

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes April 25, 2017**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

Present were Chair Wayne Harrall, Vice Chair Scott Conners, Secretary Dave Van Dyke, Commissioners; Dan Ophoff, Mark Prein, Bill Culhane and Doug Kochneff. Also present were Township Attorney Jim Brown and Planning Assistant Kara Hammond.

1. Approve minutes of the March 28, 2017 regular meeting.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to approve the minutes with the following changes;

- p.2, 3rd paragraph, last sentence should read; "Scales stated it would continue to go into underground detention and across the road and noted they have not had any issues"

Motion approved unanimously.

2. Public Hearing - Frederik Meijer Gardens - Request to amend current Special Land Use to incorporate the newly developed and proposed site master plan.

David Hooker, President of Frederik Meijer Gardens, gave the presentation;

- "Welcoming the World: Honoring a Legacy of Love" - explained the meaning behind the title
- proposing a continuation of the love story of Fred and Lena Meijer
- attendance is up 262% from 1999 to 2016 (207k to 750k)
- education programs are up 305% (22k to 89k) - only have 2 class rooms
- main campus has increased 126% (70 acres to 158 acres)
- concert guests have increased 530%
- art collection increased 88% (142 to 267 pieces)
- campaign goals;
 - ◆ further their mission
 - ◆ honor founders and donors
 - ◆ create safe and inspiring spaces
 - ◆ plan for future growth
 - ◆ add parking and improve vehicle movement, outdoor picnic pavilion
- new; welcome area, learning center, transportation center
- expand and upgrade amphitheater (heavy emphasis is on UPDATING, not expanding)
- expanded and accessible parking with lots of islands with large berms
- construction to start September 2017 with projected completion spring/summer 2020
- visual slides demonstrated significant changes made to the parking area directly next to Bradford Street as requested by the Planning Commissioners at the previous meeting, explaining the change in grades of the road/drive and elevating the surrounding berms to provide significant screening/buffering from the view of the passing vehicle
- addressed the sidewalk issue brought up at the previous meeting stating the cost would be over \$770k and gave a visual aid, also explaining that due to some wetlands more provisions will have to be addressed

Mark Prein asked the applicant how the small piece of land between the drive and Bradford Street would be maintained; revert back to wild or landscaped like the front entrance. David Hooker stated it would be manicured and taken care of just like the front/main entrance.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the legal review.

Wayne Harrall asked the applicant about the upgrade to the amphitheater, in regards to the number of people they are proposing. David Hooker stated the sponsored seats would be no more than 30 explaining that the absolute highest number would be no more than 2,500.

Dan Ophoff, seconded by **Bill Culhane**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:28 pm.
Motion approved unanimously.

Bob Hiner, 768 East Ridge Dr NE;

- asked about the proposed sidewalk and which side of Bradford it would be constructed on
- trees along Bradford are a significant buffer from the sound of the amphitheater, concerned if the sidewalk is put in their buffer will be eliminated
- not happy and would like them to think about their neighbors to the south

Ruth Powers, 772 Bradford Place NE;

- GRT owns only half, the city owns the other - road wear and tear should be a consideration and what can be done about that...their road has suffered due to the Gardens and their guests
- the sound is horrendous, the Township needs to make a noise ordinance now
- no neighborly love, cars are parking along their street
- says the PC dropped the ball once, don't let it happen again

Andrew Smith, 3794 Leonard St NE;

- long time GRT resident, been here for all Public Hearings, praised the Gardens on the updated maintenance facility
- great neighbors, support them fully
- excited to see what good things are to come

Sandy Hiner, 768 East Ridge Dr NE;

- sound check for concerts start around 11am, continues all day through the night
- it is loud, sound is coming directly at them
- dishes come off her shelves, vibrates everything within her house
- Michigan has a short summer, they should be able to enjoy it

Elaine Hoekstra, 3441 Eastridge Ct NE;

- secretarial issue... regarding the notice and when it was mailed and received
- believes it would have been a larger turnout if the notices were sent out in a timely manner

Wayne Harrall added there was an email submitted from a resident off Bradford Street regarding the concert noise.

Dan Ophoff, seconded by **Bill Culhane**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:45 pm.
Motion approved unanimously.

David Hooker addressed the noise issue brought up by the neighbors; apologized for the sound checks starting so early and will take a look at that as they are not supposed to be starting that early, adding that they try to pick artists that are diverse and appeal to a wide variety of people, as far as the time the concerts end they make sure all their artists know they have to be done by 10pm and are very strict with that rule. Wayne Harrall asked about the time frame. Hooker said the concert season is June-August and the very first part of September.

Bill Culhane asked if the applicant has ever taken any sound readings along Bradford during a concert. David Hooker explained the proposed berming should reflect the sound up, as the sound hits the new larger berms the sound should be directed up, verses out. Hooker stated most of the proposed berms are higher than the grade of the current drives. Culhane replied the only thing that will stop sound is mass, not trees or bushes, but a building or berm.

The Commissioners had a discussion regarding the proposed changes to the amphitheater noting there is a new proposed wall along the rear of the amphitheater which they all agree should mitigate and significantly reduce the concerts noise.

Wayne Harrall brought up the issue about traffic and construction traffic along Bradford Street. David Hooker said the majority of the work vehicles will access the property off the East Beltline.

Mark Prein said he is comfortable with everything, aside from the sidewalk issue, going directly to site plan review and handled at that level. Wayne Harrall stated that due to the cost of the proposed sidewalk it would be more beneficial for the Township to use funds somewhere else that is actually part of the long term path/walk way plan. Dave Van Dyke and Scott Conners said they would like to at least see a sidewalk, versus a bike path, for some available mobility along Bradford, but if the cost is going to be anything like the bike path it may not be worth it. Mark Prein stated he would rather not see either, explaining it would almost be as if they allowed an expanded shoulder that they would be encouraging people to park on the side streets.

Discussion regarding when the Planning Commission would like the Gardens to come back in front of the whole Planning Commission or just the Site Plan Review; consensus is that final design of each construction package will need to come back to the entire Planning Commission for final approval.

Mark Prein, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to approve the special land use request with the following additions;

- no sidewalk along Bradford Street
- plans: to Site Plan Review and final approval in phases (construction packages)
- major changes back to Planning Commission as determined by the Site Plan Review committee

Motion approved unanimously.

3. Informal Presentation - PVL Investments, LLC - Request for a major amendment to the previously approved Special Land use, for a home for the elderly or retired, located at 730 Forest Hill Ave SE.

David Baylis, Provision Living, gave a brief history and overview;

- ♦ asking to go back to the original approved plan back in January 2016
- ♦ would like the PC to vote on the request this evening since two public hearings have already been held

Wayne Harrall explained the difference between the previous meetings and the approvals/public hearings and asked the applicant why the changes over the past year. David Baylis stated they actually wanted to be able to construct in phases, to have a choice on what they build first, thus the confusion and coming back multiple times.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the legal review.

Wayne Harrall asked about the drainage and storm water plans. The applicant's engineer stated they have not submitted recent plans, explaining this location is within two storm water runoff areas noting they have been working on addressing the items originally brought up from the Township Engineer's preliminary review (over a year ago).

Scott Conners, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to schedule the Public Hearing for the May 23, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. General Public Comment.

No one spoke during the Public Comment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.



David A. Van Dyke, Secretary