

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes July 27, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, July 27, 2021.

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

1. Approve minutes of June 22, 2021 regular meeting.

Scott Conners, seconded by **Steve Waalkes**, moved to approve the minutes with the following changes:

- Page 1 item two, in the motion, add a period at the end;
- Page 1, item two, under the Public Hearing correct typo to “closest” residence;
- Page 3, first paragraph change “Dan Hibma” to “Sunshine Ridge Apartments”.

Motion approved, 7-0.

Dave Van Dyke, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to amend the agenda moving item 2 to the end of the agenda.

Motion approved, 7-0.

2. Initial Review – Avanterra Forest Hills Preserve – Request for a major amendment to the R-PUD located at 2409 Knapp St NE.

Sara Johnson, Continental Properties, gave an overview of the application and the location. The site would have similar characteristics as the current approved PUD, but with a clubhouse and pool. This style is a new upscale product line and rent would be 15-20% more than The Springs. Each home would have private patio space and they plan 9-10 phases to build all the homes.

Steve Waalkes asked for clarification on the targeted demographic for these units. Sara Johnson responded high earners such as young professionals, newly married couples, and empty nesters.

Wayne Harrall asked about the range of square footage in the units. Sara Johnson replied the one bedroom units are around 900 square feet and the four bedroom units are around 1900 square feet. Wayne Harrall then inquired about the amount of space between units and if open space was being counted between the units. Sara Johnson responded that the tightest is 12 feet, but the windows are on one side of the unit to allow for a private yard to the rear or side of the unit. She said they are counting open space between the units, but they are single family homes.

Dave Van Dyke inquired about the road width in the development. Sara Johnson responded that the roads are 26 feet wide and there are also apron spots in the driveways for parking. Scott Conners commented that he would like to see sidewalks on at least one side of the road because he wouldn't want people walking in the streets in a community like this. Dave Van Dyke agreed

regarding the addition of sidewalks. Sara Johnson replied that are working with a civil engineer on sidewalks. Dave Van Dyke asked what the setback distance was to the homes on Knapp Street. Sara Johnson responded 35 feet.

Scott Conners asked the applicant if they understood the improvements that were required from the last approval. Sara Johnson replied that they were aware of the required improvements. Wayne Harrall added that they have met with the Kent County Road Commission regarding Knapp Street and with the City of Grand Rapids on the water main.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review.

Wayne Harrall said the Planning Commission could potentially schedule for a Public Hearing for the next meeting. He asked the applicant if reduced units, per the legal review, would be an issue. Sara Johnson said they would have to look at the financial viability of the project.

Wayne Harrall told the applicant he would like to see a cross section of the northerly portion for the Public Hearing. He also mentioned that drainage was a concern previously. He said the neighbors came out for this site previously and encouraged as many details as possible.

Mark Prein asked what the plans were for garbage and mail. Sara Johnson said it would be individual garbage pick-up and mail would be pedestals with 10-12 mailboxes clustered with the possibility of a kiosk. Mark Prein commented that he doesn't know where garbage cans would be stored because the garages are tight.

Doug Kochneff asked what the plans are regarding snow removal. Sara Johnson said they are currently looking at options regarding snow removal.

Scott Conners commented that the applicant should move the pet playground inward on the site. Sara Johnson responded that are working with their civil engineer on that issue. Wayne Harrall agreed and asked if the applicant has talked with St. John's Home. Sara Johnson replied they have been working with them for a few weeks on a buffer between the properties.

Mark Prein commented that the no disturb was a hot topic for the last approval. He also added that the greenspace is supposed to be accessible. Steve Waalkes agreed and commented that a lot is shoved into the buildable space on this site. He added that the applicant needs to add sidewalks on the site and on Knapp Street. He commented that he has visited sites like this where it is very tight and parking quickly becomes an issue with any guests because people uses their garages as storage. Scott Conners agreed and said he was struggling with the density. He said they should consider removing units and adding parking.

Wayne Harrall asked if the applicant had considered marrying the garages. Sara Johnson replied that the garages currently serve as a buffer.

Dave Van Dyke commented that the plan is very tight and he sees some real problems with parking. He said he also sees potential for some problems with snow storage in a heavy snow year.

Sara Johnson asked if there is any flexibility with the first floor minimum square footage requirements. Jim Scales quoted the Zoning Ordinance in response.

Dan Ophoff, seconded by **Steve Waalkes**, moved to set a Public Hearing on August 24, 2021.

Motion approved, 7-0.

3. **Revoke Special Land Use - Mr. Bill's - Revoke a Special Land Use to operate a commercial landscape business on the parcels of land located at 4475 & 4481 Knapp St NE.**

Wayne Harrall introduced the agenda item noting that the Planning Commission members received a letter from the Supervisor/Zoning Administrator showing some history of the site. He said there has not been compliance since the Special Land Use was granted.

Scott Conners said he was going to abstain from this matter because he had his identity stolen and his name/identity has been incorrectly associated with this site.

Bill Souffrou, Mr. Bill's, thanked the Planning Commission for allowing him to run his business at his home up until this point. He said he had to move mountains on the site to get into compliance with the approved plan. He said he has put in a commercial entrance and an engineer had recommended letting the site settle before building. He said there are no landscape commodities on the site and nothing currently needs to be stored or parked outside. He showed photos of his site versus Knapp Valley Gardens and commented that his site is wooded and private. He commented that he believes he has compliant with most of the issues on the site.

Wayne Harrall clarified that the applicant could come back and apply again in the future. Bill Souffrou responded that he came and talked with the Supervisor in-person and he thought moving the vehicles fixed his issues.

Wayne Harrall said it has been almost four years since the Special Land Use was approved and the requirements have not been met. The Site Plan Review Committee modified the approved plan and the applicant still was not in compliance. When the applicant is ready to meet the requirements and is ready with a plan, then he could apply again.

Dave Van Dyke asked why he needed the Special Land Use if the business was not running out of that site. Bill Souffrou responded he does not run the day-to-day at the site, but would like to have a truck or equipment at his home so he could go straight to a job. Dave Van Dyke responded that the applicant has had several construction seasons to build the site and meet the requirements. He added that there has been a reasonable amount of time to meet the requirements.

Dave Van Dyke, seconded by **Dan Ophoff**, moved to revoke the Special Land Use for a landscaping business at 4475 and 4481 Knapp Street.

Motion approved, 6-0.

Scott Conners abstained from the vote.

4. **General Public Comment.**

Greg Gagnon, 4480 Knapp Street, lives across from Mr. Bill's; had questions about the water table in the area; there is a septic field in the back of his neighbor's house and he can smell it; asked about public utilities in the area and how to address the issue.

5. **Continued Discussion – Proposed Storm Water Ordinance.**

Wayne Harrall commented that Jim Scales did a good job comparing the proposed model with the current Storm water Ordinance.

Attorney Jim Scales gave his legal review.

Dan Ophoff asked what the process is for changing the manual. Scott Conners responded that LGROW has taken on the leadership role in bringing the locals together for consistency and cost savings. The committee there would take on small deviations in the manual. Wayne Harrall added that the current model was similar and the manuals are very similar. The Kent County Road Commission complies, though they can't adopt the ordinance. There is not a lot of flexibility for changes and any modifications would go to the Grand Valley Metro Council.

Scott Conners briefly touched on the biggest changes. He mentioned this is not just being adopted by the members of the Grand Valley Metro Council, but also Muskegon, Allegan and Ottawa communities. Mark Prein agreed and added that it evens the playing field. Wayne Harrall suggested that they utilize Jim Scales' suggestions that were concurred with by the Township Engineer.

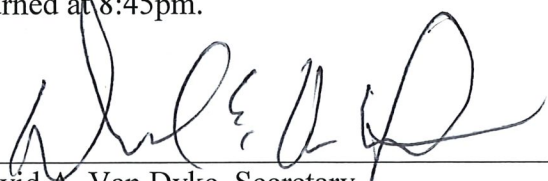
Steve Waalkes asked for clarification on the payment in lieu portion. Scott Conners said it is a tool, but it puts the local community on the hook to fix the problem.

Dan Ophoff asked if the new ordinance would impact the project that was considered at this meeting. Scott Conners responded not until it is adopted, unless they access a county drain since they already adopted the new ordinance.

Steve Waalkes, seconded by **Scott Conners**, moved to send comments to the Township Board, with the recommendation to adopt the proposed Storm Water Ordinance.

Motion approved, 7-0.

It was moved by **Steve Waalkes**, seconded by **Mark Prein**, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.



David A. Van Dyke, Secretary