

**GRAND RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
JUNE 9, 2009**

A meeting of the Grand Rapids Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following present: Chair Ronald Hall, Vice-Chair George Orphan, Secretary David VanDyke, Lee VanPopering, and Jim Kubicek. Also present were Township Planning Director Richard Sprague Jr. and Treasurer Clerical Assistant Kara Ronda.

1. Approval of the May 12, 2009 minutes.

Lee VanPopering, seconded by **George Orphan**, moved to approve the minutes with no changes required.

Motion passed unanimously.

2. #2009-03 – Westerhof CPA – 4234 Cascade Road (previously tabled)

Lee VanPopering, seconded by **Dave VanDyke**, moved to bring the motion back to the table.

Motion approved unanimously.

Before the applicant presented their new plan to the board, Planning Director Rick Sprague clarified some previous concerns regarding the 1986 minutes;

- variance requested at that time, and were granted, dealt with a 5 foot variance east of the driveway
- had delete 6 parking spaces for approval
- Kent County Road Commission would not allow this to be used as a commercial driveway, allowed only Kenmoor access, Zoning Board came back and approved it with those changes (strictly regarding the driveway setback)

Ed Westerhof, the applicant, explained the revised addition he is bringing to the Zoning Board;

- lowered size of building from what was originally purposed, from 3,000 sq ft to 2,400 sq ft, which should reduce some of the required setbacks
- did some research, found that the Westerhof's own the property and the state of Michigan owns the easement
- contacted the owner's to the west of the property regarding buying the lot, going to take the offer to their board
- explained they also have an option two which would be adding on to the existing building

Mr. Westerhof stated with a smaller purposed building, he feels there would be smaller variances required.

Ron Hall inquired if the North/South dimensions are still the same with the new plan. Mr. Westerhof believes they are reduced. Ron Hall replied they are within 3 inches of being the same, shrunk it East to West.

After a brief discussion about the corrections to proposal one, Ron Hall asked Mr. Westerhof to explain proposal two to the board.

Ed Westerhof explained proposal two is another option if proposal one is not accepted. He noted their preference is for the original proposal, but if that does not pass, then this is their other option;

- overall goal is to obtain additional space
- company is growing and they are outgrowing their building
- add 1,980 sq ft to original building therefore giving them more space

Ron Hall asked if the difference in square footage between buildings is due to the unnecessary need of mechanical space. Ed Westerhof stated the addition fits better. Explained the new section would mirror the existing building and that is how the square footage worked out. Ed also noted the addition includes a basement.

Dave VanDyke asked for clarification regarding the 1,980 sq ft, asking if it was all on the main level. Mr. Westerhof clarified the basement is housed under the current building. He also clarified the addition would not have a basement, it would be one level.

Ron Hall verified the total square footage of the building they have now is 5,278 without the proposed addition.

Lee VanPopering moved to re-open the Public Hearing at 7:19 p.m. Motion approved unanimously.

Dan Villalobos, 4255 Westchester, his biggest concern is the traffic situation. He is also concerned with the possibility their neighborhood may turn into a rental neighborhood due to the increased traffic.

Mike Kavanagh, 4215 Westchester, agreed with the concerns brought up by Dan and also agreed with the concerns brought up by James Kuipers in his letter to the Board. He also commented on the mere fact of the increased congestion.

Jackie Westerhof, 4234 Cascade Rd, recognizes all the comments and recommendations made by the neighbors and had some comments herself;

- since buying the building made significant improvements both to the interior and exterior of the building as well as the grounds and landscape
- take their roles as responsible members of the neighborhood very seriously, they live here and employee people here

- not a big out of state corporation, they are a small business that is committed here and happy to say they are expanding
- they plan on being contributing members of this community and neighborhood

Public Hearing was closed at 7:25 p.m.

Lee VanPopering noted that this was originally a hardship piece of property twenty years ago when it was first brought to the board. He does not feel this time around there is any hardship to take into consideration.

Ron Hall stated he sees somewhat of a hardship in the fact that the property is closer to the highway. Lee VanPopering stated they are asking for more variances and it is not a hardship because it is a growing business.

George Orphan noted that originally the property was smaller, it is larger now. Ron Hall disagreed saying the property size is the same. Rick Sprague confirmed the actual size of the property is indeed larger. Rick continued to explain it is actually two separate parcels.

Ron Hall asked if there is a rear entrance on the South side of the building and if it is a primary entrance. Mr. Westerhof replied it is the primary entrance to a tenant and entire basement.

Dave VanDyke explained his concerns regarding expanding the rear parking lot on the south side of the building. Explained his idea to slide the building, whether it's attached or a separate building, further to the south and closer to the lot line, thus allowing enough room to have a double parking lot in the front side. By doing this it would be an overall improvement to the neighborhood as well.

Ed Westerhof brought up the issue of parking, wondering if this suggestion would impede a problem. Dave VanDyke stated he believed it should not be a problem, should be able to pick up those spots up front. Dave also said by eliminating parking completely on the south side, all vehicles would then be on the Cascade Rd. side giving more protection to the neighborhood behind the property.

Jim Kubicek noted on the fact that traffic is still a concern. Wondered if there is anything the road commission can do as far as possibly putting in another light. Ed Westerhof agreed with Jim that this was a main concern for him as well.

Ron Hall expressed that the traffic issue is due to the North Kenmoor traffic, not the applicants business.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by Lee **VanPopering**, moved to table the applicants request to see the changes presented by the board

Motion approved unanimously.

3. Update from Township Planning Director.

Planner Rick Sprague noted he is waiting for a submittal, but plan on meeting next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
David VanDyke