

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes August 26, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, August 26, 2014.

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

1. Approve minutes of July 22, 2014 meeting.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Bill Culhane**, moved to approve the minutes with one change;

- ✦ p.3, 3rd bullet under item #4, change the word 'slop' to "slope"

Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

2. Informal Discussion - Catholic Secondary Schools (CAT) - Application for a Special Land Use request (1 year extension to existing SLU) for a stadium and site improvements at 2770 Knapp Street.

Dave Faber, Superintendent of the Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Grand Rapids;

- ✦ Grateful of the Township and willingness to help
- ✦ Change in administration, compels them to move the project forward
- ✦ Asking for an extension, with no changes to previously approved plan

Mark Wrona, with URS;

- ✦ Gave overview and history of project
- ✦ Answered questions about traffic, lighting, number of events
- ✦ Decided not to rent out the facility to other users
- ✦ Reestablished parking agreements with neighbors
- ✦ Fortunately now with new leadership the project is ready to roll; they will bid the project in the winter, start construction in the summer, so it will be ready by Fall 2016
- ✦ KC Sheriff's Department gave an outline and letter on what to do during events
- ✦ Gave an overview and background of everything that has gone on over the past 6 years with the project

Bill Culhane asked if they have looked at any water issues since 2008 because the baseball field is flooded on a regular basis. Mark Wrona stated the school recently spent \$100,000.00 on field drainage and obtained a permit from MDOT because of the water discharging in the I-96 right of way. Bill Culhane asked if the neighbors on either side of the proposed sidewalk have been contacted. Mark Wrona stated they have not yet, but an Open House for the neighbors has been scheduled for September 9. Mark explained meeting with the neighbors is the next thing they intend on doing.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to set the Public Hearing for September 23, 2014.

Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

3. Public Hearing - Forest View Psychiatric Hospital - Amendments in Special Land Use for its psychiatric hospital located at 1055 Medical Park Drive & Application for Site Plan Approval in C-2 District Lands - 1055 & 1001 Medical Park Drive and 1000 Parchment Drive.

Ryan Ysseldyke, with Holland Engineering;

- ♦ Talked with Bob Bruggink, Township Engineer, and the hospital will be providing the additional detention he is asking for
- ♦ Permits are in to the state, with the DEQ
- ♦ Moving forward with everything, this is the last piece of the puzzle

Wayne Harrall mentioned item number one of the Township Engineer's letter. Ryan Ysseldyke stated they are compensating for what will be lost (re: land/site), and they have worked that issue out with Bob Bruggink.

Mark Prein said the commissioners previously talked about relocating the generator to the north side, yet the plans now show it is on the west. Mark also asked about connecting the parking lots as talked about last meeting and questioned the applicant as to why no changes have been shown. Ryan Ysseldyke stated they had talked to the Grand Rapids Township Fire Department and said the GRTFD did not have a preference on the generator location and they did not see the need to connect the driveways, but if it is recommended by the commissioners the applicant will oblige. Ryan explained they added screening for the generator but did not understand the commissioners were talking about screening the property line as well.

Mark Prein, asked Jim Brown for clarification if the commissioners should be viewing this site as one parcel with three buildings on it. Jim Brown replied that is correct. Mark Prein added the applicant is taking out parking from one area, counting on parking on the north side to accommodate it, so they need to make it one site in order to make the parking numbers work.

Scott Conners asked if any maintenance or inspections have been done on the existing underground detention system. Ryan Ysseldyke stated not yet. Scott Conners stated an inspection needs to happen at the 4-5 year marker for maintenance and upkeep and said an inspection report is to be submitted on the existing underground detention system, as a condition of the request approval.

Jim Brown talked about the parking situation and sufficient parking numbers. Wayne Harrall asked the applicant what the overall difference is between the existing parking and what is overall proposed. Ryan Ysseldyke stated they are adding parking as part of this project, increasing the overall parking numbers beyond what the ordinance requires (requires 30, providing 34 / requires 111, providing 117 / requires 106, providing 151).

Attorney Jim Brown gave the legal report.

Andy Hotaling, Forest View Hospital CEO, stated the 1000 [Parchment Drive] building is used as an outpatient service center, the 1001 [Medical Park Drive] building is currently a mixed use building; administrative offices, company headquarters, medical treatment office and some area of the building is vacant as well. Jim Brown asked what formula was used to acquire the parking calculations. Ryan Ysseldyke said the general office, not the medical office, formula was used. Bill Culhane noted the applicant did use the medical office formula for both parking calculations. Jim Brown stated the parking numbers are then satisfactory.

Mark Prein, seconded by **Dave VanDyke**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:41 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Richard Alexander, 1040 Kenmoor Ave SE
· Concerned about the parking location

- Applicant did not specifically mention landscaping and what site improvements

Mark Prein asked about sound enclosures for the generator. Ryan Ysseldyke stated it will be a fully enclosed generator with evergreen screening all the way around. Bill Culhane asked the frequency of the generator testing. Ryan Ysseldyke stated monthly. Wayne Harrall asked if there is an existing generator. Ryan replied yes, but noted this will be a new generator to compensate for all the additions. Ryan also noted the generator location will be moving north, so it should have no, or little, influence on the neighborhoods surrounding the southerly property boundary.

Dave Pierangeli, seconded by **Bill Culhane**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:47 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

The commissioners discussed the connectivity of the two parking lots. Ryan Ysseldyke voiced the hospital is concerned that connecting the two parking lots, with a driveway, would encourage people to use it as a cut through.

Wayne Harrall stated he would not oppose a connection over the loss of a few parking spaces. Scott Conners said connecting the two lots with a drive will free up the efficiency and flow. Wayne Harrall said he agrees with Scott, that with the shared ability and connectivity, people/patients/employees/etc... could easily maneuver within the site.

Bill Culhane asked if the required parking spots are within reasonable proximity. Andy Hotaling explained the parking lot to the south is primarily employees, they have a lease arrangement with 1000 [Parchment Drive] to make sure there is enough parking and the hospital is very sensitive to that aspect. Ryan Ysseldyke stated all of the parking spots are within 300 feet of the door, as required in the ordinance.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by **Scott Conners**, moved to approve Special Land Use and Site Plan approval of 1000 Parchment Drive, 1001 & 1055 Medical Park Drive with conditions;

- ♦ Fire Chief review and recommendation (in writing) on connectivity
- ♦ Drainage issues
- ♦ Inspection report on existing underground detention

Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

4. Public Hearing - Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park - R-1 Rezoning and Special Land Use for Parking Lot F located at 800 East Beltline Ave.

Ken Wenger, Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park;

- ♦ Feel that painted lines on the existing walkway are sufficient
- ♦ Take the 800 building out, to focus on their summer concert series parking area (already using that lot for overflow)
- ♦ Looking forward to enhancing the lot
- ♦ Main use will be for the amphitheater
- ♦ Concert series runs early June – early September
- ♦ Regarding the concerns about runoff stormwater; the Township Engineer and FMG Engineers have all looked at it, in addition to the KC Drain Commissioner, and they are all confident everything is all set
- ♦ Lights will be on only when needed, manually on and off, will not be on unless using the lot
- ♦ Lot will be locked unless being used, FMG does not want random cars parked in their lots
- ♦ Berms will be built up, cars on the East Beltline will not be looking right into a parking lot

Bill Culhane asked if they are going to direct traffic or have it one-way from the west. Ken Wenger stated they typically load that lot from the west, keeping the east gate locked until the lot is loaded, and then open the locked gate to let vehicles out.

Mark Prein questioned if the Gardens are salvaging the larger trees. Wayne Harrall replied yes, they are. The Commissioners all agree that pedestrian safety is their main concern going from Lot F to Lot E. The Commissioners agree the plan can stay as presented, as long as there is a designed, designated area for pedestrians to safely get from Lot F to Lot E.

Scott Conners stated he would like to see the hatch markings raised. Scott stated they do not have to be raised very high, just an elevation change. Wayne Harrall said he supports Scott. Mark Prein suggested a change of material, like brick paver to concrete for example. Scott Conners explained pedestrian safety is a big deal and anything would be an improvement over nothing.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the legal report.

Wayne Harrall clarified the Public Hearing will be held for both the Rezoning request and Special Land Use request.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 8:29 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Wayne Harrall read the letter the Planning Commission received from the Bradford Place Condominium Association and a letter from Bill Byl, Kent County Drain Commissioner.

Randy Hoekstra, 606 Bradford Place NE

- Not opposed to tearing down the building, think that would be a great improvement to the area
- Have had water problems in the past and still do, because of the hydrostatic pressure
- Concern about the screening, no screening for the Bradford side and the head lights
- Concerned about the noise of the bus parking, and would like to see it isolated as much as possible from the Bradford side
- Biggest concern is traffic... almost impossible to get out of their driveway and get to the EBL on concert nights due to the amount of traffic
- FMG is a good neighbor, and are very happy with the way they deal with their concerns

Bonnie Zerrenner, 782 Bradford Place NE

- Concern is pedestrian traffic
- FMG is a good neighbor but she still has concerns
- Walking there does become an issue when walking there from the Bradford side
- Very dangerous
- Addressing the Bradford Street side, to help keep the pedestrian traffic off the road (sidewalk or trail)
- Traffic exiting and head lights, would like to see a better buffer

Paula Jacobson, 791 Bradford Place NE

- Traffic concerns
- Bound up for a good 30-40 mins
- Exit is unregulated, no traffic light at Bradford and the EBL
- Take another look at the traffic situation and the berming at the northeast side

Gwen Powers, 772 Bradford Place NE

- Licensed real estate broker... property values will decrease!
- Where they live is a neighborhood...
- Breathing problem with the diesel buses idling across the street

- Seller must disclose certain things in their home or neighborhood, bothers her because they have to disclose a nuisance (ex; proposed parking lot)
- Bradford is a secondary street, the driveway is 37 feet from their neighborhood entrance, and is an annoyance
- Engineers have told them that water leaches on to their property due to the gardens, some households have three sump pumps
- Hydrostatic pressure, it is a problem... cannot mow their lawns, have to use a weed whacker because the back yards are so saturated with water
- Want to work with the FMG, but they never go to the neighbors unless the GRT Planning Commission tells them to...
- Water runoff is a joint problem between GRT and the City
- Learned to tolerate the noise pollution from the concert, now asking for the gardens to give a little

Jean Knapp, 3650 Bradford St NE

- Traffic is a huge problem
- Absolutely no control
- Need to convert that traffic back to the EBL
- Already congested at 5pm from the dr office, school and all their other events

Mary Wysocki, 780 Bradford Place NE

- Thinks FMG could do a much better job at being a good neighbor
- Head lights are a problem
- She is very concerned if there is an emergency, that the emergency vehicles would have nowhere to go
- It has become a safety issue, with ambulances coming in and out, there should be no question...safety comes first, residents come first

Marjorie Giesken, 3610 Bradford St NE

- Request a difference exit/entrance...
- Bradford has become the cut through
- Bradford is not built for the type of traffic...asked is there another way to put an entrance off from the main entrance...
- Asking that the Planning Commission look at some alternatives
- Loves the gardens, but hates the traffic

Frank Lynn, 3446 Devon Dr NE

- Real concerns about this project...
- Putting more asphalt down is not an alternative
- In support of bringing public transportation to the EBL
- Cannot keep bringing more and more asphalt
- Need to be more creative, deal with this problem now, look at this ongoing problem, better alternatives to transportation issues

James Hale, 648 Bradford Place NE

- Traffic is the biggest problem, bumper to bumper, every night from 3-6
- Can't go anywhere...sit there and wait
- It is a safety hazard
- Basically a senior area, so many problems, not only traffic but the water problems
- Concern about medical care if it is needed, that it will not get to them
- 45 mins to an hour the entire street is stopped, cannot get in or out
- Cannot get on the EBL from their house...they need access to their homes...
- Concert music is fine, they do not mind listening to it free of charge, but traffic is something that needs to be taken into consideration

Gwen Powers, 772 Bradford Place NE

- Find alternatives to coming out on Bradford Street
- Would be happy to work with the gardens architects

- The gate is open constantly
- Please encourage the gardens to be the good neighbor that they are...

Randy Hoekstra gave Kara Hammond signed petitions to include with the minutes.

Dave Pierangeli, seconded by **Bill Culhane**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 9:01 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Wayne Harrall touched on the driveway location and requested the Gardens add some type of low level planting to help buffer the head lights. Dave VanDyke stated the traffic is already a given, especially because of the existing Bradford Street entrance/exit. Dave noted the traffic is already out there, this is not a new situation, the gardens are asking for a type of remedy with this additional lot.

Wayne Harrall asked if the Gardens have considered using “rent a cop”, police support, for backups with traffic (along Bradford Street). Ken Wenger explained the Gardens have employed security, 3-4 guards in the parking lots, but not in the street with those security guards. Ken said to put an officer out in the middle of Bradford Street or the East Beltline, would do more bad than good, it would be a bigger hindrance to have a person standing there telling people where to go.

Scott Conners mentioned a lot of the neighbors from the condo association go to the Gardens for events and just walk across the street, he suggested a sidewalk be built on the south side to the drive entrance. Wayne Harrall agreed and said a sidewalk from the existing bike trail (on the East Beltline) to the proposed drive entrance (on Bradford Street) should be implemented. Ken Wenger disagreed and stated there should be a study done before the Gardens are required to construct a sidewalk.

Dave VanDyke explained that with a Special Land Use request, the Planning Commission has the ability to require a sidewalk, he explained they are trying to make sure they take all issues into consideration. Dave said there does not need to be a study done at the corner of Bradford Street and the East Beltline, the Planning Commission can make the sidewalk requirement a condition in the Special Land Use approval for the safety of the pedestrians. Scott Conners explained he is not sure the Planning Commission can help find a different access point, but the sidewalk is a minor help to the surrounding neighbors. Scott also noted regional transportation is on everyone’s radar, but it is so expensive and not economically feasible, especially for this demographic.

Mark Prein suggested a landscaping effort on the east side of the entrance drive be required as well. Mark said landscaping directly to the east of the drive will help buffer the light cast/pollution across that area, for the neighbors.

Wayne Harrall asked if the Gardens currently have buses and bus parking. Ken Wenger replied no and explained the dotted lines are for possible future bus use.

Scott Conners noted the existing Gerontology building does not have any stormwater maintenance and wondered if the Planning Commission should address that issue. Wayne Harrall noted Township Engineer Bob Bruggink comments and his confirmation email.

Scott Conners suggested the designated bus parking spots be pushed as far north as possible. Mark Prein agreed and noted that designation more than doubles the distance away from Bradford Street.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to recommend the rezoning request for the parcel of land at 800 East Beltline Ave NE, and forward the request to the Township Board for final approval.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by **Dave Pierangeli**, moved to approve the Special Land Use request for the parcel of land at 800 East Beltline Ave NE with the following conditions;

- ♦ Grade change and material change on pedestrian walkways at the connection of parking lots E & F
- ♦ Additional landscaping is to be planted on the south end of the parking lot/Bradford Street frontage to obscure head lights (entire Bradford Street frontage)
- ♦ A sidewalk running from the south frontage on Bradford Street from the existing bike trail to the east where it meets the drive, to be completed when the construction of the lot is completed
- ♦ Limit bus parking to north half of the parking lot
- ♦ Parking lot lights will continue be on an as needed use
- ♦ Lots are gated unless in use

****Subject to final approval of the site plan review committee.*

Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

The Planning Commission suggested the Gardens take the concerns voiced into consideration and meet with the neighbors.

5. General Public Comment.

Gwen Powers, 772 Bradford Place NE, asked why the Gardens have not asked the UAW for an easement to have a drive onto a primary road where lights could shine on to commercial buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 am.



David A. VanDyke, Secretary