

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission
Monday, May 15, 2006
7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Goldberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Members Present: Goldberg, Koessel, Lewis, Logue, MacAllister, McDonald, Robinson.
Members Absent: Postma, Richards
Others Present: Planning Director Peterson, Admin. Assistant Hern and Members of the Public.

ARTICLE 2. Chairman Goldberg led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ARTICLE 3. Chairman Goldberg requested motion for approval of the May 15th agenda.

Member Robinson motioned for approval of the agenda, supported by Member Lewis. All in favor with none opposed, the motion carried.

ARTICLE 4. Chairman Goldberg requested motion for approval of the May 1, 2006 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. He also noted that Member Lewis previously noted a correction on Page 9, fourth complete paragraph down, first sentence "Chairman Goldberg doesn't see the center lane..." needs to be corrected to: "Chairman Goldberg said he does see the center lane..."

Member McDonald noted on Page 3, sixth complete paragraph down for clarification after the word "if" the words "the property" should be added noting he had asked if the property south of Cascade Road backs up to the highway.

Member Lewis motioned for approval of the minutes as corrected, supported by Member Robinson. May 1, 2006 Minutes approved as corrected. All in favor with none opposed, the motion carried.

ARTICLE 5. **Case #06-2802: AJV Ventures, LLC**
(Tabled from May 1, 2006)
The Applicant is seeking tentative preliminary approval to create a site condominium with ten (10) lots in the R-1 Zone.

Chairman Goldberg noted this item had been tabled at the May 1st Planning Commission Meeting, the Commission requested to hear the opinions from the Township's Attorney.

Member Robinson motioned to remove this case from the table, supported by Member McAllister. All in favor with none opposed, Case #06-2802 AJV Ventures, LLC removed from the table.

Chairman Goldberg asked Staff for introductory remarks and Planning Director Peterson noted the site plan is on the board and copies are in the Commission's packets. Nothing has changed since first presented to the Commission with the exception that the Commission did request the Township's Attorney's opinion regarding a center turn lane on Cascade Road. The Township Attorney's response is included within the packets and, again, it is Staff's recommendation that the Commission award tentative preliminary approval to the Township Board with the condition that the center turn lane be included in the project. Staff still believes this would be ideal for Cascade Road and doesn't believe this project is too different from others that were also required to install a center turn lane within the Township.

Planning Director Peterson noted in terms of process, this project is tracking through as a platted subdivision and Applicant is seeking tentative preliminary approval from the Planning Commission, then move to the Township Board for their approval and then circles back to the Planning Commission with more details after the Township Board has reviewed the tentative plan.

Chairman Goldberg reminded the Commission that the attorney's opinion is a confidential and privileged document and ask the Commissioners refrain from discussing the opinion or the contents of the opinion in public session. If there is a desire by one of the commissioners to have discussion regarding the opinion and/or its contents, it would be appropriate for a Commissioner to motion to go into a Closed Session for that purpose and at that point we would clear the room and proceed forward with the discussion.

Chairman Goldberg opened the meeting for Commission's discussion.

Member McDonald clarified that this case is just a tentative preliminary approval and this is not a P.U.D. of any nature, this would fall into the normal subdivision ordinance and Planning Director Peterson confirmed that to be correct. Planning Director Peterson further noted the Applicant is meeting the minimal zoning requirements and similar to a site plan review. The Township Board will see the same information and then will come back to the Planning Commission with the detailed information including

approval from the Kent County Road Commission, approval from the city for utilities, etc.

Member Koessel asked Planning Director Peterson to define the area the Commissioners have been discussing regarding the center turn lane on Cascade Road and the anticipated costs to the developer, what the Township has discussed regarding the expansion of the left turn lane. Planning Director Peterson noted the center turn lane would be installed in front of Beard Drive on Cascade Road. He also noted that one of the ideas the Utility Subcommittee of the Board had was having the township install a center turn lane in front of Mont Rue and essentially make it one long center turn lane with tapers. He does not have cost figures for the total improvement but believes that a good number, according to the Road Commission, for a center turn lane at Beard only would be about \$60,000.00. Member Koessel asked if the distance the developer is responsible for regarding the turn lane and the distance the Township would be responsible for are about the same? Planning Director Peterson said it appears it would be.

Member Lewis noted that Planning Director Peterson previously mentioned the Applicant needs approval for sewer and water hook-up, is there already sewer and water in that area? Planning Director Peterson said there is sewer and water on Cascade Road and the Applicant will be pulling up Beard Drive along their property line, as noted on the site plan, up to their property line and extend into their street. Member Lewis asked if the other homes on Beard Drive do not have sewer and water? Planning Director Peterson confirmed that to be correct. Member Lewis asked who paid for Beard Drive when it was put in? Planning Director Peterson believes the original developer did. Member Lewis noted that all the houses above it use it but the original developer paid for it. Planning Director Peterson said yes noting those are all public roads but when the original development went in, the developer paid for it.

Member McDonald asked what the age is of the Beard Drive development and Chairman Goldberg believes the development went in 1984 or 1985. Member McDonald questioned if Mont Rue went in at the same time? Planning Director Peterson said he is not sure but assumes the majority of the project was one (1) phase, he would have to check the Township's records.

Chairman Goldberg recalled the Commission has heard from the developer and the attorney at the last meeting and opened the

meeting for Commission's questions of the developer and attorney at this time.

Member McDonald asked Planning Director Peterson regarding condition number three (iii) that the center turn lane needs to be indicated on the site plan, since this is a tentative site plan approval, Staff is asking the developer to put it on the plan and not deciding who is responsible (i.e. developer, Road Commission, Township, etc.) for the financial aspect of the left turn lane since there are no details yet. Planning Director Peterson said that is correct, Staff is requesting this be a recommendation of their approval since it has been for the other projects that have installed center turn lanes.

Chairman Goldberg said his perspective is that it is quite clear to him that traveling Cascade Road every day a number of times as he does, the traffic on that road has increased over the years to a point where it is a safety issue a center turn lane be installed for this project. This project is coming along, it is adding something to the traffic load and every project adds to the load on the street that services access to that development. From his point of view, a center turn lane is needed at Mont Rue and at Beard in order to provide for a safe flow of traffic on Cascade Road and allow for those left lane movements into those developments. This will be a benefit to those persons traveling Cascade Road and also be a benefit to the persons on Mont Rue and Beard along with those in the new development. These other things (i.e. sewer, water, etc.) are all in right now, these lots are not and they are adding to the burden on an already burdened thorough fair. They benefit from things that were installed by other developers, the Township and the Road Commission and various points in the process; infrastructure benefits the community in general and infrastructure located within a particular place provides incremental and special benefits to particular lots that are serviced by it. For all of those reasons, Chairman Goldberg believes it is appropriate to require a center turn lane at this point as we approve this development.

Member Lewis noted he lives in Watermark and when that was developed, it was not required that a center turn lane be installed. He knows what it is like to sit on Cascade Road waiting to turn as you watch cars approach in your review mirror doing sixty (60) miles per hour and you hope you will not be rear-ended. He also noted that if coming from the other direction, the high school is there and students travel fast too. Fortunately, another development has been put in across from Watermark and they were required to install a center turn lane, and it is true, he is benefiting

from it and thanks that developer very much for including it within his plat. Safety is the driving factor, especially along Cascade Road, and this is an opportunity supporting a safety factor for the people of Cascade and would support a motion that the third condition be included in the approval process.

Member Koessel agrees with Member Lewis and also reminded the Planning Commission that although they did not end up having a development at the corner of McNider and Cascade that was another thing the Commission did discuss at the time and that was a one (1) building development at the time. One of the things discussed at great length was if the project did go they wanted a center turn lane and he believes this is being consistent. He noted Chairman Goldberg said earlier cannot go back and change the past but can improve the future and there has been one (1) death on Cascade Road from a rear end collision that now has a center turn lane at Laraway Lake Drive and by adding additional traffic within the Beard Farms Development are we creating other opportunities. Agrees with Member Lewis that you do not want people sitting in a left lane of traffic, waiting to turn left and hoping they won't be hit. He believes from a safety standpoint, it makes perfect sense to include it and the Township Board also is willing to make it safer by extending it to Mont Rue. He supports adding condition three within the approval.

Member McDonald motioned that the Planning Commission recommend tentative preliminary approval to create a site condominium with ten (10) lots in the R-1 Zone stipulated as Staff has presented with Staff's conditions:

- 1) The Township Engineer's comments be addressed before the plan is taken to the Township Board.**
- 2) The four (4) trees per lot need to be shown on the site plan. Existing trees that the Applicant wishes to count towards these trees need to be indicated on the plan that they will not be cut down.**
- 3) The Applicant install the center turn lane on Cascade Road at Beard Dr.**

Member Robinson supported the motion.

Member MacAllister questioned if a condition should be added regarding the closure of Beard Road for two (2) days and Planning Director Peterson does not believe this would be necessary and Chairman Goldberg noted there is a second access to the subdivision, it's not as critical as it might otherwise be.

Chairman Goldberg also noted that the particular stretch of Cascade Road probably has more young drivers, novice drivers than any other section of road in the Township because it is one of the two primary routes to the high school and there are a lot of sixteen year old kids, without a lot of driving experience, to travel that particular stretch of road and while safety is always important, it is all the more important when dealing with a group of novice drivers as the Commission is, to error on the side of caution and create the safest environment for them to learn.

Chairman Goldberg asked if there was anymore Commission discussion and Member Koessel noted he wanted to make sure he understood, there is a recommended amendment to Member McDonald's motion by Member Robinson that indicated that rather than showing the center turn lane that the center turn lane actually be added, is this correct? Chairman Goldberg indicated that is correct and it be done. Member McDonald added the center turn lane would be done in some fashion with the Township, since the Township is going to extend the lane to Mont Rue.

Chairman Goldberg requested further discussion on the motion. Hearing that there was none, he called to question. **All in favor with none opposed. Motion passed.**

ARTICLE 6.

Any Other Business

Chairman Goldberg opened the meeting for other business and Member McDonald asked if this was the last meeting in this building, the Museum? Planning Director Peterson reminded the Planning Commission that meetings will now be held at the new Wisner Center.

Member Logue asked regarding the center turn lane on Cascade Road it is a very real issue and there are other spots that could benefit from a left turn lane. Member McDonald noted that in other projects, a traffic study has been done; does the Planning Commission or Township ask for a study? Planning Director Peterson said the Planning Commission has the ability to ask for those and is in the Zoning Ordinance for larger projects. Chairman Goldberg said the Township Board might request a traffic study if the Road Commission continues to believe there is not a need for a center turn lane. Member Logue noted that the more the center turn lanes are installed, the more some people take them for granted and expect them to be there and they're not expecting cars waiting to turn left. Member McDonald noted there are good places and bad places to install center turn lanes and has seen some use them as a passing lane, but in the case of Cascade Road, that is

a major thorough fair, people are speeding and if there is any road within Cascade, other than 28th Street, that needs a center left turn lane it is Cascade Road.

ARTICLE 7.

Adjournment

Member MacAllister supported by Member Robinson moved to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Claude Robinson, Secretary

Lisa Hern, Recording Secretary