the text and description that the commissioners can discuss and adjust, if need be, of this specific district
- Made recommendation to change the south border of this district to Michigan Street
- General type of approach they can use as to each of these areas
- Concept is to designate each of these areas on the map to determine what they feel ought to be considered or off the table

Scott Connors thinks the public component would be a great asset to the process and may get some valuable insight from the public. Wayne Harrall agreed. Jim Brown explained all the narratives will need to be entered as a draft, then can be open to public input. Dave VanDyke explained he would like to get a good draft done with the commissioners, but agrees the public should be included.

Mark Prein stated he is having a hard time grasping the overall idea how this process will make the process easier rather than making it more difficult. Wayne Harrall gave examples of Celadon and Spectrum Health and explained the narratives of these districts will give more flexibility and believes it is to our advantage to be a little more flexible, yet still specific.

Wayne Harrall suggested that Jim Brown draft the narratives for a couple more districts (two to the north) and the commissioners will have a longer time to look over the narratives and maybe schedule a special meeting later on to go over everything. The commissioners agreed with the suggestion.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.



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David A. VanDyke – Secretary