

**MINUTES**  
Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission  
Tuesday, January 20, 2009  
7:00 p.m.

- ARTICLE 1.** Chairman McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.  
Members Present: Hammond, Lewis, Logue, McCarthy,  
McDonald, Pennington, Robinson, Sperla, Waalkes  
Members Absent: None  
Others Present: Township Planning Director Peterson and  
Members of the Public.
- ARTICLE 2.** Chairman Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- ARTICLE 3.** Chairman Robinson requested a motion for the approval of the  
January 20, 2009 Agenda.
- Member Lewis motioned to approve the January 20<sup>th</sup> Agenda  
as presented, supported by Member McDonald. All in favor  
with none opposed, the motion carried.**
- ARTICLE 4.** **Approval of the Minutes from the December 15, 2008 Meeting.**  
Chairman Robinson asked if there were any corrections to the  
December 15<sup>th</sup> Minutes or requested a motion for approval.
- Member Waalkes asked on Page 3, under the roll call vote, that he  
be added as a yes; he was present at that meeting and voted in  
favor.
- Member Waalkes motioned to approve the December 15, 2008  
Minutes with the addition on Page 3, supported by Member  
Hammond. All in favor with none opposed: December 15,  
2008 Minutes approved as corrected.**
- ARTICLE 5.** **Approval of the Minutes from the January 5, 2009 Meeting.**  
Chairman Robinson asked if there were any corrections to the  
January 5<sup>th</sup> Minutes or requested a motion for approval.
- Member McCarthy asked on Page 4, last sentence be cleaned up  
and Staff noted the sentence should read "...although we did just  
have a site plan...."
- Member Lewis motioned to open the Public Hearing,  
supported by Member Hammond. All in favor with none  
opposed: January 5, 2009 Minutes approved as corrected.**

**ARTICLE 6.**

**Case # 08-2960: Forest Hills Golf / Watermark Condo's**

**Address of Property:** 5536 Cascade Road

**Requested Action:** Basic Plan Review for an amendment to add a new office / health club.

Planning Director Peterson referenced the site plan drawing in the Commissions' packets noting the location of the project within Watermark and also referred to the copy of the Golfview Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.).

The Applicant is requesting to amend the existing P.U.D. and add a new office/health club near the clubhouse at the end of Galbraith Avenue.

The building is a 17,000 square-foot (s.f.) building with 13,000 s.f. for the office and approximate 4,000 s.f. for the health club.

The Watermark Development is currently under a P.U.D. and has been so since 1997. Originally the P.U.D. included what became the Golfview project. They were separated after Watermark developed and the Golfview portion of the project did not. The golfview project went to its own P.U.D. in 1999.

The Watermark P.U.D. does not contemplate this additional building and therefore, the Applicant must proceed through the P.U.D. amendment process.

Staff has met with the Applicants to review the project and has indicated to them that there are concerns regarding the project:

- a. Adding more office space to the area.
- b. Bypassing the negotiated 1997 P.U.D.
- c. The health club ideas seems like a good fit but not the primary user of the building.
- d. Large multi-tenant will want exposure to Cascade Road.
- e. Splitting off a one-acre piece of property.

Staff has indicated that if the project were just a health club, it would have more merit and would fit within the development as an accessory to the golf course. This would be the same as when the swim center was approved in 2000 as an accessory use to the clubhouse.

The Applicant has submitted this package as required for the Basic Plan Review that allows the Applicant to introduce the project to the Planning Commission for their input. This review is a little different since Staff normally works with the Applicant to work out some of the issues, and as of this point, have not been able to do so. Staff did explain to the Applicant that they are not in favor

of the project as presented and the Applicant would still like to hear from the Planning Commission.

If the Commission supports staff's opinion then that should be communicated to the applicant so they can decide on how to proceed.

If the Commission thinks the project is worthwhile or the Developer would like to continue with it, the Applicant would need to include:

- a. A complete landscape plan.
- b. Lighting plan.
- c. A completed site plan
- d. A completed site plan showing all four (4) sides of the building including the materials of the building.
- e. A perspective of the building from Cascade Road.
- f. Approval of the storm water plan from FTCH (Fishbeck Thomson Carr & Huber).

Member McDonald referred to Staff's report under adjacent area land uses regarding the gas station on the west if that was correct and Planning Director Peterson corrected the report in saying that there is a parking lot and the swim center on the west property.

Member McDonald asked if the project was in P.U.D. 2 or P.U.D. 15 and Planning Director Peterson clarified it is in P.U.D. 15, Watermark, and P.U.D. 2 is the Golfview project.

Member Pennington noted that his company has done some of the work on the Watermark project and are not involved in this particular project. He does not believe his involvement poses a conflict of interest.

Member Lewis also disclosed that he is a member of Watermark and lives in the development, but does not see any conflict of interest with this case.

Applicant Kevin Einfeld, 5510 Cascade Road, is one of the principals of Watermark, also present are principals, Doug Bauer and Steve Plakmeyer.

Watermark was developed in 1997 with approximately 160-home sites and includes a wonderful golf course, clubhouse and swim center.

The reason for coming before the Planning Commission is because the development has a void in their club and that is having a fitness center.

The fitness center would complete the project as many other developments offer a fitness center along with the golf course and pool.

The reason for the request for both the office space and the health club is based on the economy and the cost of the construction. Not many buildings of 4,000 s.f. are built due to the financial costs of the project therefore additional square footage justifies the costs. Watermark Development would move their offices into the building along with an interior design group and interest from a possible sports doctor who would lease space.

Applicant Einfeld referred to the changes for the existing service drive allowing for a circle area for the bag drop. They have also been in dialogue with the neighbors in implementing some traffic calming devices in the pick up areas as traffic is moving too quickly in the area.

The Applicant noted that a fitness center is very complimentary to a golf course. They have proposed fifty-two (52) parking spaces to accommodate the fitness center noting use of parking for the clubhouse would also be utilized.

One of the concerns of the project is its visibility from Cascade Road and Applicant Einfeld produced two (2) images showing the view. He noted the building is approximately 1700-feet from Cascade Road.

Applicant Einfeld also noted regarding traffic and traffic control, that with the improvements earlier noted and the current traffic flow, the addition of the fitness center would not impose any additional problems.

The Applicant also addressed their proposal for signage proposing that they would ask for a small increase in their current square footage, they currently have 50-s.f., and would also like to have additional small signage at the north end of the building.

The current office buildings in the development are quality buildings and is currently 100% leased. The Applicant said the new building will also be built of high-end quality and believes it would benefit the development.

Member Lewis asked the Applicant if they explored the possibility of adding just the fitness center to one of the current two buildings in the development. Applicant Einfeld said they believe the fitness center should be a part of the clubhouse facility to allow those at the fitness center to have lunch if they would like and provide more accessibility of the facilities to the community.

Member Lewis noted that the Township is completing their new Master Plan and the survey taken of the residents regarding Cascade Road. Ten years ago, when the survey was taken, people were concerned about office space and traffic on the road. People are still preferring to keep Cascade Road as it is without adding more office or retail between Hall Road and Burton Street.

Member Lewis also noted that there were conditions that were placed on the office buildings for the Watermark Development, along with others along Cascade Road, in that there had to be fifty percent (50%) occupancy of the office building. The current plan notes this is a request for an office building with a fitness center.

The Watermark P.U.D. was negotiated with the developers and the project was developed as stated within the P.U.D. It is difficult to amend the P.U.D. to include an additional office building and believes it would be more appropriate if done as the swim center, as a benefit to the clubhouse.

Currently there are approximately ninety (90) P.U.D.s within the Township and if this P.U.D. were amended to allow for additional office space, it could set a precedence for the others to do the same. If the project were proposed with just the fitness center that would benefit the clubhouse, the more likely the project would be supported. The people, however, would not support additional office space.

Member Lewis said he is personally having trouble opening up the P.U.D. that was heavily negotiated in 1997 for additional office space.

Member McDonald noted that the project should conform with the Master Plan and is also concerned with setting precedence in amending P.U.D.s. and referred back to another case that was asking to rezone to office space from residential and the people expressed their concerns with that case as well.

Member Sperla agreed with the previous comments and also noted that when the green space is removed, there is not anymore green space within the development. He noted that the other office buildings are more removed from the club, this project brings the

office use into the club area of the development. He agrees the office use could be focused around the fitness center with sports medical practioners, etc., but general office use does not seem to conform to the clubhouse and fitness uses. He supports Member Lewis' idea in adding onto the current facility for the fitness center but is not in favor of additional office space.

Member Sperla also noted that there was a condition to one of the buildings that was developed and that was to be limited to 10,000 square feet, this proposed building is 17,000-s.f. and another restriction was a 25-foot height maximum. He believes in looking at the proposed office / fitness center that the proposed building exceeds the original P.U.D. standard.

Member Hammond asked the Applicant if they have spoken with the membership of the country club regarding the fitness center and Applicant Einfeld said they have and they are supportive of it. Member Hammond noted that 4,000-s.f. does not seem very big for a fitness center as he lived in a development that also had a fitness center. He noted that his development's center closed when MVP Sports Complex opened because their facility could not offer the amenities that MVP Sports could. He agrees that the office use is inappropriate and he is also concerned of the success of the fitness center in the future.

Chairman Robinson supported the concerns the Planning Commission has expressed regarding additional office space and opening up the established P.U.D.

Applicant Einfeld said he appreciates the Commissions' input and they need to figure out how to add the fitness center into the development. He is not in favor of putting the building off of Cascade Road since the community is not in favor of more office on the road and the project would entail additional parking. They would prefer to utilize the parking from the clubhouse.

Member Waalkes asked the Applicant if they have considered adding the fitness center onto the clubhouse and Applicant Einfeld said they have but there is no logical place for the addition. It is also not economically feasible to build a 4,000-s.f. building solely for the purpose of a fitness center.

Member Logue asked if the addition could be added to the swim center since locker facilities are already built and Applicant Einfeld said they could not add onto the swim center in a reasonable fashion.

Mr. Plakmeyer asked what size would be appropriate for a fitness center if 4,000-s.f. seems small? He also noted that the proposed office area is being proposed at 80% occupied. His understanding is that the residents do not want more office space that remains unoccupied and they have 80% of theirs occupied.

Chairman Robinson said it is not a question of occupancy of the office space but a matter of that the office space is larger than the fitness center. The proposal is for an office center with a health club, not for a health club with a few offices.

Mr. Plakmeyer asked if more health related offices would be more appropriate and Chairman Robinson said that what he is hearing from the Planning Commission is that the health club is the smaller than the proposed offices. The residents of the Township are also opposed to new office space on Cascade Road. He also noted that opening the P.U.D. would set precedence.

Planning Director Peterson also noted that the Township does not want the golf course to fail and when it was originally done, the offices were allowed on Cascade Road to help support the golf course. The Staff is open to having a fitness center but opposed to additional office use. The two (2) office buildings that are along Cascade Road is part of the comprise established when the P.U.D. was developed in 1997.

Member Sperla noted that if the project were proposed as extended use of the clubhouse it would be more acceptable but to open a P.U.D. for office space is setting precedence and is not in support of additional office space.

Member Waalkes said he would not oppose the fitness center with related uses and the building could be reduced to approximately 10,000-s.f.

Member Sperla also noted that the other country clubs have their fitness centers within their clubhouses and this has the feel of an independent project.

Mr. Plakmeyer noted that fitness centers today do not necessarily contain locker rooms as people are looking for a quick way to exercise and they leave. He does not believe that locker rooms are necessary for the project.

Member Hammond suggested that the Applicant show the Commission that some of the additions to the current clubhouse and swim center would not work. Mr. Plakmeyer said they have spent \$1 million in the swim center and they do not want to disrupt

that facility. There is a service drive, drop off and golf course that surrounds the clubhouse and the addition is not feasible on that building. They are trying to establish more viable business opportunities in support of their project.

Member Lewis also suggested that the current building houses the golf carts and asked if that area could be renovated into the fitness center providing access to showers and locker rooms. The golf carts could be stored in a freestanding building. Mr. Plakmeyer said the area was considered but would not allow for a freestanding health club facility and the cart storage area is a basement area that is not easily accessible.

Member Lewis asked whom the Applicants met with in obtaining support of the project and Applicant Einfeld said that they spoke with the Watermark Board who favored the project.

Planning Director Peterson suggested tabling the Basic Plan Review. It seems that all agree that the health club use seems appropriate and anything more than the club, the uses should be limited to related uses of the health club. The building's height and square footage would also need to meet the previous requirements of the P.U.D. that has been established. The Applicant should also provide a study of the need for a fitness center. If the case were tabled, the Applicant could further develop his plans according to the comments heard this evening and request another Basic Site Plan Review.

Member McDonald clarified for the Applicant that the area is not compatible for office use and does not want the Applicant misled. If there were a couple of offices related to the health club, including the Watermark offices, that may be considered as acceptable but the health club should be the predominant use of the building.

**Member Sperla motioned to table Case # 08-2960: Forest Hills Golf / Watermark Condo's, supported by Member Hammond. All in favor with none opposed.**

#### **ARTICLE 7.**

##### **Any Other Business.**

Chairman Robinson opened the meeting for any other business. There was no other business of the Planning Commission.

Member McDonald noted that the Planning Commission should consider the issues of heliports in their residential areas as Ada Township has recently addressed this.

#### **ARTICLE 8.**

##### **Adjournment**



Chairman Robinson requested a motion for adjournment.

**Member McDonald supported by Member Hammond moved to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

John Sperla, Secretary

Lisa Hern, Recording Secretary