

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission  
Monday, September 8, 2008  
7:00 p.m.

**ARTICLE 1.** Chairman McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.  
Members Present: Koessel, Lewis, Logue, McDonald, Pennington,  
Robinson, Sperla, Waalkes  
Members Absent: Hammond  
Others Present: Planning Director Peterson, Recording Secretary  
Hern, and Members of the Public.

**ARTICLE 2.** Chairman McDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**ARTICLE 3.** Chairman McDonald requested a motion for the approval of the  
September 8, 2008 agenda.

**Member Lewis motioned to approve the September 8<sup>th</sup> Agenda  
as presented, supported by Member Robinson. All in favor  
with none opposed, the motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 4.** **Approve the Minutes of the August 18, 2008.**  
Chairman McDonald opened the meeting for revisions, corrections  
or a motion for approval of the August 18<sup>th</sup> minutes.

**Member Logue motioned for approval of the August 18, 2008  
minutes as presented, supported by Member Koessel. All in  
favor with none opposed: August 18, 2008 Planning  
Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.**

**ARTICLE 5.** **Case # 08-2952: The Design Forum**  
**Address of Property: 6000 28<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**(PUBLIC HEARING)**  
**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting a Special Use  
Permit to construct an addition to an accessory building larger than  
832-square feet.

Planning Director Peterson noted that the plan within the  
commission's packets is not the same one that is being shown on  
the screen overhead during tonight's meeting. The Applicant has  
amended the plan to meet some of the comments within the report  
and this plan is a bit more detailed.

The Applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to construct an  
addition to an accessory building larger than 832-square feet. This  
request is a bit unusual since this property is within the

Commercial District and Staff could not find any other accessory buildings larger than 832-s.f.

The Applicant has mentioned to Staff that they are seeking to build a garage structure to house their vehicles for some of their employees who travel for an extended period of time. They are experiencing a few issues with vandalism and would like to house the vehicles inside the secured building.

The building itself is approximately 3,388-square feet with dimensions of 154' x 22' and it is in the parking lot. The current parking lot is close to the property line and the Applicant will be moving the building further away from the property line and bringing the building more within compliance to the Township's setback requirements.

The building's exterior is now brick and the Applicant does show additional landscaping along the east side of the building. As noted in Staff's report, a large concern is the metal barn that the Applicant had before and did not fit in with the neighborhood. There are not many commercial buildings to compare this request to but the closest Staff could find is the building at Fleis & Vandenbrink at Lucerne and Tahoe. Their building is approximately 800-s.f. and is built out of the same materials as the main building and fits in with the neighborhood nicely. There are a couple of other small sheds within the park that are less than 200-s.f. and store tools. Golfridge Apartments also has a carport structure that is also built out of the same matching materials as the main building.

Staff's report also notes that the Township has recently completed a land use plan for Centennial Park that provides several recommendations for changes to the regulations for the park. The plan does not suggest that this type of building be prohibited. Planning Director Peterson believes the plan provides flexibility.

Chairman McDonald asked if Staff is comfortable approving the plans without the association's comments and Planning Director Peterson said he is and noted the Applicant has broken up the building, which was a concern, they have addressed the additional landscaping and the building's exterior. Staff also has the standard condition regarding exterior lighting be reviewed by Staff prior to its installation to ensure that it meets the Township's requirements.

Member Koessel asked if there was brick between the doors and Planning Director Peterson said there is brick and it is darker colored and referred to the plan. Member Koessel asked if there

are two (2) types of brick and Planning Director Peterson confirmed there is and it will wrap around the entire building now.

Member Koessel referred to the thick row of trees on the property line and Planning Director Peterson said there was nothing on the original plan and this was a concern of his. The Applicant submitted an updated landscaping plan that indicates several additional plantings closer to the building in addition to what is currently on the property.

Member Sperla asked how high the current berm is and the Applicant said approximately four to five feet tall. The contractor is reviewing the site. Member Sperla asked what type of new plantings would be going in and the Applicant said deciduous. They are following the ordinance in regards to the types of canopy trees, under-story trees and shrubberies allowed.

Member Sperla noted that the building seems long and asked how many parking spaces will the building hold. Planning Director Peterson noted twelve (12) parking spaces. Member Sperla commented that the idea of employees parking for an extended time does not seem to be reasonable as other companies drop off their employees at airports, etc. and asked the Applicant to elaborate on his business for a better understanding.

Neale Bauman, representative of Design Forum, said they provide training for credit unions. The process to convert a system is a two to three week process that involves the actual conversion, training and support and could take employees away for one to three weeks at a time. Four company vehicles are also housed on site along with a utility trailer. The corporation has a total of eleven company vehicles, some are housed in Kentwood and some in Cascade.

The site has recently been victimized by vandalism and this is a proactive measure in protecting not only corporate assets but the assets of their employees as well.

Member Sperla asked if they anticipate storing any other vehicles in the building other than employee's vehicles and the Applicant Bauman they would not be.

Member Lewis referred to the roofline and how it steps up and Applicant Bauman said that is correct. Member Lewis noted that this is an architectural change from the previous plan. Applicant Bauman noted that surveyors provided grade information the grading is significant enough that the building needed to be done at

three different levels. Member Lewis noted the building does look better this way and complimented the Applicant in doing so.

Member Logue asked the Applicant if they envision installing concrete filled pipes up to protect the building. Applicant Bouman said they would be installing these but they would be painted to match the building's exterior, they would not be painted yellow as often seen.

Member Sperla asked if their business is the only one within the park that has experienced vandalism. Kurt Ojala, representing the building owner, said that there was also an instance at Centennial Plaza.

Mr. Ojala also noted that he is a member of the Centennial Park Association as Vice President and he has spoken to George Wanty who is acting as President. Mr. Wanty did send an email saying that he does not see a reason to oppose the project it looks like it is blending in. Mr. Wanty is out of town this week and the Association is not meeting until October. The direct neighbors are in favor of the project and he is happy to provide his support as well.

Chairman McDonald asked Planning Director Peterson if Mr. Wanty and Dan Wiersma were involved in the master planning of Centennial Park and Planning Director Peterson said they were along with Mr. Ojala. Chairman McDonald asked Mr. Ojala if he had spoken with Mr. Wiersma since he was opposed to this project. Mr. Ojala said he did speak with him three different times. The first time he expressed his concern that others within the park would want to build a similar structure and Mr. Ojala noted the Association could regulate the structures and this project is not a carport style building. Mr. Ojala addressed the vandalism issues on the site and noted Mr. Wiersma's opposition to Mr. Wanty. Mr. Wanty spoke with Mr. Dan and emailed Mr. Ojala that Mr. Wiersma is starting to support the building. Mr. Wanty noted that Mr. Wiersma is concerned of setting precedence within the park and Mr. Ojala noted that the Centennial Park Association could review the requests on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Ojala has not spoken with Mr. Wiersma directly regarding his support or comments regarding this request.

Chairman McDonald asked Mr. Ojala if allowing this building would create precedence within the park that might not fit within the land use plans developed. Mr. Ojala said that he is not in support of putting up sheds or to build structures just to build them. If the structure is done correctly and a genuine need is established, he supports the buildings with guidance from the association.

Chairman McDonald asked Mr. Ojala if he believes this project fits within the spirit of the park and Mr. Ojala noted that since the Applicant has made amendments to the plan, it does.

Member Koessel asked the Applicant if he plans to have utilities in the building and the Applicant said electricity.

Member Sperla asked if the Applicant would be doing any vehicle maintenance inside the building and the Applicant said no.

Member Lewis asked if each of the individual parking spaces would be sealed with walls from the one next door and the Applicant said the building would be open inside and would have a security system.

Member Lewis expressed his concerns with the building and what if the Applicant decided to relocate and now there is this empty parking garage. New tenants come into the building and decide they want to rent the parking spaces within the garage. He is opposed to having a garage rental facility on the site. Member Lewis said he would like the garage to be tied with the building and asked Applicant Bauman if he had any opposition to that request. Applicant Bauman does not.

Member Koessel noted that the Planner said he could not find any other buildings of this size and asked how the association plans to control the size of the buildings within the park? He noted that driving on the site, this building would be fairly well shielded from sight. Member Koessel asked if the association would be developing criteria for these types of buildings and how they would fit within the neighborhood?

Mr. Ojala said that he did not drive around the park to review other sites but believes this request will fit within the park nicely. He believes the association will need to review the future requests on a case-by-case basis.

Member Koessel asked Staff how large the parcel is and it is approximately 5-acres.

Member Koessel asked if the standards for a special use permit are the same in a commercial district as a residential and Planning Director Peterson said they are.

Member Sperla noted that this building would be storing a trailer and company vehicles as well and it's not solely intended for the employee's parking when they are traveling. He is concerned over

the storage of vehicles and trailers. Member Sperla also noted that the need from a future tenant to have parking like this would be remote. He is concerned with the project. This project does appear to fit in nicely with the site, but is also concerned with precedence, as the next request might not fit in with the park.

Member Lewis asked if Member Sperla's concerns could be lightened if conditions were made if the project were approved? Member Sperla noted what if the next tenant does not utilize the building and it deteriorates and no one wants to tear it down.

Mr. Ojala noted that the building's owner, Mr. Hineman, would not letting the building become an eye sore. His first concern was the look of the building, he is very proud of his property. Mr. Ojala also noted that if the tenants do leave, the parking would be rented to tenants within the building; indoor parking is in demand.

Chairman McDonald asked how many employees are in the building and Applicant Bauman said 144.

Member Robinson asked how many of the staff travel and Applicant Bauman said approximately 12 and out of the 144 employees, 100 are in the Centennial Park building.

Applicant Bauman also noted that the trailer he referenced earlier is an enclosed trailer that transports computer equipment to the sites and does not expect the employees to bring their personal trailers, etc.

Member Pennington noted that he also has a unique business that requires parking for survey trucks, etc. He believes a parking structure like this is beneficial to this specific business.

**Member Lewis motioned to open the Public Hearing, supported by Member Robinson. All in favor with none opposed. The Public Hearing was opened.**

Chairman McDonald asked if any phone calls or letters were received at the Township regarding the case and Planning Director Peterson said just the two letters received that are in the Commissions' packets, nothing else.

**Member Robinson motioned to close the Public Hearing, supported by Member Waalkes. All in favor with none opposed. The Public Hearing was closed.**

Member Logue commented that in the extreme and the building changes hands and the owner decides to rent the stalls out but the

building is maintained, does this create a new problem since it would be utilized as a storage facility. Chairman McDonald believes there is concern regarding precedence. Member Sperla clarified that the term “accessory building” which means it is an accessory to the principal use of the main building and cannot turn into a storage facility.

Member Koessel asked Mr. Ojala if there is a board of Centennial Park Association and Mr. Ojala said yes. Member Koessel asked if the association’s board has reviewed the plans and Mr. Ojala said they have not formally reviewed the plans. Mr. Ojala noted there are approximately eight to nine active participants. Member Koessel noted the Township has an agenda and Staff has a recommendation that the Centennial Park Association review the plan for comment.

Member Koessel noted Member Sperla’s comments regarding this building’s size; it is a large building. He has visited the site and it is well shielded. He believes it would be a good idea to run this plan by the association’s board so they are fully aware of the amended plan and the building being proposed on this site. Chairman McDonald supported having the association’s board review the amended plans.

Member Lewis noted that the plan does meet the Township’s requirements noting that one of Staff’s recommendations is that the Centennial Park Association for comment reviews the plan.

Chairman McDonald asked the Applicant that if the plan were approved, when would they start building and Applicant Bauman said they would like to have it built prior to snow fall and would plan to construct as soon as approved by the Planning Commission.

Chairman McDonald asked if it would be a hardship if the plan were tabled while Mr. Ojala sought formal approval from the association while the contractors proceeded with pricing costs, etc. for the Applicant? The Applicant does not believe this would be a hardship.

Member Sperla said he would be more in favor of the project if the board members of the association had reviewed the amended plan.

**Member Sperla motioned to table the Applicant’s request for a Special Use Permit to construct an addition to an accessory building larger than 832-square feet until the Centennial Park Association has reviewed the amended plans, supported by Member Robinson.**

Mr. Ojala said he would email the core association board members for the comments regarding the revised plan to present to the Planning Commission.

Member Lewis requested a roll call vote:

Member Koessel, yes

Member Sperla, yes

Member Robinson, yes

Chairman McDonald, yes

Member Lewis, no

Member Waalkes, yes

Member Logue, yes

Member Pennington, yes

**The motion was supported seven to one. Motion carried.**

## **ARTICLE 6.**

### **Any Other Business**

Chairman McDonald opened the meeting for any other business.

Member Robinson addressed the cell towers and co-location of antennas regarding the antenna behind the Township's offices. He believes the engineer should review if the wind could pose problems since the tower has reached maximum capacity. He also noted that the Engineer did state that the last co-located antenna would put the tower at capacity and any other requests would need to have further studies conducted. Planning Director Peterson said the Township Engineer provided a report regarding the capacity of the tower at that meeting.

Chairman McDonald noted that the Township Board recently approved ballot language for a millage that will come up on November 4<sup>th</sup> for purchasing land areas that would be used for natural parks. This was driven by the Township survey that was done and the number one priority was to preserve open space. Chairman McDonald asked if the Planning Commission is in agreement with the Township Board.

Member Sperla said he is in full support of the millage and would support the Planning Commission providing their endorsement for supporting the millage.

Chairman McDonald noted that the superintendent of Forest Hills Schools is also supporting the millage as this provides wonderful educational opportunities. Member Lewis said he also supports the millage and believes endorsements to the Township Board would be received favorably.



**Member Sperla motioned that the Planning Commission endorse the Township Board's Millage regarding preservation of green space and developing natural parks, supported by Member Lewis. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.**

Planning Director Peterson noted the Master Planning Committee will be reconvening, they took the months of July and August off and will begin meeting the last Thursday of the month beginning in September.

Member Koessel noted there are still issues with the house on Cascade Road and Laraway. The Township should consider refining the ordinance or the property maintenance code.

Member Koessel also noted that Biggby's did get better for a little while regarding their truck and there is adequate parking in the rear for it. Planning Director Peterson noted that the ordinance patrol has been keeping an eye on the truck.

Member Sperla asked if the Shagbark property is being dealt with. The property has not been occupied in quite a long time and the property is becoming overgrown. Planning Director Peterson said he would follow up with the building department.

#### **ARTICLE 8.**

##### **Adjournment**

Chairman McDonald requested a motion for adjournment.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Lewis, Secretary

Lisa Hern, Recording Secretary