

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS  
Minutes October 26, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

Present were Chair Wayne Harrall, Vice Chair Scott Conners, Secretary Dave Van Dyke; Commissioners Doug Kochneff, Dan Ophoff and Mark Prein. Also present were Township Attorney Jim Scales and Planning Assistant Lindsey Thiel. Commissioner Steve Waalkes was absent.

1. **Approve minutes of September 28, 2021 regular meeting.**

**Scott Conners**, seconded by **Dave Van Dyke**, moved to approve the minutes with the following changes:

- Page 1, agenda item 2, second paragraph, first sentence, change “at” to “about”;
- Page 4, third paragraph, first sentence, change “Dan” to “Dave”.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

2. **Public Hearing – The Learning Experience Daycare – Request for a major PUD amendment and site plan approval of a 3.45 acre O-PUD located at 3300 East Beltline Avenue.**

Robb Lamer, Exxel Engineering, gave an overview of the project. They are requesting a daycare at the old Sunshine Church property. They are also seeking a variance for the required playground space.

Scott Conners asked about the entrance drives to the site. Robb Lamer responded he thinks they should designate both drives for two-way traffic, but it could be changed if there are safety concerns. Scott Conners said he doesn’t want cars that are entering from the East Beltline to stack. The owner of the daycare added that pick up and drop off are staggered at a daycare. Wayne Harrall asked the applicant if they would be opposed to language to allow the Township to change the drives, if there is a problem. They responded that would not be an issue because they would want to reevaluate if there is a problem.

Dave Van Dyke commented he would be more concerned if there was only one driveway. He asked about fencing and if it would be hidden by the berms. He also commented he would like to see elevations for the site. Robb Lamer showed plans and went over the elevations. Dave Van Dyke commented that, potentially, only the top of the fence would be seen. Robb Lamer responded that if you can see the fence, it would only be the top. He added that the berm would also help with sound from the East Beltline. Wayne Harrall said he likes the idea of the berms. Mark Prein added that liked the landscaping on the berms.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review.

**Dave Van Dyke**, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:21 pm.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

No one wished to speak.

**Dave Van Dyke**, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:22 pm.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

**Dave Van Dyke**, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to amend the ordinance and recommend to the Township Board approval of the major PUD amendment and site plan with the following conditions:

- resolve, with the Zoning Administrator, inconsistencies between the grading and landscape plans;
- approval of the lighting plan by the Zoning Administrator;
- the Zoning Administrator can direct a change in traffic markings or circulation, as needed.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

3. **Tabled Request– Avanterra Forest Hills Preserve – Request for a major amendment to the R-PUD located at 2409 Knapp St NE.**

Max Saichuk, Continental Properties, gave an overview of the project. It would be 149 rental units within the development. They are working with the City of Grand Rapids on a utility plan. They are preserving 15' of trees as a buffer with the neighbors. They plan to do the Knapp Street sidewalk and road improvements. They have talked with the school district and there is not a concern and there is capacity. They are asking for a waiver for first floor square footage for some of the four bedroom units. Those units don't meet the first floor requirements because all of the bedrooms are upstairs.

Dan Ophoff asked about the request for a waiver and if the applicant could specify exactly which units would require the variance. Max Saichuk responded that the waiver would apply to four bedroom Vista units. He said there are ten of those units. Wayne Harrall asked about the first floor square footage for the Vista units. Max Saichuk replied they are 688 square feet on the first floor.

Scott Conners commented that the applicant said they were preserving 15' of trees by neighbors, but the plan looks like it is cleared and landscaped. Max Saichuk responded that they would be completing a tree survey and if there is not enough of a buffer then they would supplement as needed to meet the landscape requirements. They would work with a landscape architect to fill in the trees. Dave Van Dyke commented that some trees might not be worth saving. He said there might be areas where they are not as nice of trees and it would be good to have the latitude to plant new trees.

Wayne Harrall asked about the terrace retaining walls and if they were more for aesthetics or so the retaining walls aren't as large. Max Saichuk said they are easier for maintenance and visually breaks up a wall.



Mark Prein asked about the no disturb and fencing for St. John's Home. He said he wants to make sure that issue is addressed. Wayne Harrall commented that they let the previous applicant make that decision with St. John's Home. Max Saichek said they don't currently show a fence on that property line, but there will be fences along the top tier of the retaining walls for safety.

Dan Ophoff asked for clarification on the locations of the terrace retaining walls. Max Saichek touched on the locations.

Wayne Harrall said previously they pushed the applicant for a 25' no disturb. Max Saichek responded they have a 15' no disturb and 8' patios in the back of the units. He added that structures are not within 33' of the property line.

Scott Conners commented that the watermain looping location has changed. He said he wants to maintain the looping in some fashion. Max Saichek said they are pursuing two different options with the City of Grand Rapids and looping will be done.

Wayne Harrall pointed out that one of the retaining walls was within the right of way of Knapp Street. Max Saichek said they will fix that on the plans. Scott Conners added that the plans need to be sealed per the State of Michigan.

Mark Prein said the retaining walls make some of the open space not accessible. Wayne Harrall replied that this is a difficult site and there were walls on the last plan as well. He added that he thinks the terrace walls are nicer.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review.

Scott Conners asked if the applicant would be opposed to walking the site with the neighbors and working with them on the tree study. Max Saichek said he did not see a problem with working on the tree study with the neighbors. Mark Prein commented that developers are not replacing trees that die and he would like to see replacement as a condition of approval.

Wayne Harrall asked how they would be doing phasing and what entrance they would be using. Max Saichek responded they will be using the west entrance. Dan Ophoff said the applicant mentioned the project will be done in 9 phases and asked what the timeframe would be until it was complete. Sara Johnson replied it will be one continuous process and will be done in just under 2 years. She said they would be fine with adding language regarding secondary access after 75 units.

**Scott Conners**, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to recommend approval to the Township Board with the following conditions:

- road layout on the plan;
- sidewalk constructed east to I-96;
- utility layout per the City of Grand Rapids comments;
- submit plans with Engineer's seal
- fence to be discussed and negotiated with St. John's Home;
- buffer discussion with all 4 neighbors regarding the tree study;

- tree and vegetative buffer kept in perpetuity;
- final plans will be reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee;
- secondary access will be added at 75 units;
- retaining wall shown in the southwest quadrant to be shown outside of the right of way;
- look at options to allow better access to the common area wetland.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

4. **Public Hearing – TowerCo – Special Land Use request for a 125-foot Wireless Communication Facility on property owned by Grand Rapids Township at 533 East Beltline Avenue, S.E.**

Matt Kunder, TowerCo, presented the application. He said he thought many of the issues from the last meeting were addressed. He touched on the fencing and landscaping. Jason Woodward, TowerCo, talked about the equipment cabinets and the desire for smaller individual cabinets. Dave Van Dyke asked about the height of the cabinets. Jason Woodward replied they are about 6-8 feet. He also said they are trying to shield the East Beltline side of the property and would use Juniper trees to achieve that goal.

Wayne Harrall commented that they could put a condition in the resolution to preserve the tree line. Matt Kunder responded that they do not have plans to disturb the tree line. Scott Conners said he would like to see landscaping at the north side of the site. Jason Woodward responded they wouldn't be opposed if more landscaping was required. Wayne Harrall agreed and added that they could allow the Zoning Administrator to add trees as needed for screening.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review.

**Dave Van Dyke**, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 8:35 pm.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

No one wished to speak.

**Dave Van Dyke**, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 8:36 pm.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

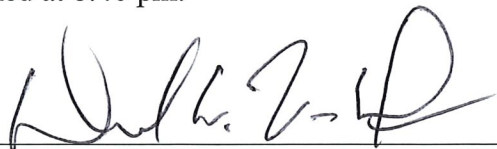
**Dan Ophoff**, seconded by **Scott Conners**, moved to approve the proposed resolution for a special land use for a wireless communication tower and antennas at 533 East Beltline Ave SE.

**Motion approved, 6-0.**

5. **General Public Comment.**

There were none.

It was moved by **Dan Ophoff**, seconded by **Mark Prein**, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David A. Van Dyke', written over a horizontal line.

David A. Van Dyke, Secretary