

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes May 26, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

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

1. Approve minutes of February 25, 2020 regular meeting.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to approve the minutes of the February 25 meeting with the following changes:

On page 1 in the attendance, correct Jim Brown to Jim Scales.

On page 3, fifth paragraph, third sentence, replace “of” with “if”.

Motion approved, 6-0.

2. Continued Discussion – Grand Forest Townhomes – Rezoning request, R-PUD, for an 11.41 acre parcel located at approximately 1137 Forest Hill Avenue.

John Wheeler, Orion Construction, talked about the updated items submitted. He said they worked on many site plans and the current one stays below the allowable density. The updated plan has 48 units compared to 62 units. They fixed the blocked green spaces and the open space was increased to 54%. The new site plan is all 4 unit buildings and the density is 5.4 units per acre. He said they are very proud of the design and would like to move forward with the proposal.

Doug Kochneff asked if there are still zero step units. John Wheeler responded that there are still zero step units.

Bill Culhane stated he has concerns with the issues stated in the Engineer’s review. He asked if the applicant thinks those issues can be managed. Rick Pulaski, Nederveld, responded that they have gone over a lot of detail already and have talked to the City of Grand Rapids about connecting.

Scott Conners said he thought the applicant addressed a lot of concerns from the previous meeting. He asked if they would bring more detail to the Public Hearing, if the commission moved them forward to one. Rick Pulaski responded they would bring more detail to the Public Hearing.

Wayne Harrall asked if the applicant had considered another road in and out of the development rather than a single access point. He said he thought it would improve circulation, even if it was

only use for development residents. He shared that Commissioner Mark Prein, who couldn't attend the meeting, shared this concern of circulation and connectivity. Mark Maier, Orion Construction, responded that the issue they have with another drive is the concern for cut thru traffic. They want to protect the people that live in the community.

Dan Ophoff commented that the updated plan looks better than last time, but hasn't gotten to where he could justify changing the zoning. He added that he doesn't see substantial benefit to the community or Township with the change. Mark Maier responded that they are offering alternative housing options. They think many of the units will go to empty nesters and their Spaulding property is full.

Dave Van Dyke said he is not sure the Township Board would be supportive of changing the zoning. He mentioned that the township has a shortage of single family lots and this site could be single family without a change in zoning. Wayne Harrall asked if the applicant has done a mockup of a single family neighborhood. Mike Maier responded that they are finding a shortage of any housing, which shows a need and a market for this type of housing. John Wheeler responded they have looked at a single family neighborhood and it would be about 30 homes. He said these would be single family attached homes and there would only be 12 buildings versus 30 buildings if they were single family homes. He added that they are working to make the plan have a neighborhood feel and cohesive architecture.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review.

Wayne Harrall commented that he is concerned for the houses across from the drive. John Wheeler responded that they had a neighborhood meeting at Heather Hills and received only positive responses. They launched a traffic study as a response to the meeting. He also commented that the project will be quick at around 12 months whereas single family development drags on. Rick Pulaski added that one reason to consider the rezoning is the guarantee of open space and the protection of the wetland and stream.

Doug Kochneff asked the applicant how long they would leave the units as rentals. John Wheeler said it is typically 2 years or 5 years. Doug Kochneff asked what the rental price point would be. John Wheeler responded the 2 bedrooms are in the \$1,700 range and the 3 bedrooms are in the \$2,100 range. He added that they don't finish the basements, if the unit has one, until they are converted to condos. Doug Kochneff commented that he is still struggling with the rezoning.

Wayne Harrall said he thinks it is important to hear from the neighbors. Dave Van Dyke questioned when to schedule the hearing due to COVID-19 concerns.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to set the Public Hearing for July 28, 2020 or later, if necessary, as determined by Legal Counsel and dependent on Executive Orders limiting meeting sizes.

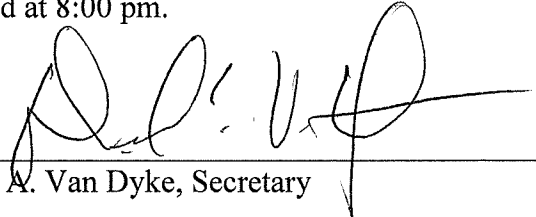
Motion approved, 6-0.

3. **General Public Comment.**

The Planning Commission Chair invited general public comment on Planning Commission matters.

There were none.

It was moved by **Scott Conners**, seconded by **Bill Culhane** to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.



David A. Van Dyke, Secretary