

ZONING MINUTES
Cascade Charter Township
Zoning Board of Appeals
Tuesday, June 09, 2015
7:00 P.M.
Cascade Library Wisner Center
2870 Jackson Avenue SE

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Hammond called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.
Members Present: Berra, Hammond, McDonald, Neal
Members Absent: Casey (Excused)
Others Present: Community Development Director Steve Peterson and those listed on the sign in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Chairman Hammond led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Agenda.

Motion made to approve the Agenda as printed by Member McDonald. Support by Member Berra. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the May 12, 2015 Meeting.

Motion made by Member McDonald to approve the Minutes of the May 12, 2015 Meeting as written. Support by Member Berra. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 5. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.

No visitors present wished to speak to non-agenda items.

ARTICLE 6. Case #15:3247 Ridges of Cascade

Public Hearing

Property Address: 3319 Charlevoix Drive SE

Requested Action: The Applicant is seeking a variance to allow a sign to be constructed taller than permitted by the sign ordinance.

Community Development Director Peterson introduced the case. The Applicant is requesting a taller sign than is allowed. The sign will be out by the highway. This is the new apartment project that is being built on the old Centennial Golf Course. When we approved the development, it was agreed that they would follow the residential signage Ordinances. The Ordinance states that they are allowed to have an entry or subdivision sign at each entrance to the development. They have three entrances and they would be allowed three signs. Each sign is limited to 64 sq. ft. and a height of five (5) feet. We do allow them to be closer to the road than a commercial sign but no closer than five (5) feet to the right of way.

The Applicant is requesting is a sign that is 64 sq. ft. but, nine (9) feet tall instead of the allowable five (5) feet tall. They would like to replace one of the signs that they are allowed have at the entrance and instead place it out by the highway. A strict read of our Ordinance would say that the subdivision signs are supposed to be at the entrances.

We have allowed for the commercial businesses to put there allowed sign out by the highway rather than at their road frontage. The difference is that commercial properties can only allowed one sign per lot. The developer made comments that they want signs like some of the businesses around them and they have provided pictures for you. The signs at Centennial Fitness and Hope Network are a little bit taller at about seven (7) feet. Commercial signs do not have the same regulations as residential signs or subdivision signs. Commercial signs are allowed to be taller but are typically moved farther back from the property line. The residential signs are smaller but are allowed to be closer to the road. I do not think using these two commercial sites is comparable to this case. I recommend that you do not approve the sign variance to allow for the taller sign out by the highway. I feel that we are already letting them exchange the sign out by the entrance for a sign out by the highway. I did not find anything unique or exceptional that would necessitate the variance. If the site restrictions do not accommodate the placement of the sign, there are plenty of other areas on the property where the sign could be located. I understand they want the exposure of the highway but that is not our concern. My own sense is that the apartment buildings themselves will provide more exposure than a sign. It is not like other commercial developments where there were some exceptions for traffic flow which is not a concern at this location. My recommendation is that you not approve the variance request for a taller sign.

Member McDonald stated for clarification, we are allowing the Applicant three signs. Two signs at the entrance and one at the highway for a total for three signs, not four. Director Peterson stated that this was correct.

Chairman Hammond asked about signage behind Walmart for the residential development. Director Peterson stated that they have a sign at the entrance and only have the one sign. Cassidy stated that they do not need the variance and have a backup plan for a lower sign in this same location.

Chad Cassidy, 1570 Lookout Farm Dr., Ada, MI came forward as the Applicant. Regarding the signage, this development has been in the development for some time. We have a 25 acre site. We technically have approval to put up signs and have the opportunity to put up signs at both entrances each at 64 sq. ft. Our thought process is to keep only one sign at the main entrance of Ridges of Cascade rather than multiple signs. For exposure, I would like to add a sign that will not impact anyone else. It is on the high point on the site to get exposure and I think it would be a better option to get exposure from the highway that would not impact the neighbors or businesses. We don't have to have the sign, but this would limit the signage in the actual residential area while getting the impact from the highway. The other thing is the fact - is it residential or commercial. Project is not a residential single family or condominiums association that are individually owned, this is a commercial type asset. (Articles introduced to support asset classes.) The property is not individually owned, it is all commercial. It is a Luxury multifamily development and we are keeping the branding very high end. The logo would be a compromise and a high end branding to the development, not for directions. Our request is to really get the exposure via the brand with a light sign and to exit off 36th street. Cassidy stated that they do not need the variance and have a backup plan for a lower sign in this same location.

Chairman Hammond asked Director Peterson about the zoning of the property. Director Peterson stated it goes back many years to the early 70's and was agricultural zoning designation. It is now designated residential land use.

Chairman Hammond stated that the Variance request is the height of the sign. Director Peterson stated that they can have a sign in place of entrance signs, but must still meet residential height requirements. The Applicant stated the reason for the variance is that there is a barbed wire fence in front of the sign and he is worried that debris may block sign at that height. Better exposure with the greater height.

Chairman Hammond stated that if the variance is not granted, the normal sign will still be put up. The Applicant responded that this was correct.

Member McDonald made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Second by Member Berra. Motion passed 4-0.

Jane Hesselchwerdt, 6121 North Gatehouse Dr. S.E., stated that she sees no need for a sign to make it look more commercial and less residential like they all enjoy.

Patricia Goede, 6115 North Gatehouse Dr. asked how high the signs are going to be at the entrances? The Applicant responded 5ft. in height.

Member McDonald made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Second by Member Berra. Motion passed 4-0.

Member McDonald made a motion to deny the variance to allow Ridges of Cascade to have a sign taller than permitted on the highway by the sign ordinance based on finding of fact. Second by Member Berra. Motion passes 4-0.

ARTICLE 7. Any other business.

ARTICLE 8. Adjournment

Motion by Member Berra to adjourn the meeting. Support by Member McDonald. Motion Passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Seykora/Julie Kutchins
Planning Administrative Assistant