

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission  
Monday, September 14, 2009  
7:00 p.m.

- ARTICLE 1.** Chairman Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.  
Members Present: Hammond, Lewis, McCarthy, McDonald, Pennington, Robinson, Sperla, Waalkes.  
Members Absent: Logue (excused)  
Others Present: Township Planning Director Peterson, Recording Secretary Hern and Members of the Public.
- ARTICLE 2.** Chairman Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- ARTICLE 3.** **Approval of the Agenda for the September 14, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting.**  
Chairman Robinson requested a motion for the approval of the September 14, 2009 Agenda.  
  
**Motion was made by Member Sperla and supported by Member McCarthy to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**
- ARTICLE 4.** **Approval of the Minutes from the August 17, 2009 Meeting.**  
Chairman Robinson asked if there were any corrections to the August 17<sup>th</sup> Minutes or requested a motion for approval.  
  
**Motion was made by Member Lewis and supported by Member Sperla to approve the August 17, 2009 Minutes as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.**
- ARTICLE 5.** **Case # 09-2960: Kevin Einfeld/Watermark Country Club (PUBLIC HEARING)**  
**Address of Property: 5536 Cascade Road SE**  
**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting an amendment to the Watermark P.U.D. that would allow the construction of a new fitness center/office building.  
  
Planning Director Peterson said the Applicant is requesting Preliminary Plan Approval in order to amend the existing Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.) and add a new office/fitness center at the end of Gailbraith Avenue.  
  
The site for the health facility/offices is just west of the country club building and the Planning Commission has received the latest drawings of the plan.

The Commission has seen this case a couple of times. This project was introduced at the January 20, 2009 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission agreed that the fitness center was a compatible use but expressed concern regarding how much office space was associated with the project.

At the July 20, 2009 meeting, the Applicant revised the January 2009 plan and submitted a revised site plan. At this meeting, the Commission felt the Applicant responded well to the original comments by addressing several issues including most notably the new location and the downsizing of the building.

The P.U.D. amendment is necessary in order to allow another building in the project.

In addition to the need to amend the Ordinance to include this additional building, there are other changes that are needed or that they are asking for as a result of this project. Staff has compiled a small table in their report showing the issues and Staff's comments:

The Applicant has requested an increase in the amount of signage on Cascade Road to a maximum 64-square foot sign. Staff recommends denial of this request; as other office uses on Cascade Road are limited to 50-square foot sign.

The Applicant is requesting an increase in the existing on-site directional sign by 4-square feet and Staff would approve this request since this is a small sign that would benefit those coming to the site and enable them to find the building easier. Currently there is no language allowing the directional signage and Staff suggested adding it.

The Applicant is also requesting to add 50-square feet of wall signage to the new building. The existing clubhouse is allowed a 50-square foot wall sign and Staff suggested that the same amount be allowed for this building.

In regards to the building's use, the Applicant would like the ability to include in the lower level area, marked as "Sports Fitness" for office use. Staff recommends denial of this request keeping the lower level for the health club uses makes the building fifty percent (50%) health club and the office use is already a compromise. This plan shows the top level for office uses and in conversations with the Applicant, they have indicated putting office use in the lower level. Staff would like to see the lower level utilized for the fitness center.

The parking lot is being redesigned and will flow better. This design is closer to meeting the Township's requirements that are present today.

The Applicant is also requesting a side setback of 17-feet that does not meet the Township's required 25-foot setback. Staff approves of this request as the site has plenty of separation and the minimum having a smaller east side setback does not compromise the site.

Planning Director Peterson said the Township's Fire Department has reviewed the plans and does not have any issues.

The Township Engineer has reviewed the plans and has indicated conditional approval pending approval from the City of Grand Rapids for the sanitary sewer connection. Planning Director Peterson referred to the original sewer connection and said the Applicant will be able to connect in another area. This item will need to be addressed prior to proceeding.

The Applicant is redesigning the parking lot area that includes some areas that are available for additional parking if needed in the future. The biggest issue would be to make sure the Applicant meets the Township's standard storm water regulations.

Staff's report also includes the Standards with comments.

Staff believes the Site Plan has been adjusted to address the major issues raised at previous meetings and recommends approval of the P.U.D. amendment provided the following issues are addressed:

1. Signage issues
2. Use of the building
3. Sanitary sewer connections
4. Review by Watermark Associations

The Applicants have requested to come before the Planning Commission prior to approaching the associations to see if the plan is feasible. The Planning Commission needs to hear the Association members' comments regarding the project.

Member Lewis noted that the parking is a problem by the clubhouse and when the facility is in full use, you have to park far away from the facility. There are enough parking spaces but the distance is rather far. He is also concerned with holding additional parking in reserve. Planning Director Peterson believes the Applicant's redesign of the parking will help with traffic flow. Member Lewis agreed the redesign would help the traffic flow.

Member Sperla still questions who the Township is working with on the project, are there multiple owners and if so, should the amendment include the updated owners of the property? Planning Director Peterson said they have the property owners signature but would speak with the Township Attorney to ensure that the amendments are done correctly.

Representative Wayne Visbeen of Watermark LLC and architect for the project said they have reduced the square footage of the building based on the Commissions' comments at the last meeting.

They also understand the Commissions' request to have the fitness center be the tenant of the lower level of the building. He believes that at the last meeting, the Commission said they were comfortable having a Watermark office in the lower level. He agrees in not having a general office for rent in the lower level, the office would be strictly for Watermark's use and asked Planning Director Peterson if that was his understanding.

Planning Director Peterson said that was not his understanding and understood that the Watermark offices would be upstairs. Representative Visbeen said there are other sports-related professions who are considering leasing the space. Their goal is to have it be all fitness but if they are not able to lease the space, they would like to utilize it for Watermark's offices.

Representative Visbeen asked for clarification regarding signage and the 50-square feet they are requesting is for building signage. They are hoping to divide the 50-square feet and have 10-square feet above each door in the transom glass (i.e. Visbeen and Associates, Inc.) and one above Snap Fitness and the additional tenant. They are also hoping to have a 20-square foot sign on a stone base in the front grass area as shown on the drawings and dedicated for Snap Fitness. Planning Director Peterson said the Township would like to see the wall signage limited to 50-square feet. Representative Visbeen asked if 30-square feet on the building and 20-square feet on an attractive monument were acceptable? Planning Director Peterson said that he would be agreeable to that.

Representative Visbeen said they are also requesting a 64-square foot sign on Cascade Road. He understands that everyone is at 50 or 54-square feet and Planning Director Peterson said the Cascade Road Corridor study was done in the 1990's and buildings are allowed a maximum of 50-square feet on Cascade Road.

Representative Visbeen said they are requesting additional square footage since all those buildings have direct access off of Cascade Road and direct visibility of the business. They are looking to pull

additional attention to their facilities that is off Cascade Road and gain more visibility but will leave this decision to the Planning Commission.

Member Sperla asked if the same materials would be used to construct the new building and match the clubhouse. Representative Visbeen said they would match but the materials might be different. They are looking to make the new building a “green” building and have not decided on the materials yet, but the buildings will match and their design elements are very similar.

**Motion was made by Member Sperla and supported by Member McDonald to open the Public Hearing. Motion carried unanimously.**

Planning Director Peterson said the Township did not receive any phone calls or letters concerning the project.

Mark deWald, 1601 Galbraith SE, was concerned with additional office going into the building since there is vacant office space available close by already. After hearing the plans for the building it seems like a nice facility.

**Motion was made by Member Lewis and supported by Member McDonald to close the Public Hearing. Motion carried unanimously.**

Member McDonald appreciates Staff’s work and agrees with their recommendations in their report including the 20-foot square foot stone directional sign and 30-square feet on the building. He is concerned with allowing Watermark offices in the lower level and dedicating the space solely for that use. The initial intent is the more square footage dedicated to the fitness center.

Member Pennington asked if that area could be dedicated to Snap Fitness and listed as an accessory to the fitness center and limited to those in the building? Planning Director Peterson said it would be difficult to regulate the use if allowed to use as an office. Once it becomes an office, it would be used as an office and difficult to regulate. Chairman Robinson agreed with Staff and the Commission agreed the fitness center should have 50% capacity of the building in the lower level. Member Lewis noted the goal of the Commission was to have the occupancy as even as possible and understands the Applicant’s request but would like the building remain that the lower level remain dedicated for the fitness center in the lower level.

Representative Visbeen said their goal is to lease the space for the fitness center but in case they cannot lease the space, they would like to put Watermark into the space and utilize the area so it does not remain empty.

Member McDonald asked where Snap Fitness' office space would be and Representative Visbeen said within their leased area, there is only one (1) office.

Member Sperla said he is more comfortable in keeping the lower level dedicated to the fitness center and not allow office use in the lower level.

Member Hammond also said he favors in keeping the office use in the upstairs level of the building and favors the distinct separation of office and fitness center.

Member McCarthy favors keeping the space dedicated to the health profession as the Applicant has commented that they have interested health professionals considering the space.

Member Waalkes noted that the building is not designed to accommodate office use in the lower level. He does not see Watermark's usage of the space as a problem.

Regarding the signage on Cascade Road, Member Sperla said he is not in favor of granting more square footage on the sign. If a larger sign were allowed, that would set precedence and he is not willing to set precedence and believes the sign should remain at 50-square feet.

Member Waalkes noted that the current 50-square foot sign could be redesigned to allow for recognition to those in the building.

Member Lewis noted that the 50-square foot sign was discussed at the July meeting in great detail and the Applicant did not wish to enlarge the sign at the time. He supports remaining with the 50-square foot sign.

Member Hammond also supported keeping the square footage of the sign at 50-square feet. The businesses that do go into the building are destination businesses and supported redesigning the sign to allow for recognition of those in the new building.

Member Lewis said he is still concerned with the parking and Representative Visbeen noted they have met the requirements for the number of parking spaces and the distance from the parking spot to the door should not be an issue. He does not foresee the

parking lot always being so full; there are a few peak times that numerous engagements would be happening at the same time.

Chairman Robinson asked why the need for the reserved parking spots, what might change that the additional parking might be needed in the future? Representative Visbeen said they designated future parking if the need should arise in the future and in case, for some reason, they have a need for more.

Member McDonald said he understands Member Lewis' concerns but he is comfortable with the parking.

**Motion was made by Member Sperla and supported by Member McDonald to approve the request for an amendment to the Watermark P.U.D. that would allow the construction of a new fitness center/office building provided the following issues are addressed:**

- 1) Cascade Road signage to remain at 50-square feet**
- 2) No general office use in the lower level**
- 3) Directional signage is allowed.**
- 4) The building shall have 30-square feet of wall signage and 20-square feet of directional signage on the ground**
- 5) Developer is to meet with Watermark Associations and review plans for their comments**
- 6) Sanitary sewer connections are approved.**

**All in favor with none opposed, the motion carried.**

Member Lewis asked if the Applicant would be reviewing the plans and meeting with all of the Watermark Associations and Planning Director Peterson said the Applicant would be presenting their plans to the homeowner's association, and the club members for their comments.

Member Sperla asked that the P.U.D. language be corrected to reflect the drawings received at this meeting and Planning Director Peterson said that provision has already been addressed.

## **ARTICLE 6.**

### **Any Other Business.**

Township Building Official, Butch Visser, addressed the concerns from the Planning Commission regarding the possible new State law regarding sprinkler systems in residential homes.

He explained the current law process for the State of Michigan and noted that Townships are not allowed to amend State laws and codes. He does not believe the regulation will be in the next code stipulated by the State as the code is receiving a lot of opposition

from builders at this current time. He will keep the Township updated if anything changes.

Member Sperla asked if there has been any progress with Tassell Park and Planning Director Peterson said they are exploring options.

Planning Director Peterson reported that the round a bout feasibility study has been completed and the project does work at Cascade Road and 28<sup>th</sup> Street. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will manage the project and will be moving forward with it.

**ARTICLE 9.**

**Adjournment**

Chairman Robinson requested a motion for adjournment.

**Motion was made by Member McDonald and supported by Member Waalkes to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

John Sperla, Secretary

Lisa Hern, Recording Secretary