

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission  
Monday, March 19, 2012  
7:00 P.M.

**ARTICLE 1.** Chairman Sperla called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.  
Members Present: Hammond, Lewis, McCarthy, Mead, Pennington, Robinson, Sperla, Waalkes, Williams  
Members Absent: none  
Others Present: Planning Director Steve Peterson, Township Engineer Mike Berrevoets and members of the public.

**ARTICLE 2.** Chairman Sperla led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**Motion was made by Member Robinson to approve the Agenda. Support by Member Pennington. Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 4.** Approve the Minutes of the March 5, 2012 meeting.

**Motion was made by Member Lewis to approve the Minutes as presented. Support by Member Mead. Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 5.** Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items

Chairman Sperla welcomed the visitors and explained the new procedure for public comments.

Dale Sommers of 2520 Linda had concerns about traffic stacking at the new median by Meijer. He is also concerned about the decorative lights along 28<sup>th</sup> street; many being on during the daylight hours and also wires. Planner Peterson replied that they are both DDA projects. The DDA is currently evaluating the possibility of burying the power lines.

**ARTICLE 6.** Case #12-3070 Golf Club at Thornapple Pointe  
(Public Hearing)

**Property Address:** 7211 48<sup>th</sup> St.

**Requested Action:** The applicant is requesting an amendment to their Special Use Permit to allow for a 576 sq ft expansion of the pavilion building.

Chairman Sperla introduced the case as well as procedure, and then turned it over to Staff for comments.

Planner Peterson explained that the Golf Club at Thornapple Pointe was granted a Special Use Permit in 2006 for the existing pavilion. The existing building is 5,616 sq ft and now they would like to expand the building by 576 sq ft, which requires an amendment to the Special Use Permit.

The building is being constructed to match the existing building. No new access is planned as part of this project.

Staff recommends approval to amend the Special Use Permit allowing the addition as proposed.

The applicant was invited by the Chairman to come forward for any additional comments. Chris Sobieck introduced himself as the manager and one of the partners. He explained that they need storage and they want to add a kitchen to service that building. They also want to add more restrooms.

Board Members questioned the applicant as to the structure, pitch of the roof, height of the building, and venting for the kitchen.

**Member Waalkes made a Motion to move into Public Hearing. Support by Member Lewis. Motion carried.**

No one was present to comment to this case.

**Member Lewis made a Motion to close Public Hearing. Support by Member McCarthy. Motion carried.**

**Member Lewis made a Motion to amend the Special Use Permit to allow for a 576 sq ft addition to the existing pavilion. Support by Member Pennington. Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 7. Case #12-3067 Kraft Holding LLC/Lacks Enterprises**

(Public Hearing)

**Property Address:** 5631, 5673, 5791, & 5801 Kraft Ave.

**Requested Action:** Rezone property into the Meadowbrooke PUD/amend Master Plan for Phase II of Meadowbrooke.

Chairman Sperla announced that Member Pennington has a potential conflict in regards to this case due to the fact that he works for the engineering company that is doing the plans for this project. Member Pennington has asked to be recused from this consideration.

**Member Lewis made a Motion to accept Member Pennington's request to be excused from this item. Support from Member Mead. Motion carried.**

Staff reviewed the location of the properties. The applicant is requesting preliminary approval in order to rezone 5631, 5673, 5791, and 5801 Kraft Ave from ARC into the existing Meadowbrooke PUD. Three of these properties were rezoned in 2003 as a part of the last amendments to the Meadowbrooke PUD, therefore only the property at 5801 Kraft is in need of being rezoned. In addition they are asking to amend the Master Plan for Phase II of Meadowbrooke. Phase II is the south half of the Meadowbrooke project.

The current Master Plan shows a series of planned roads that would connect through, both to Kraft and to 60<sup>th</sup> and eventually over to M-37, and even into the existing built portion of Meadowbrooke.

The new plan, as a result of their project, will

1. No longer have access to Kraft with a new street
2. The access to 60<sup>th</sup> gets located much further west

One item that still needs to be worked on is the layout of utilities. This is being reviewed by our engineers as well as the City of Grand Rapids.

Staff recommends approval of the rezoning of 5801 Kraft into the Meadowbrooke PUD and the adoption of the new master plan with the condition that the plan is revised to incorporate the comments from the City of Grand Rapids and the Township Engineer.

Chairman Sperla asked if the applicant was present. Patrick Knight, facilities engineering for Lacks Industries and Plastic Plate Inc introduced himself. He offered to answer any questions Board Members might have.

Member Waalkes asked Staff if the utilities being installed on Kraft between 60<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> was driving any of this development. Peterson said he believes it has had an impact on that. Mr. Knight agreed.

**Member Waalkes made a Motion to move into Public Hearing. Support by Member Lewis. Motion carried.**

No one present wished to speak to this project.

**Member Lewis made a Motion to close Public Hearing. Support by Member Williams. Motion carried.**

Member Waalkes commented that he likes the idea of this development. Having manufacturing near the airport is what was intended for the Master Plan process and the industrial land use.

**Member Waalkes made a Motion to re-zone 5801 Kraft Ave and amend the Master Plan for Phase II of Meadowbrooke, with the condition that the plan is revised to incorporate the comments from the City of Grand Rapids and the Township Engineer. Support by Member Hammond. Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 8. Case #11-3042 Denis Johnson/Turnburry**

(Public Hearing)

**Property Address:** 5500 and 5452 Burton St SE

**Requested Action:** The applicant is requesting amendments to the Turnburry P.U.D. Ordinance to allow for changes that include layout, density, as well as other design elements.

Planner Peterson reviewed the location of the property as being on the SW corner of Burton and Kraft streets. The property is already zoned PUD. The project was approved in 2005.

The previous plan was a mix of apartments and condos totaling 123 units. The Township Board ultimately approved 106 units in a mix of attached and detached condo units with no apartments. In 2011 the applicant proposed a revised project that had 152 units.

They are now seeking a plan with 140 units with a mix of type of units. This project is proposed for apartments, townhomes, and luxury flats; all rental. They are proposed to be from one bedroom to three bedrooms. This calculates to a requested density of about 7.6 per acre. Cascade Township currently has about 7 ½ % of housing in rental units.

While the Master Plan does envision different housing types it does not speak to the form of ownership. Staff displayed the future land use map from the Master Plan. The plan shows how we identified several areas for the transitional use idea. This designation is called community residential in the Master plan and uses a density of 4-6 units per acre as the desired density.

The developer will have to reconstruct a significant portion of the bike path. The Township will need the appropriate easements to accommodate this. They will go through a permitting process and must meet our Township standards. The bike path will remain open during construction.

A reason given for the need for the additional density is the ability to add better features. If that is the case, Peterson stated that we will want to tie that to the PUD amendments so we get those features as advertised.

The plan includes a clubhouse with a swimming pool. These would go in during the second phase of the project. Staff suggests that the amenities be installed before any occupancy permits are issued for the urban flat buildings.

The Fire Department has reviewed the plans and has provided a list of comments for the developer to address. Most of these are detail that can be worked out between the Fire Chief and the developer after the plans are approved.

**Additional staff comments:**

- The development has been approved with private roads and they would like to continue with that.
- Public sewer and water is proposed for the entire project and has been reviewed and approved by the City of Grand Rapids.
- Kraft and Burton have plenty of capacity to handle the traffic from this development.
- The open space in the project is sprinkled throughout the entire project.
- The access to the site is the same location as originally approved by the KCRC. This has been approved by the KCRC.
- The Township Engineer is still reviewing the stormwater design and some of its related issues.

**Staff comments regarding Section 16.03 of the Zoning Ordinance and this case:**

- The property is already zoned PUD.
- In relation to underlying zoning, the project would not result in the need for any public improvements.
- The Master Plan has called for this type of project given the location. The density of the project at 7.6 units per acre is still a little over what this transition area (Community residential) was designated.
- This transitional area is planned for this type of project. The development is high end with amenities like the pool/clubhouse, underground parking, brick and composite siding that would not detract from the area.
- The neighborhoods in the area have a large discrepancy in selling price, however that has not resulted in any negative economic impacts.

Staff recommends that we table this project until the Township engineer and the fire department are able to complete their review.

Chairman Sperla asked if there were any questions of the Planner. Member Robinson questioned whether the roads in the development should be public or private. Staff reported that the project is already approved with private roads.

Chairman Sperla asked if the design standards on the roads were compatible with or up to the public road standards, such as the depth of the hard surface.

Staff said it is not so much with the construction method but the width of some of the roads. The width of these roads meets our private road standards, but they do not meet the standards of the public roads.

Chairman Sperla asked if the schools in the area had the capacity to accommodate the additional potential students. Peterson said that he believed the developer had spoken with the school district but that school capacity is not one of our review criteria.

Member Hammond requested verification that during the most recent Master Plan the public was a part of that process. Staff replied that we had various Focus Groups and good participation from a broad range of citizens.

Member Mead asked if any of the information provided contained the number of surface lot spaces for visitors. Staff replied that is a good question for the developer, and the parking calculations are on the plans.

Discussion followed in regards to the possibility of traffic stacking up in peak hours from either exiting the development or entering the development at the traffic light.

Chairman Sperla invited the applicant to approach the podium for comments or to take questions. Present was Denis Johnson, part of the developer team and architect for the project. Denis stated that they have been in partnership since 1984. He described the various types of housing their partnership has designed, built, and developed throughout Michigan in the past. He also introduced Pat Cornelisse as part of his team who has also worked on many projects in the Township. Also introduced was Kyle Wilson as his civil engineer.

Denis presented the history of the site/project and their continuing contributions to the site. He explained the types of units being proposed. He talked positively about the compromises MVP had made with them as a neighbor of the site, along with other neighbors.

Denis talked about the different types of apartments. He stated that they have "conventional" apartments and upscale or luxury describes what they have to offer. Their target is the "aging boomer" market along with professionals. The project will have on-site management. They have added a ½ acre dog park with a shelter in the corner of the site; against the MVP fence and the fence of the RV storage. There will be some underground parking. The project was explained with much detail. Kyle Wilson came to the podium to talk briefly about the storm drainage. He has worked on this project since 2005 and is working with our township engineer.

Member Hammond asked about the timeline for the project. Developer Johnson said that they would like to begin this fall with Phase I (44 units) and be ready for occupancy next spring. Phase II could possibly start shortly after, however it is market-driven.

Member Mead inquired about roof drains, mechanicals, and foot traffic patterns. He asked Mr. Johnson for his position on performance bonds.

Member Williams commented on the importance of the clubhouse being built to justify the higher rent and to attract more tenants.

Member Pennington asked how many parking spaces there were per unit. Denis answered by saying, two. Planner Peterson stated that our requirement is about 260 parking spaces and they have over 300.

Member Pennington had a question about the drainage review and also the configuration of the roads for turning. Engineer Berrevoets commented that these are still in review.

Member Hammond questioned density justifying amenities, what if density would fall, and what would happen to those amenities? Denis gave reasons for using the materials they have planned and expressed optimism for not having to cut costs. He feels they are adding to the project to make it better.

Member Mead asked what the site distance on the north entrance was; is there a defined site distance requirement? Mr. Johnson answered that it has been approved by the KCRC and has a decell lane as part of it.

Chairman Sperla asked if they could move into Public Hearing after a short break.

After the break, Member Hammond verified the noticing process with the Planner. Peterson replied that notices are sent to residents within 300 ft of the property and there is also a notice in the newspaper per state law.

**Member Lewis made a Motion to move into Public Hearing. Support by Member Williams. Motion carried.**

Chairman Sperla gave direction to the public then asked for participants.

Bernard Link of 2281 Partridge Ct: Mr. Link is concerned about the volume of traffic on Burton Street and believes that we should not re-visit a possible ramp at Burton and the expressway.

Dale Sommers of 2520 Linda Ave: Mr. Sommers has concerns about the flow of water on the site, private roads, capacity for sewer, swimming pools for projected type of tenants, and timing of development. He does not feel the market is ready for more development at this time.

Jon Achterhof of 2431 Candlewick Ct: His main concern is about transitional apartments being in a family oriented neighborhood.

Fletcher Cochran of 2351 Arbor Tree Ct: His concern is in property values going down, density, commitment to the neighborhood, and that traffic is already a problem at Burton and Spaulding.

Scott Van Houten of 2581 Tall Timber Ct: Scott is concerned about rentals lowering property values and commitment to the neighborhood. He says that condo's are once again selling quickly in the area.

Nermin Elmi of 2469 Candlewick Ct: She used to live near an apartment complex and chose to move away from that. She said if they build apartments, she will have to move again.

Ruth Bajema representing the Burton Pointe Condo Association: They are concerned with property values going down and also traffic cutting through their development. She agrees with all of the previous comments.

Peter Whitehead of 2253 Christine Ct: His back yard abuts to Spaulding. He agrees that the intersection of Burton and Spaulding backs up at peak times from all directions as well as the intersection of Cascade and Spaulding. His main concern is regarding more traffic.

Bob Singer of 2445 Candlewick Ct: He agrees with all of the previous comments. He wonders if anyone has any statistics about whether a project like this does actually lower the property values and he is also concerned whether the 44 unit development is commercially viable as a standalone unit or will it be required that they develop this whole thing at one time.

Mike Knowles of 2452 Candlewick Ct: Mike is also concerned about added traffic. Traffic from Meijer, plus new stores being constructed in the area adds to the traffic volume. He states that the curve from Kraft to Burton is already dangerous. He said that it was a "done deal" that Turnburry would only be owned units when first presented a few years ago. He is concerned about property values decreasing and he objects.

Paul Bajema of 5349 Burton Ct: Paul is concerned about declining property values, traffic volume, and density. He would like the project to be delayed until



they can get condo units on that site, which he feels is more consistent with the Cascade area.

John Schorr of 2532 Highridge Hills Lane: He is a new resident of Cascade. He would not have purchased the property if apartments were already there.

Pritdal Deo of 2455 Candlewick Ct: He used to live in Wyoming by an apartment complex. They had a hard time selling because of that, and he doesn't want that to happen again. They like the neighborhood they moved to in Cascade.

Rick Laporte of 6420 Burton St: He has an investment in this community and he wants this community to stay healthy. If he were looking for a rental, the Turnburry plan does not look appealing to him. There are plenty of homes for rent in the area if an executive is looking for a temporary place to live.

Sheri Laporte of 6420 Burton St: She attended the Master Plan meetings. Residents attending the meetings objected to the PUD density of this site. She supports the comments that have already been spoken. She grew up in the neighborhood and supports single family, owner occupied homes.

Remco Bergsma of 5692 Tall Timber St: If rental housing comes to this area people are going to want to leave, and homes are already hard to sell.

John Brownlow of 2492 Candlewick Ct: Seven years ago, the group made a decision that apartments weren't acceptable for that location. Homeowners here are trying to preserve the neighborhoods and this change is unacceptable.

Darrell Cass of 2515 Kraft Ave: This is his back yard, he lives next to this. He does not believe the developer will ever live next to this. The plan has no place for children to play. Mr. Cass believes only two letters were sent out about the public hearing. He believes something should have been posted on the Township website sooner than the Thursday before the meeting.

Chairman Sperla responded by informing Mr. Cass that he could be notified for the next Public Hearing by way of the Planner if he would like.

Robert Caswell of 5760 Tall Timber St: Mr. Caswell pointed out that there is water/a spring on the property, as water comes across the bike path frequently. He wants to make sure there is adequate water removal for the site. He also agrees with the other public comments in regards to reduced home values due to rentals.

Chairman Sperla responded to Mr. Caswell reporting that our Township Engineer is still reviewing the property and the water issue will be addressed.

Judy Genter of 6035 Burton St: Judy stated that the builders have a lousy track record. When the sewer was done on Burton St. the project was a mess and they ran out of money. They tore all the trees out. They left a sewage, a dump, a mess, a horrible disaster at the corner of Kraft and Burton. She feels that precedes them and that they are not exactly what they say they are. She went on to say that their track record stinks. We don't believe a word they say and that is why our whole neighborhood is represented. We want to stay a small neighborhood where we are all friends, we all have kids, we know everybody's dog name, we are just a nice neighborhood and we do not want apartments.

Katherine Cleary of 5337 Burton Ct: She wonders if the water that runs across the path is a wetland and if the Dept. of Environmental Quality needs to be involved vs. someone just from the Cascade area. She said that there are wetlands behind their development that are protected and entry is not allowed. She would like that to be looked into. Secondly she wants to be able to know that her property is being looked at with as much sincerity as the Turnburry property. She wonders if the tax value of apartments is greater for the community than for single family dwellings.

Roger Kraft of 2485 Kraft: He lives adjacent to this project. He has problems getting out of his driveway now, as he can only see a few feet. Vegetation blocks his view of the signal light, which concerns him; he does not want to cause an accident. He says that his neighbors are so upset with apartments that they want to blast a 1000 wt stereo into the apartment complex so they'll never be rented; that is how upset they are. Some neighbors are prejudice against apartments and some are prejudice against condos. He agrees with what everyone else is saying. He said that if we wanted apartments we would be living in Kentwood. We don't want apartment sprawl.

Mike Knowles of 2452 Candlewick Ct: Mike came to the podium for the second time to ask who this project is for. Is it for our community, is there anyone that feels this is good for our community; that is what this should all be about. Is this anything positive except for the 4 people setting behind me?

Allan Girvin of 5700 Tall Timber: Mr. Girvin said he had looked at the pen and inks for the project. He is of the opinion that it looks no different than most apartment complexes that you see around the Grand Rapids area. He wonders how they will look in 20 years. They don't look as nice as they do on those pen and inks. The people who have homes here and who keep them up to the standard of the community have a lot more at risk than an apartment dweller. Apartment dwellers are transient by nature and you're looking at a community with single family homes. He believes everyone just wants to protect their investment.

Chairman Sperla said he appreciated everyone who came and input from the public is appreciated. Sperla thanked everyone for coming to express their views.

**Member Waalkes made a Motion to move out of Public Hearing. Support by Member Robinson. Motion carried.**

Chairman Sperla asked for comments or for a Motion from the Planning Commission Members.

Member Mead asked Staff if there had been a wetlands determination done on the project. The Township Engineer said he will review this.

**Member Lewis made a Motion to table this case until there is a full report from the Fire Dept. and the Township Engineer. He said this will also allow time to review notes taken from public comment.**

Member Lewis added that he wanted to remind the public that this case will be coming to the Planning Commission again. It will be removed from the table and will be discussed, along with a determination. After that it goes to the Township Board. At the Township Board level there will be another Public Hearing and another chance to express your feelings. It's a long process, but through this process we can do the right thing and satisfy the wishes of as many people as possible.

**Support by Member Robinson for the Motion made by Member Lewis. Motion carried to table this case.**

Planner Peterson reported that the next Planning meetings are scheduled for April 16 and May 14. The engineer and Fire Dept will have to complete their reports first.

**ARTICLE 9. Recommendation for Planning Consultant regarding the reformatting of the Zoning Ordinance**

Planner Peterson said that it has been budgeted by the Township Board. The budget is for about \$20,000. There are three bids and Peterson prefers the Clearzoning project.

**Member Pennington made a Motion that the Planning Commission make a positive recommendation to the Township Board to award the contract to clearzoning for the reformatting of the Zoning Ordinance. Support by Member Mead.**

Chairman Sperla stated that for the record, Member Robinson has left the meeting.

**Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 10. Any other business:**

**Time of Sale Septic Inspections – Kent County Septic Study**

Planner Peterson briefly discussed the Kent County Septic Study. He recommends that the Planning Commission monitor the results of the study before pursuing our own program.

Discussion followed.

**ARTICLE 11. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Waalkes to adjourn. Support by Member Pennington. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karen McCarthy, Secretary

Carol M. Meyer, Planning Administrative Assistant