

# MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 11, 2017 --- 7:30 p.m.

Big Rapids Township Hall, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

## I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 P.M.

Chairman Philip Keating called the regular meeting of the Big Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission to order at the township hall on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

## II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Philip Keating, Carman Bean, Mary Davis, Gordon Oliver, Mark Sweppenheiser and Amanda Wethington. Zach Cook is excused. The record shows a quorum is present. Also Present: Zoning Administrator and Recording Secretary, Brent Mason and Supervisor Bill Stanek.

## III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Mr. Keating asked if any of the Commission members had known conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda for this meeting. No one indicated that a conflict of interest existed.

## IV. MINUTES:

Mr. Keating asked the Commission to review the minutes of the June 13, 2017 regular meeting and the June 29, 2017 Special Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Bean made a motion to approve the June 13, 2017 minutes as submitted. Mrs. Davis seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed with six ayes. Mr. Bean made a motion to approve the June 29, 2017 minutes as submitted. Mr. Oliver seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed with six ayes.

## V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

## VI. SITE PLAN REVIEW:

The Site Plan review for the Big Rapids Township Fire Department Addition began at 7:35 p.m. Mr. Keating introduced Mike Oezer, PE from Progressive AE to present site plan 58516006 dated 06/08/2017 and revised on 07/03/2017. Mr. Keating then asked Mr. Mason if he would like to comment on his report to the Commission. Mr. Mason spoke to the history of the property, and the requirements of the Commercial District. He advised that all requirements were met with some minimal modifications for the parking requirements. There was substantial discussion about how the site could be modified to provide the required number of parking spaces, including adding additional parking to the rear of the office building. Mr. Keating asked what would need to be done on the east end of the addition or the lawn in order to turn that area into parking. Mr. Oezer replied that it would require an additional driveway to access that area and possibly additional fill material. It is possible that it could interfere with the storm water retention as it is currently being proposed. Mr. Keating expressed his concern for getting the fire

department vehicles out of the building on election days, since parking is such a big problem on those nights. Mr. Stanek advised that the Fire Department usually positions their vehicles outside the building on election days so that they are ready to respond and don't get "parked in" by the voters. There were some other suggestions mentioned, and it was eventually determined that the dumpster enclosure provided for on the north side of the Fire Hall could be moved to the east side of the addition and the space on the north side of the hall could be turned into two parking spaces, meeting the parking requirement and putting the dumpster in a more preferred location. Mr. Keating asked Mr. Oezer if there were any other areas of concern that he wanted to discuss. He talked about the storm water review that is being done by Spicer for the County Drain Commissioner, and the grade issues at the site. Mr. Oezer advised that this review is a good thing because it will bring our site into compliance with the current drain district requirements. Mr. Oezer also talked about the elevation difference between the proposed addition floor and the existing grade. There will have to be approximately four feet of foundation wall exposed above grade on the southeast corner of the new addition. This will also require a storm drain pipe from the driveway and parking area to the new detention drain pond. Mr. Bean asked about whether fill would be required and Mr. Oezer stated that there would need to be some compacting of fill in the southeast corner of the new building addition. Mr. Oezer reiterated that we should be hearing back soon from the Drain Commissioner regarding the storm water calculations and review process. Once that is back, the project should be able to begin with the required permits. Mr. Keating asked if there were going to be any major changes to the site plan. Mr. Oezer said the minor changes that have been discussed regarding the location of the dumpster enclosure and the addition of the two parking spaces in the lawn north of the Fire Hall will be red-lined for addition to the site plan pending the outcome of the Drain Commissioner review. Mr. Keating asked if there were any further questions or comments. Mr. Stanek explained that he would like to see the project get started as soon as possible, preferably within the next two weeks since lumber prices have recently gone up a substantial amount. Mr. Keating mentioned to the commission members that he believes the site plan should be approved tonight if possible. Mr. Bean made a motion to approve site plan 58516006 revised on 07/03/2017 with the suggested modification of two parking spots in the lawn north of the Fire Hall, relocation of the dumpster enclosure to the east end of the addition, and contingent upon approval of the storm water review from the Drain Commissioner's Office. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sweppenheiser. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 ayes.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Keating asked Mr. Mason to comment on the information he provided about an electric car charging station that is preliminarily being considered for the southeast corner of the Meijer parking lot. Mr. Mason's concern is that our current Highway Interchange language doesn't specifically address this particular use. Mr. Mason is asking if the current zoning ordinance language needs to be modified to accommodate alternative vehicle fueling stations. Mr. Sweppenheiser suggested instead, that this might be considered an accessory use and not need any language changes at all. Mr. Keating asked what would happen if this use were to be considered on a separate parcel that was stand-alone and not manned. How would we deal with that situation? Mr. Sweppenheiser asked if the existing Use by Special Permit language; Section 153.021 (C) (3) Other non-listed commercial uses; would cover this situation. Mr. Mason agreed that it should. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked if the preliminary proposal would meet the

setback requirements, and Mr. Mason stated that he hasn't even begun to look at those requirements, since this project is in the information gathering phase only at this time. Mr. Sweppenheiser commented that he thinks this proposal is a great idea for the region. Mr. Keating asked if the Meijer access drive to the east of the proposed site was a public road and how that would affect setback requirements. Mr. Mason advised that it is a private road, and that he is not actually sure where the property line is so he isn't able to comment on whether the proposal meets setbacks. Mr. Oezer commented that the proposal doesn't look like it changes the parking site plan of the property except for the charging towers. Mr. Oliver asked if this project might be the reason that Consumers Power put a bigger underground line in the area. While no one was able to definitively answer that question, it was presumed that the reason for the new line could be all the recent development in the vicinity. Mr. Keating asked if we were approached by Tesla on this proposal, and Mr. Mason advised that it was a Black & Veatch Land Services and Acquisition specialist on behalf of Tesla that initiated the contact. Mr. Oezer advised that they are a national civil engineering company. Mr. Oezer has been working on a similar charging station elsewhere and gave the Commission some background information on those projects. Mr. Keating asked Mr. Mason to keep the Planning Commission updated on any information related to these kinds of issues. Mr. Stanek asked if there was any more happening with the information request for a solar farm. Mr. Mason stated that there hasn't been any movement on that issue. It was also for information purposes only and no further inquiry has taken place. Mr. Keating asked for existing language from other areas and municipalities that have solar farms. Mr. Mason will research those items and bring some examples back to the PC.

Mr. Keating asked that the Planning Commission review the method used for ranking of Capital Improvement requests for the future. He feels that we should get started on that process right away. He suggested that Mr. Bean, Mr. Mason and Mr. Sweppenheiser work on a proposal for ranking that might work more effectively. Mr. Mason stated that he would start on the process and keep in communication with Mr. Bean and Mr. Sweppenheiser.

Mr. Keating asked Mr. Mason if there were any Site Plan reviews or other items on the agenda for August. At this point, Mr. Mason advised that the schedule for the August meeting is open. Mr. Keating requested that Planning Commission review our By-Laws and also review the Master Plan. Mr. Bean asked if we actually had a Master Plan. Mr. Keating advised that we do. Mr. Mason passed out copies of the existing plan dated November 2015. Mr. Keating asked Mr. Mason to put those items on the August agenda. Mrs. Davis asked if there was anything specific that Mr. Keating wanted to review in the Master Plan, and Mr. Keating replied that he would like the members just to familiarize themselves with the document so they can discuss it in general terms for any changes that they feel might need to be considered when it comes up for review in the next three years. Mr. Bean specifically suggested that the Future Land Use map be reviewed so that it would accurately represent where the township development is heading. Mr. Keating mentioned that the Master Plan hasn't been utilized in the past as it should for making zoning and other important land-use decisions.

Mrs. Wethington asked Mr. Stanek whether anything more has occurred with Campus Creek Cottages regarding the request to split their property. Mr. Stanek advised that he has discussed the request with our assessor, David Kirwin, and that the property can be

split legally and meet the requirements of zoning provided that a 66-foot access easement is written into the legal description of both created parcels. Mr. Stanek said that the split request is just so they can get financing for Phase II. Mr. Keating asked for a report clarifying how the property split will meet the road frontage requirement of the Zoning Ordinance.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Keating entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. The motion was made by Mrs. Wethington and seconded by Mr. Bean. Motion carried with 6 ayes.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of July 11, 2017 by: Mr. Bean,  
Seconded by: Mr. Oliver. Roll call vote carried with 7 ayes:

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Philip Keating, Chairman  
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION

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Date Approved