

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes September 23, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, September 23, 2014.

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

1. Approve minutes of August 26, 2014 meeting.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Bev Wall**, moved to approve the minutes with the following changes;

- ♦ p.1, paragraph before motion, 2nd sentence, change “dumping” to ‘discharging’
- ♦ p.1, paragraph before motion, 2nd sentence, insert ‘the I-96’ between the words “in” and “right”
- ♦ p.2, 2nd bullet, change “drainage” to ‘detention’
- ♦ p.2, 4th paragraph, 1st sentence, change the word “buildings” to ‘underground detention system’
- ♦ p.2, 4th paragraph, 3rd sentence, change the word “buildings” to ‘underground detention system’
- ♦ p.2, 6th paragraph, 4th sentence, change “correct” to ‘medical office’
- ♦ p.3, change the address of the motion to read ‘1000 Parchment Drive, 1001 & 1055 Medical Park Drive’
- ♦ p.3, 1st bullet under motion to read ‘Fire Chief review and recommendation (in writing) on connectivity’
- ♦ p.3, 3rd bullet under motion, change “storage” to ‘detention’
- ♦ p.4, 2nd bullet under public hearing, insert ‘water problems’ between the words “had” and “in”
- ♦ p.4, 2nd bullet under public hearing, change “bc” to ‘because’

Motion approved unanimously.

2. Informal Presentation - Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park - R-1 Rezoning and Special Land Use for additional lands at 3300, 3420 & 4300 Leonard Street.

David Hooker, President of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park (FMG) gave the presentation;

- ♦ FMG is closing on the UAW building property next week, application is to rezone that entire property to R-1
- ♦ Second piece of property is immediately to the east, Mrs. Buzzitta’s lot, which is located directly next to the maintenance area and the Gardens will need that area in order to expand the growing maintenance need/s
- ♦ Grand Rapids Golf Course; that property was gifted to FMG from the Meijer Foundation
- ♦ UAW; it will be used consistent with the FMG purpose and condition, all of the property will be used for that purpose, wetlands and natural environment and will absolutely remain consistent with FMG mission and purpose

- ♦ FMG has many ways the UAW property could be used, they will go into great depth to figure out the right fit, including the beautiful pond on the property

Dave VanDyke stated he is curious as to what the Gardens intentions are with the maintenance plans and what they plan to do with the other sites. Dave explained especially with the visibility of the course on Crahen Ave and Leonard Street, he would like some more description on what they intend to do and how they intend to maintain the properties until the Gardens figures out what they are going to do with those pieces of land. Dave said if it were natural land now it would be one thing, but if the golf course is let go for 5 plus years, without any upkeep or maintenance, it could turn into an eye sore. Dave said he would like more detail on the plan FMG will submit for the Public Hearing.

David Hooker, explained FMG currently owns the sliver of land between the two proposed properties (UAW and Buzzitta) and that property is kept up and they intend to do the same with the three additional properties.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the legal report.

Bev Wall, seconded by **Dave Pierangeli**, moved to set the Public Hearing for October 28, 2014.
Motion approved unanimously.

3. Public Hearing - 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.

*Commissioner Bill Culhane excused himself for this item, due to a conflict of interest.

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

- ♦ Introduced all the people representing the school and architects
- ♦ Expressed his, and the schools, gratitude to GRT
- ♦ The request they are making is the same, no changes have been made
- ♦ KISD and other neighbors have been supportive and still are supportive
- ♦ Had an open house with the neighbors to keep them informed and they will continue to stay in communication with them as the construction commences

Mark Wrona, with URS;

- ♦ Asking for one more year in order to get this project built
- ♦ Thanked the Planning Commission for their guidance and helping them get to where they are
- ♦ Asking for the existing field to have an upgrade, setup for (pedestrian) traffic to come from the parking lot, easy flow in to the new stadium
- ♦ Modification in one verbal component, the existing track - they planned on bidding that field as alternate synthetic turf, but now they would like real synthetic turf
- ♦ Agreement with the Church and Knapp Charter school; they use their lots in exchange for the CAT allowing the use of theirs
- ♦ Average game attendance is 2400 per game

- ♦ Possibility of playoff games being held there, but the team would have to earn the ability to play at home
- ♦ Approval from KISD to use their lots with a big game
- ♦ A letter from KC Sheriff Department, which was provided at last meeting
- ♦ Decided to no longer rent the facility out as talked about in 2008
- ♦ Explained all the criteria on which the original Special Land Use was approved

Bev Wall asked if they are just delaying the inevitable. Bev noted the Planning Commission gave the school one extension, understandably, but she is wondering why the new interest would make another one year extension worthwhile.

Mark Wrona explained the reason the request was first generated was when Catholic Central was no longer able to play at Houseman Field. Mark went on to describe how Catholic Central then had hopes of buying the church property but the church backed out (and they had that right), then they bid the project out in 2010 but the project was put to a halt. Mark explained, now under different leadership, Catholic Central is in a position where they can move forward.

Dave Faber noted, in the Catholic School sector the reality of their world is donations and they are comfortable enough to ask for the extension and finally move this project forward.

Attorney Jim Brown gave the legal report, and asked that CAT provide the updated letters from New Life Church and Knapp Charter regarding parking agreements.

Scott Conners asked if Catholic Central were able to peck away, does that count towards diligence, or do they need to take a big bite and go after it. Jim Brown said ultimately this body, the Planning Commission, in accordance with the Township Board, would consider what they find to be diligent or not. Jim explained, moving a small amount of dirt at the site then not doing anything is not working diligently.

Dave VanDyke asked if the Planning Commission granted the extension, if they are limited to just the one year extension or can the Commissioners make the decision to extend the request longer. Wayne Harrall asked what the CAT's time line would potentially look like. Mark Wrona stated they intend to break ground spring 2015 and have the fields ready for fall 2016.

Mark Prein, seconded by **Bev Wall**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:51 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Ken Katerberg, 1920 Leffingwell Ave NE

- Talked with the neighbors and the feeling is to not do anything with a temporary fence/walkway right now, but recommend they work with the KISD to put a paved walkway down to have people get used to using the designated walkway, keeping spectators off their lawns
- Recommends waiting to see what kind of foot traffic there will be before making permanent walkways
- Afraid people will be parking on the bike path, directly in front of their homes

Joe Thiel, 1874 Leffingwell Ave NE

- Overall concerns with the project in its entirety
- Concerned Leffingwell Ave and Knapp St were not built with that type of traffic flow in mind
- Concerned about property values, and lights on during the evening
- There are too many details that have not been given to the neighbors
- Attended the open house and asked specific questions and has not gotten any responses
- Would like to see the Planning Commission deny the extension, 6 years is long enough

Etta Denbesten, 1904 Leffingwell Ave NE

- Concerns are traffic and that people will be parking along the side of the road

Lindsey Thiel, 1874 Leffingwell Ave NE

- Agree with husbands comments (previously made)
- Changes to the project seem to keep coming up, wondering where do these changes stop
- Concerned with the fact that they will be using the KISD parking lots more than they are implying
- How are they going to get pedestrians across the wetlands at the Knapp Charter Academy

Joe Thiel, 1874 Leffingwell Ave NE

- Questions the fact that they say they are not going to be leasing the facility out, but what kind of financial sense does that make
- Why would they build a multi-million dollar stadium to play 5 games a year at, seriously questioning their motive

Wayne Harrall explained he feels very confident that with the sheriff's presence the pedestrians will be moved safely across the road.

Trevor Hinshaw, Athletic Director for Catholic Central

- Previously worked at Muskegon Catholic and said they had great relationships with their neighbors by staying ahead of any issues that may come up, just like they are doing here with Catholic Central
- Not just a new facility for football, but band, soccer and tennis will all benefit from this facility
- Besides the varsity football games, the 331 parking spots located directly next to the proposed facility will accommodate all other athletic activities

Bev Wall, seconded by **Scott Conners**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 8:11 pm.
Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Scott Conners said he knows he is the new guy, but he feels that this plan is more thought out than most facilities. Scott stated the site plan is well thought out, controversy or not, he feels comfortable with granting the extension. Dave VanDyke agreed with Scott and noted it is essentially the same site plan everyone worked so hard at years ago. Bev Wall said the question at hand is whether they want to give them the extension, not rehash the plan.

Dave Pierangeli again brought up the fact of extending the approval for more than the requested one year extension.

Bev Wall stated she knows what fund-raising is like out in the community, and if they have not raised the money in the last 6 years, she is not sure how they will get the required funds within the next year.

Dave Faber stated they have not opened the fundraising to the public yet, the majority of the funds they have currently obtained have been donated privately. Bev Wall asked if he could give the Planning Commission a percentage of funds obtained. Dave Faber stated it is close to 50%. Dave noted if they were not that close or could not see a means to an end, they would not be here asking for the extension. Dave added that the 50% is cash, in the bank.

Dave VanDyke, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to approve the Special Land Use extension of time to commence the construction request and the proposed Resolution approving Amendment No. 3 for the Catholic Secondary Schools (CAT) at 2770 Knapp Street with the following conditions;

- ♦ Approval for 2 year extension, until October 25, 2016
- ♦ No temporary fences are to be put up, rather wait to see if trespassing occurs at which time Township staff will address the issue appropriately
- ♦ Approval is contingent on receiving the parking agreements from New Life Christian Fellowship and Knapp Charter Academy

Aye – 5

Nay – 1

Motion approved, 5-1.

4. Informal Discussion - Chapter 30 (Signs) - Grand Rapids Township Zoning Ordinance chapter revisions, to be recommended to the Township Board.

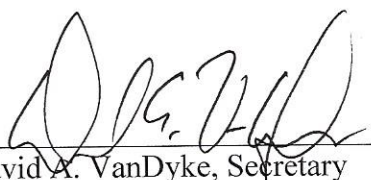
Attorney Jim Brown gave a brief overview of the revisions.

Wayne Harrall recommended the Commissioners look over the revisions, bring any changes/edits to the next meeting and also noted they may want to add in the working possibility of some policies be left up to the judgment of the staff.

5. General Public Comment.

No one was present for public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.


David A. VanDyke, Secretary