

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission  
Monday, January 27, 2014  
7:00 P.M.

**ARTICLE 1.** Al Pennington called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.  
Members Present: McCarthy, Mead, Williams, Robinson, Pennington  
Members Absent: Waalkes, Lewis, Sperla, Hammond  
Others Present: Planning Director Steve Peterson

**ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda.**

**Motion was made by Member Williams to approve the Agenda. Support by Member Mead. Motion carried 5-0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the December 2, 2013 meeting.**

**Motion was made by Member Robinson to approve the Minutes as written. Support by Member Mead. Motion carried 5-0.**

**ARTICLE 5. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items (Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker.)**

There was no one present who wished to speak on non-agenda items.

**ARTICLE 6. Case #13-3168 – EAST IMPORTS P.U.D. EXPANSION  
Public Hearing**

**Requested Action: Green Castle Properties is requesting to rezone property from B2, General Business and the Thornapple Manor P.U.D. to expand the East Imports P.U.D. to accommodate a separate facility for Subaru parking.**

Planner Peterson stated that Wal-Mart is to the west of East Imports with 28<sup>th</sup> Street to the south and office buildings further down 28<sup>th</sup> Street. The private drive Charlevoix Woods Court gives access to the assisted living complex and then Charlevoix Woods Court wraps around Wal-Mart and exits out 28<sup>th</sup> Street, service drive exits out to Kraft Avenue. What East Imports is proposing to do is break out Subaru (there are three manufacturers: Subaru, Porsche, and Audi.) to its own site. It will still be a P.U.D. 1 Development.

This is the old Meekhof Lumber site, which has been removed, and that's where this will be built. Essentially, the existing Auto Dealership will remain the same

with a few subtle changes that are taking place. The most obvious being the removal of one of the curb cuts essentially being combined with the new site.

They do pick up some additional parking. East Imports will pick up some landscaping at the Meekhof site and they'll get some increased parking. There will be a new cross access in the rear to allow for some circulation through the site. That's a small change on the existing site.

The new site takes over the Meekhof site. You do have the additional landscaping up front and the increased landscaping along the east side. They do have some landscaping and storm water detention towards the rear of the site. They do show some possible future parking as well as the storm water detention for the site.

This will be on two separate properties. That was the request of one of the manufacturers, Subaru. That's not a problem for Cascade Township other than the setback would be 10 feet. Our normal side setback for a commercial site is 25 feet. We've made them aware that from a zoning perspective that it is not that big a deal for us. If there's building code ramifications from that, it is something they would have to address. Obviously the easy fix is to eliminate the property line and that sort of thing would go away. It wouldn't be uncommon for us to allow for two buildings like this. It was their request to allow for the property line.

Planner Peterson stated there were a couple of things worth noting. If you're really familiar with the area, some of you may remember some of the development when the original car dealership went in. The Township tried to pay close attention to the original B2 zoning line. Essentially, everything on the south side of this site is zoned commercial.

The Township has tried to stick with that original concept of where that commercial zoning line was. You can see that the original site stopped at their parking and provided for their storm water detention where that zoning line was. Currently this property is zoned as part of the Thornapple Manor Assisted Living project. Everything on the south side of the road could have more general office use in that development, but the area north of that would have to continue to have the same sort of original concept of the assisted living project.

There is a second building on the site where they plan to do some detailing of cars. As a result of buying the property in the back of Meekhof there are a couple lot splits.

East Imports has already submitted and filed for all the lot splits and combinations so that isn't an issue.

Planner Peterson spent some time with the Township Engineer, as storm water is always an issue. East Imports is trying to accommodate for that. It doesn't look like that's going to be a problem, although it sounds like a few details need to be worked out between our engineer, their engineer, and the Drain Commission. According to the Township's Engineer it doesn't sound like that will be an issue but we are asking for some more details before the Township Board would grant final approval.

When East Imports submitted their plan, and within the packet you have before you, Planner Peterson indicated there were some issues with signage. Essentially, the Township has stated, between their pylon sign and the wall sign for these sites, they have a total amount of signage. They can divide it up however they want to. This is the original concept when the original site went in. Their original signage plan, which is different from the information in your packets, is different than the Township would allow. Planner Peterson did receive new plans late last week and they have resolved those issues to meet our sign standards for wall and pylon signs, for the original and the new Subaru site.

Planner Peterson gave Commissioners traffic numbers for 28<sup>th</sup> Street. There is nothing here that creates a problem for capacity. He does feel a bigger issue is the circulation through the site. I think some of the things they have done to improve this so that trucks may enter and exit the site are more important than the impact on 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

The standards for the PUD rezoning have been met. I think it is consistent with the current zoning we have on file for both the PUD and Commercial, as well as the Master Plan where we talk about the general business area and the office area.

Planner Peterson stated he is recommending approval of their rezoning. This is the stage for the Public Hearing for the Planning Commission to decide on whether to approve the rezoning and depending on what you decide, we would come back with an Ordinance that would regulate the project under any other conditions that you may specify.

Member Mead asked if this was a new PUD or amending an existing PUD to increase the envelope size. Planner Peterson stated that it would be an amendment to an existing PUD to increase the size of it.

Member Mead stated that we are reducing the landscaping but increasing the overall volume.

Planner Peterson stated there are some modifications. There is old landscaping that will be going away but more will be added along 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

Member Mead stated that it appears that on the NW corner there will be a change in the curb cut and a new one further to the West. Will this be on the Wal-Mart property? Planner Peterson stated that it will not be on Wal-Mart Property.

Member Williams stated that the conditions of the Township Engineer had to be met before this could go before the Township Board, does this mean that work could not begin until the spring when the ground melts?

Planner Peterson stated that this should not be necessary. We have allowed this in the past based on the assumptions; but we still will require the tests. The Township Engineer felt the plans were conservative and he was comfortable with his conditions.

Vice Chair Pennington asked the Applicant to come forward.

Steve Frye, Architect and President of Concept Design Group, stated that we are not closing one curb cut, but two out of the five that we currently have. We feel this is significant as some of the landscaping that was along the curb cuts will now be along 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

We are very comfortable with the criteria for the storm water as this is designed for the worst case scenario and we do have additional land available if necessary. We are waiting for the boring tests to come back but we are comfortable that we will be able to satisfy the requirements.

We listened and tried to clean up some of the internal sight circulations. We were challenged by the 12 foot drop on one side and we are balancing the whole sight so it all works well together.

We fixed the signage. We currently have a sign in the rear and we are thinking that we may ask to put another sign in the rear- but we will redistribute the square footage that we are allowed.

The current Delta dealership will have the face re-skinned as per the direction of the car manufacturers.

In the two areas that we are looking at, we have two extreme grade problems. We are looking at putting in natural rocks and a natural stairway so that we can turn the area in to a display area. We are exploring in the back where the grading transitions exist, to make the last five parking spaces into an area where we can also use it as a display area. We are investigating those concepts to show that the cars are meant for the outdoors. This will help with the transition to look more natural rather than cement retaining walls.

Vice Chair Pennington asked if there were any questions of the Applicant.

Member Mead asked what was being planned on the West side of the building at C-31. Can we expect to see railings and a retaining wall in this area?

Steve Frye stated that there is some steep grading but there will not be a retaining wall in this area. We have very limited openings in this area.

Vice Chair Pennington asked the applicant to give us an idea how the storm water is being handled. Is there a retention facility?

Steve Frye stated that the Cascade Ordinance states they have to have retention abilities to handle a 100 year storm capacity. The design we currently have is for 100 year capacity. With the current frozen ground we are not sure of the saturation rate. We went with the Kent County soils book which gives us the type of soils we have. I went with the lower number and approximated the saturation rate. Your Township Engineer agreed with my calculations for saturation rate. I am also showing a riser and a connection to the Kent County Drain. As we are right up against their drain, there is the possibility that they may require a type of outflow. The set-up that we have will allow for outflow that has been cleaned of sediment. We currently have a retention pond that is able to store 100 year storm water but can be converted to an infiltration system if necessary.

Vice Chair Pennington asked if this set-up was for just the new Subaru facility or both facilities? Steve Frye stated that it was for the new Subaru facility but it does include the future parking area.

Member Mead asked what the overflow is from the centerline from the exit road to the west. Steve Frye stated that if the retention pond reached its 100 year storm water capacity, it would overflow onto Charlevoix.

Member Mead asked on site C3.1, what is the connector on the far side of the road?

- Steve Frye stated that it is a catch basin and is an inlet. The surface is for parking behind East Imports. If that plot was developed for parking, the developer would not have to tear up the road to connect to the catch basin, but could simply connect into it. The detention site will all be paved so it will be an improvement from when Meekhof Lumber had the site, as far as storm water released from the property and storm water quality.

Member Mead wondered if the issue of lighting or any spillage to the back had been addressed.

Planner Peterson stated there was a lighting plan in the Commission's packet and that it had to be revised from the first submission, but does now meet the Township's standards.

Vice Chair Pennington raised concern in regards to owners of some properties using storm water retention sites as snow storage and then they don't function well as storm water retention sites because they're already full. Do you have mechanisms in place to protect against that?

Planner Peterson stated this comes up in winters like we're currently experiencing. However, the Township does not have snow storage requirements. He doesn't disagree with Member Mead but feels it's in the developer's best interest to make sure the site is working the way it's designed whether it's snow storage or letting the detention pond fall into disrepair. It's always in their best interests to let it work the way it's been designed.

Steve Frye stated operationally they're very concerned. Currently, there's a 30 foot buffer all the way around this pond. These are very large pieces (200x100 foot of green space) that might in the future be used as parking, but no one's going to shoot themselves in the foot by not hauling snow away. Basically, this will be used for new car storage. The problem is East Imports has to show it because the manufacturer is demanding it of them in order for them to get their licenses. It doesn't mean the cars won't be stored somewhere else because they have lots of space to put them, but it has to be shown from the manufacturer's perspective in order to meet their criteria for the number of cars we have. The Applicant believes East Imports is over parked significantly in regards to Township requirements for parking spaces.

Vice Chair Pennington asked if there were any other questions for this Applicant. There were none.

**Member Robinson made a motion to open the Public Hearing with support by Member McCarthy. Motion passed 5-0.**

Public Hearing is now open. Anyone from the public who wishes to speak on this project may do so now. No one from the public wished to speak on this project.

**Motion by Member Robinson and support by Member Pennington to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 5-0.**

Public Hearing is closed.

Vice Chair Pennington asked Planning Commissioners if there was any more discussion on this project.

Member Mead stated Planner Peterson seemed comfortable with this project and the minimal conditions. It sounds doable; they're showing a worst case scenario and it may be even better if the borings come in at a positive. They're considering, at least by design, a worst case scenario right now.

**Member Mead made a motion to award preliminary P.U.D. approval for Case #13-3168, the East Imports PUD Expansion with the criteria that Planner Peterson has spelled out on page 5 of the Planning Commissioner's packet. Member Robinson supported the motion. Motion passed 5-0.**

Planner Peterson stated that he would work with the Applicant and develop the proper ordinance and get that back to the Planning Commission so they can review the ordinance before it goes to the Township Board.

#### **ARTICLE 7. Any other business**

- Planning Department 2013 Annual Report  
Planner Peterson stated that the 2013 Annual Report is a summary of the case loads that we handled in the past year. The Four Corners report was included so that it is readily available.
- Kent Count Road Commission Five-Year Road Improvement  
Planner Peterson stated that this is just a listing of the projects that they are anticipating for the year and that helps us align some of the projects that we may want to do.
- Review of 2013 Work Plan and proposed 2014 Work Plan  
Planner Peterson stated that the 2013 Complete Streets initiative with the DDA is ongoing. The next meeting will be February 18, 2014 and will be a joint meeting with the DDA to review the Complete Streets plan.
- Election Of Officers

Planner Peterson stated that the election of Officers could be postponed as a number of Members of the Board are absent from tonight's meeting.

Member Robinson stated that typically the election is held when we have a full house.

Vice Chair Pennington stated that he thinks we should wait until the next meeting when we have more members present as the meeting is next week.

Member Williams asked about the Complete Streets Plan.

Planner Peterson stated that there is a mid-block crossing on 28<sup>th</sup> Street and some smaller ideas such as a sidewalk on Cascade to connect to Burton and the pathway. Landscaping ideas and possible Bridge ideas were discussed. The sidewalk continuation on Thornapple River Drive by the Museum to continue to Cascade Road is included.

Vice Chair Pennington stated that one of the strategies is develop economic development for microbreweries.

Planner Peterson stated that we have one microbrewery now and maybe we need to refine some or regulations to encourage that type of development in the village area. The Food Truck idea has been brought up and we are trying to be careful to avoid the next fad while still being open to development ideas. We have received some interest in Food Trucks and we are studying the issue.

Member Mead asked if zoning would be revised to allow this type of business.

Planner Peterson stated that we would have some revisions as we currently do not have anything in place for Food Trucks. Currently Microbreweries are treated as an industrial use and not a commercial use.

Vice Chair Pennington asked if a Brew Pub could be in a Commercial zone but not a Microbrewery. Planner Peterson stated that it would depend on if the beer is made on sight as then they are considered industrial and a manufacturer.

## **Article 8. Adjournment**

**Member Mead made a motion to adjourn. Member Williams supported. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen McCarthy, Secretary  
Ann T Seykora & Debra Groendyk, Planning Administrative Assistant