

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes September 28, 2010**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, September 28, 2010 at 6:59 pm.

Present were Chair Susan Molhoek, Vice Chair Stephen Fry, Secretary Wayne Harrall, Commissioners; Edward J. Robinette, Mark Prein, David VanDyke and Beverly Wall. Also present were Township Planning Director Richard Sprague Jr. and Treasurer Clerical Assistant Kara Ronda.

1. Approve minutes of July 27, 2010.

Steve Fry, seconded by **Ed Robinette**, moved to approve the minutes with the following changes:

- p. 3, 4th bullet, change the word “lessened” to “reduced”
- p. 3, 5th bullet, omit: “parking spaces for” and insert: “buildings F(a) and F(b) to allow for parking”
- p.6, in the motion made by Ed Robinette, change the word “hearing” to “neighboring”

Motion approved unanimously.

2. Approve minutes of August 17, 2010.

Wayne Harrall, seconded by **Steve Fry**, moved to approve the minutes as they stand without any corrections.

Motion approved unanimously.

3. Public Hearing – Master Plan Amendment Cascade and Forest Hills Ave.

The applicant is requesting an amendment to the Master Plan for the area in the southwest corner of the intersection at Cascade Road and Forest Hill Avenue. (This request was previously approved by the Planning Commission but denied by the Township Board. This will include a Public Hearing.)

Mark Buddy, with HB Real Estate Holdings, supported the request:

- explained the intersection (at Cascade and Forest Hill Ave) is identified as a hub for Forest Hills

- asking to consider changing the property on the southwest corner of Cascade and Forest Hill Ave from residential to neighborhood commercial PUD.
- stated the intersection is a center for commerce in the Forest Hills area
- noted there have been several letters of support and local business owners support the proposed change

Rick Sprague gave the staff report:

- noted the change of previous language is included in the resolution (included in the packet) to address the amendment request
- letter was submitted by a resident opposing the request and is included in the packet
- explained this is the final step of the process
- noted May 18, 2010 the Township Board elected not to make a decision on this and leave it up to the Planning Commission for final approval
- explained if the request is approved, it takes effect immediately, and will be distributed to neighboring communities

Sue Molhoek asked Rick Sprague if the Township Board had any feedback on this request. Rick stated they did not and put the decision in the hands of the Planning Commission.

Steve Fry asked Rick Sprague about the changes to *Exhibit A*, referring to the Target Area 7 document. Rick noted the underlined parts are changes which include: defining boundaries, some spelling corrections and the last two paragraphs were added.

Mark Prein asked Rick Sprague about the box/drawing on *Exhibit A*. Rick Sprague replied it is meant for nothing more than a reference point.

Mark Prein, seconded by **Wayne Harrall**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:10 pm.

Motion passed unanimously.

George McCargar, 990 Waltham Ave SE, is opposed to the change.

- referred to the letter submitted by Mr. Gary Slingsby and agreed with his concerns, which are:
 - o adding additional traffic in an area which is already congested
 - o it would duplicate services that are already readily available at Forest Hill's Foods, Walgreen's and Rite Aid
 - o additional traffic in the area would impede an already high volume of ambulances, fire trucks and medical transport vehicles that already serve the elderly frequently in that immediate area
- opposed to the change primarily because of the impact of the increased traffic
- noted a strong concern from neighbors on changing the property to commercial use, believes the change would be wrong

Monique VanBrabant, 4219 Castle Dr. SE, stated she was under the impression a Master Plan can only be changed every 5 years. Rick Sprague clarified that was not correct, explained the Master Plan can be changed at any time but is required to be reviewed every 5 years.

Jane Hildenberg, 1030 Waltham Ave SE, is opposed to the change.

- wondered if there would be more traffic lights at Medical Park Drive
- believes making that property commercial will make a bigger mess, traffic wise
- happy with the boundaries, but concerned about property values declining with a commercial property so close

Sue Molhoek noted the Planning Commission does not have control over placement of street lights; the Kent County Road Commission makes those decisions.

Bob Hildenberg, 1030 Waltham Ave SE, is opposed to the change and asked if the Planning Commission will be consulting with the Road Commission in the event the Walgreen's is built. Secretary Wayne Harrall said yes and the Road Commission will be involved with any modifications and believes it unlikely a signal will be placed there. Bob Hildenberg asked if there was consideration of other commercial enterprises, other than Walgreen's, for that property. Chair Sue Molhoek stated it is not the Planning Commission's position to choose who moves into the space. A site plan comes before the Planning Commission and then the decision is made to approve or deny the request.

Monique VanBrabant, 4219 Castle Dr. SE, asked if Grand Rapids Township has candlelight restrictions on brightness. Rick Sprague stated the Township does not.

George McCargar, 990 Waltham Ave SE, asked if the resolution change applies to only the identified parcels. Steve Fry clarified this is a change of the Master Plan, not a change of the zoning.

Steve Fry, seconded by **Dave VanDyke**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:31 pm. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Mark Prein asked Rick Sprague to pull up the existing zoning map; he would like to see/remind himself what is on the North West corner of the intersection.

Wayne Harrall believes the Planning Commission has stayed consistent with *Exhibit A* and stated the original intent for that area was to be included as NC PUD.

Steve Fry stated he is struggling with this, concerned how it would be developed, would like to see it as a neighborhood center, not just a commercial building. Steve agrees the zoning is correct, but believes the intent is not.

Dave VanDyke noted traffic is always a common theme and this decision is not a final "go ahead", it is just approving the property for commercial use.

Steve Fry added traffic is going to be there regardless, but feels more comfortable now that they are only talking about the Master Plan.

Wayne Harrall noted the burden of traffic ultimately falls on the Road Commission.

Sue Molhoek stated the Planning Commission envisioned a village center for that area, which was the original goal.

Mark Prein talked about the verbiage of the *Exhibit A* document and ultimately making the Master Plan match the original intent.

Ed Robinette, seconded by **Bev Wall**, moved to approve the resolution as it stands.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. Discussion – Bylaws.

Planning Director Rick Sprague explained, due to the most recent Planning Act update the Planning Commission is required to have By-Laws. The by-laws establish a set of guidelines to format the meeting and procedures.

Bev Wall questioned if there were by-laws before. Rick Sprague stated there were at one time, but they were revoked years ago.

Steve Fry, seconded by **Bev Wall**, moved to approve the Grand Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission Bylaws draft as presented.

Motion approved unanimously.

5. General Public Comment.

No Township residents were present for Public Comment.

6. Update from the Township Planning Director.

Planning Director Rick Sprague believes there will be something on the agenda next month in regards to the Knapp/Maguire project. Rick also informed the commissioners the CVS project is moving along quickly.

Vice Chair Steve Fry noted he will not be able to attend the November meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Wayne A. Harrall - Secretary