

**MINUTES OF THE GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
June 25, 2020
Via Zoom Meeting
GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
8555 KALAMAZOO AVENUE SE CALEDONIA, MICHIGAN 49316**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Giarmo. A quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Wells, Township Planner
David Jirousek, Planning Consultant
Robin Haaksma, Recording Secretary

II. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING AGENDA

No Changes

III. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

May 28, 2020 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Giarmo asked for a few changes. Her name is listed as Member and Chair Giarmo in the minutes. It should always read Chair Giarmo. Planning Commission should also be capitalized throughout the minutes.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Waayenberg to approve the minutes for the May 28, 2020 Planning Commission Regular Meeting.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

IV. INQUIRY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Advertised Public Hearings

a. Amendment to Section 4.2 F, Chapter 22, and Chapter 28

Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to regulate required frontage, private streets, shared driveways, and private driveways.

David Jirousek addressed the Planning Commission. This amendment has been in the works for many years. The primary objectives of the changes are to ensure safe access to properties, establish minimum requirements, and ensure long-term maintenance.

Chair Giarmo opened the public hearing at 7:10 pm.

Chair Giarmo closed the public hearing at 7:11 pm.

Motion: By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Thomas to recommend the draft ordinance for Township Board approval.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

2. Site Plan Review

a. Old Dominion Freight Lines Terminal (West Portion of Parcel 44-22-01-400-036)

Site plan review for a 43,089 SF industrial building with 83 truck dock doors.

David Jirousek gave the Planning Commission a brief overview of the project. The site plan does not meet the 4 to 1 depth to width ratio required for land divisions, but the ordinance allows the Planning Commission to waive this requirement. The site plan also includes excess parking spaces which should be discussed by the Planning Commission. The entrance and exit should also be clearly marked as one way because they are narrower than normally required for safe fire access. The lighting will require a height modification. A traffic study was prepared for this project, but Staff has not seen the final findings from the Kent County Road Commission.

Kyle Hoyt from Hoyt & Berenyi is the Civil Engineer on the project and was present to address the Planning Commission. The applicant and the engineering firm are happy to address the sidewalk requirement and employee driveway markings with Staff. The applicant requests a higher light pole height in the yard portion of the property to adequately light around the trucks and trailers. The remaining portions of the plan do comply with the 20 foot pole height. Old Dominion usually asks for one parking spot per truck door to have adequate parking for their drivers.

The Planning Commission discussed the 4 to 1 ratio. There is a shared space at the top of the property that causes the project to not comply. If that was removed they would be in compliance. Member Haagsma stated since the north section is wet and not usable and considering the shared space the applicant has satisfied the 4 to 1 ratio. The other Planning Commissioners agreed with Member Haagsma's statement.

The Planning Commission was satisfied with Mr. Hoyt's explanation for the number of parking spaces and the taller light poles in the yard.

Chair Giarmo stated her concern with adding more traffic to this area. Will this overload 68th St.? Member Haagsma explained the traffic study compared peak times for this use with the peak times of Amazon and the distribution center across the street. It was found the peak times do not align with each other. Without the final report from the Road Commission can the Planning Commission have staff resolve any adjustments that are required?

Motion: By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Haagsma to approve the site plan with the following conditions:

1. The light fixture height is acceptable as written. The fixtures shall not tilt upward and must be parallel to the ground.
2. The additional parking spaces are acceptable because of their use.
3. The 4 to 1 ratio has been met because of the wet lands to the north and the shared property at the front of the property.
4. Revise setback notes to 50 foot front, 15 foot side, and 25 foot rear.
5. Indicate pavement markings on the site plan directing one-way traffic in and out of the front parking lot.
6. Correct landscaping points in notes to 270 points for the front yard and 204 for the parking area.
7. Show the ground sign placement on the site plan, if applicable.
8. Add a sidewalk along the 68th St. frontage.
9. All Township departments and outside agency approvals are secured:
 - a. Township Engineer/BGUA
 - b. Fire Department
 - c. Kent County Road Commission
 - d. Kent County Drain Commission
 - e. EGLE Wetland Verification
 - f. Staff to review the traffic report

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

b. 6729 Hanna Lake, Dutton Christian School Addition

Site plan review for a 11,500 SF addition on south side of the existing school.

Travis Tate of Dan Vos Construction is the Civil Engineer on the project. This is a 11,500 square foot addition the length of the school. The plans also include moving an accessory building to the adjacent lot owned by Dutton Christian. A new driveway and dumpster enclosure will also be added by the accessory building. Mr. Tate stated the shed will border a playground on the neighboring property owned by the church and not impact any residential property. He asked if the Planning Commission could waive the setback requirement. Planner Wells and Consultant Jirousek responded this cannot be waived by the Planning Commission. The variance would need to be approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Planning Consultant David Jirousek gave the Planning Commission a brief overview of the staff report. The Planning Commission should discuss the setback issue with the accessory building. The ZBA has granted a setback variance for the west side of the building.

The Planning Commission discussed the accessory building. Mr. Tate shared the school is looking into purchasing the adjacent property which would make the building in compliance. Chair Giarmo stated they would need a purchase agreement showing the property line has changed. David Jirousek stated that staff can handle the accessory building location prior to the issuance of building permits.

Motion: By Member Burns, supported by Member Haagsma to approve the site plan amendment with the following conditions:

1. Adjust the boundary lines or relocate the accessory building in a compliant manner. This can be finalized by staff.
2. Correct note regarding required parking (100 spaces).
3. All Township departments and outside agency approvals are secured.
 - a. Township Engineer/BGUA
 - b. Fire Department
 - c. Kent County Drain Commission

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Items not requiring a Public Hearing

a. Major PUD amendment: Loan Oak – Kent LLC, Rapids Drive (PUD)

Major amendment to allow for greater wall and ground sign square footage.

Planning Consultant David Jirousek stated this resolution reflects the guidance from the previous Planning Commission meeting.

Motion: By Member Haagsma, supported by Member Burns to recommend approval of the resolution to the Township Board.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

VIII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. 3304 60th Street, PUD Amendment for Rezoning RL-10 to PUD for Apartments

Planner Wells apologized for forgetting this item was withdrawn. The applicant is proposing apartments off 60th St. in an area previously designated for office use. The applicant has pushed their presentation to next month. Preliminary plans were very standard looking and staff recommended more imagination be put into the appearance and design.

Chair Giarmo recommended putting some design pages together to direct developers on what the Planning Commission would like to see in the Township. The Planning Commission has seen several very standard apartment communities that haven't met expectations. Planner Wells agreed this would be helpful for future developers.

2. Setback Averaging Ordinance Language for Older Neighborhoods

Planner Wells shared this has come about from a few ZBA issues and infill projects that have been proposed in older neighborhoods. This applies mainly to the northwest portion of the township near Division (Section 6, 7, 18). Current setbacks of 35 foot can make these smaller lots unbuildable. Also, when a lot is buildable it looks out of place to have a new home set further back than the neighboring properties. How do we fit new houses into the older neighborhoods?

Planner Wells and Consultant Jirousek came to the idea of setback averaging or establishing a build-to area based on the historic average of these neighborhoods. This could help the Township preserve the character of these neighborhoods. Revising the Ordinance could also bring non-conforming homes in these areas into compliance.

Chair Giarmo recalled a few items the Zoning Board of Appeals has discussed over the years. Does the hybrid approach reduce the need for the Planning Commission to approve a Special Use Permit? Consultant Jirousek explained this could be an administrative review item handled by Staff.

Planner Wells asked if the Planning Commission would like this applied to side and rear setbacks as well.

Member Waayenberg likes the build-to/hybrid idea. He suggested adding a setback variance can be allowed if there are three examples of that variance in the surrounding area.

Member Haagsma feels the side yard should be included as well. Many garages in this area were constructed right on the property line.

Motion: By Member Waayenberg, supported by Member Rober to instruct staff to draft an Ordinance amendment for Chapters 6, 7, and 8 for zones 5, 6, 7, 8 and 18.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: By Member Thomas, supported by Member Waayenberg to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 PM.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Billips, Burns, Giarmo, Haagsma, Rober, Thomas, Waayenberg

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Decision: Passed

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes from the June 25, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission held at the time and place mentioned above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,



Lani Thomas, Secretary
Gaines Charter Township
Planning Commission

Dated: _____, 2020

