

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission

Monday, December 17, 2007

7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 1. Chairman McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Members Present: Koessel, Lewis, Logue, McDonald, Robinson
Members Absent: Postma (excused), Richards (excused), Waalkes (excused)
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 motion for approval of the December 17th Agenda.

Member Lewis motioned for approval of the agenda as presented, supported by Member MacAllister. All in favor with none opposed, the motion carried.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the December 3, 2007 Meeting

Chairman McDonald opened the meeting for revisions, corrections or a motion for approval of the December 3rd minutes.

Member Robinson motioned for approval of the December 3, 2007 minutes as presented, supported by Member Logue. All in favor with none opposed: December 3, 2007 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted

**ARTICLE 5. Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer
Address of Property: 5555 & 5595 28th Street SE
(Tabled at the November 19, 2007 Meeting)**

Requested Action: Preliminary Plan Review for an amendment and addition to the P.U.D. at 5595 28th Street.

Member MacAllister requested to be excused from the case due to conflict of interest.

Member Lewis motioned to excuse Member MacAllister from the Commission for Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer due to conflict of interest, supported by Member Robinson.

All in favor with none opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman McDonald requested a motion to remove Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer from the table.

Member Robinson motioned to remove Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer from the table, supported by Member Koessel.

All in favor with none opposed, Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer was removed from the table.

Planning Director Peterson noted this is the proposed amendment to the Macaroni Grille/Meijer P.U.D. The rezoning for adding the Macaroni Grille was done a few years ago. Now the Applicant is requesting to add this corner piece of property at Kraft Avenue and 28th Street into the existing P.U.D.

At the introduction meeting of this case, the Planning Commission had asked if the Meijer Store should be included in the P.U.D. and there was discussion regarding the number of buildings per acre and Meijer's has agreed to include the Meijer Store in the P.U.D.

The biggest change in the plans the Commission had seen earlier includes reconfiguration in the site's traffic flow and the driveway to Kraft Avenue. The Commission may remember that the reason for tabling the project at the November Meeting was that the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) had indicated they would not allow access to Kraft Avenue feeling that the Applicant could utilize the existing Meijer drive access that is located to the north of the retail center. The Applicant has worked out the access drive with the KCRC and the Road Commission is allowing for right-in-right-out drive off of Kraft Ave. and this has changed part of the Site Plan.

The Applicant first introduced this project to the Township in October of 2007 and at that meeting; they were given several items to address prior to holding the Public Hearing. The Applicant has addressed the items from that meeting.

The Applicant does show the sidewalk connections to the buildings from the walk on Kraft Ave.

Staff also noted that the Applicant does show the building within the Consumers Power easement and the Applicant will need to provide documentation from Consumers' that this is acceptable to them.

The Applicant has reduced the parking by seven (7) spaces from the original plan that was based on having a fast food restaurant. The revised plan also improves the parking and maneuvering. Staff would like to discuss the possibility of deferring the parking space construction along 28th Street. These spaces are very far from the strip center and appear that they would not be used.

At the last meeting, there were concerns regarding the bank drive-thru and vehicle stacking and blocking Kraft Ave. and the Applicant has redesigned traffic flow and no longer backs up to Kraft Ave.

The Applicant is proposing to develop one building at 20,000 sq. ft. retail/restaurant building and a separate 4,000 sq. ft. bank.

The Township Engineer has provided his report and Staff does not see any items that would prevent the project. One item that is being discussed is if the project has enough storm water detention. The Applicant has indicated that if they do need additional storage, they would put it underground. The Applicant is still investigating if there is adequate capacity with the Drain Department.

Staff's report includes the Standards for Rezoning with the philosophy that this is an amendment to the current P.U.D. Staff feels this is consistent with the Standards and no issues with the amendments.

Staff recommends approval of the plan and Staff can begin to write the P.U.D. Ordinance to regulate this expanded project. This will also give the Applicant time to address the concerns of the Township Engineer. If approved, Staff can begin to write a draft P.U.D. Ordinance for the Planning Commissions' review. That document would then be presented after review by the Applicant for the Commissions' consideration of a recommendation to the township Board. This would also allow the Developer to address any other detail item for the Commissions' review before the recommendation is made.

Chairman McDonald opened the meeting for questions of Staff from the Planning Commission; there were no questions. Chairman McDonald invited the Applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Applicant Greg Fulk from Paragon Development and Cheryl Scales from Progressive AE were present.

Ms. Scales said they have applied with Consumers for the easement and Consumers has agreed to reduce the easement to

allow the project. The documentation noting Consumers approval will be submitted to the Township once received.

Chairman McDonald asked the Applicant their thoughts regarding Staff's comment in deferring the seven (7) southern parking spaces and Mr. Fulk's concern is the additional expenses to add the spaces later instead of constructing all at once. Chairman McDonald noted that the spaces may not be necessary and Mr. Fulk noted the feedback they have received from retailers is that the site is already under-parked. They are trying to work with Meijer to utilize some of their spaces. To eliminate parking however, at this point, would not be favorable based on their feedback.

Mr. Fulk also noted the site's encroachment onto the Meijer property and the developer will be adding landscaping in the area. Member Lewis asked what type of landscaping would be used and Ms. Scales noted evergreen shrubs mixed with some ornamental trees. The exact species of trees has not been selected and once the decisions have been made, the landscaping plans will be submitted to the Township. They have indicated the number of plantings in the area that has been agreed upon by Meijer. The Developer also has the opportunity to provide island trees.

Member Lewis hears that the Developer is saying this project is an under-parked plan but Staff is suggesting removing seven (7) spaces to the south of the project. Does the Township want a drive thru on the retail center that would attract more cars. Mr. Fulk noted that the benefit of the drive thru is that it does not attract as much need for parking. Mr. Fulk noted that the revised plan does deal with the traffic flow on the site to allow cars access in and out without spending much time on the site. He also referred to the traffic flow around the bank site that contains the bank traffic to that area of the site and noted the right-only Kraft Ave. access drive. Ms. Scales noted that the KCRC does not want traffic turning left into the location.

Member Lewis noted that if he were on the site and wanted to turn left onto Kraft Ave. he would have to drive to the Meijer Drive and turn left onto Kraft Ave. from that drive and Mr. Fulk said that is correct.

Member Koessel asked what prevents the drive thru traffic from turning west and cutting through the parking lot? Ms. Scales noted they are not deterring traffic flow in that direction but indicated the ideal exit drive. Member Koessel expressed his concern with traffic movement wanting to proceed north on the site, noting the site is a bit restricted in traffic flow.

Member Koessel referred to the buffer in the back of the site that Meijer requested the additional plantings on and what is the width distance of this area and if movement is tight in this area. Ms. Scales said the distance is approximately 5-feet and there are lanes back there that are 18-feet wide.

Member Koessel asked if the retail center's drive thru is necessary for the site's success and Mr. Fulk noted they do have a signed Letter of Intent from a retailer needing a drive thru.

Member Logue sees the need for the parking but the site does not layout well.

Chairman McDonald asked when the KCRC approved the Kraft Avenue access and Ms. Scales noted they approved the drive the morning after the November Planning Commission Meeting was held. The Road Commission's concern was the left turn into the site off of Kraft Avenue. Planning Director Peterson noted that due to the KCRC's concern, the changes are now reflected on the Site Plan. Mr. Fulk said that KCRC's concern with the left turn in off of Kraft Avenue interfering with Kraft Avenue traffic turning left onto 28th Street. There is a left center turn lane for Kraft Avenue traffic to turn left onto 28th Street and the Road Commission did not want incoming site traffic interfering with the center turn lane traffic.

Chairman McDonald asked Staff that along with their recommendations, does the Commission need to add a condition requesting the easement documentation from Consumers and final approval from the Township Engineer regarding storm water issues? Planning Director Peterson believes adding the Consumers Power easement information would be acceptable. Regarding the storm water issue it would be acceptable to add the condition that it meets the Township Engineer's approval since the Applicant has indicated they will add underground retention if necessary.

Member Lewis referred to the elevation plans and asked what the colors are of the building that is checker boarded. Mr. Fulk noted it is a stucco, sprayed on material and part will be tinted a darker shade of brown.

Mr. Fulk further explained that the in-line bay and the checkerboard area are all stucco with brick in the middle and on the opposite end. There are bottom areas of the building that will be in stone base and brick with standard canvas canopies. On the center premier portion and the two ends, there is a steel canopy that comes out. Member Lewis asked about the signs for each

retailer and Mr. Fulk noted the signage would be in accordance with the Township's Sign Ordinance.

Chairman McDonald asked Staff if there are any ramifications to the P.U.D. to incorporate the whole 29-acres and if any other buildings could go into the area and Planning Director Peterson believes it was discussed that the P.U.D. amendment would simply be written to include what is currently on the site today, the current five (5) buildings. That does not mean the buildings could not be modified later but the amendment would recognize what is on the site today.

Staff will also include the past Meijer Variances that were granted in the amendment along with the Meijer Gas Station, Macaroni Grille and this project.

Member Lewis expressed his concerns with traffic movement on the site.

Member Koessel asked the Developer if the parking shown on the north side of the bank indicated traffic flow into the parking spots, and if so, is there going to be some signage that prohibits the flow of traffic from turning right and heading back to the south? Mr. Fulk said there would be and have modeled the bank off of a couple of other bank sites and would be happy to install signage to deter incoming traffic in that area.

Member Koessel noted he works at a bank with a similar site design and he has seen people challenging and conflicting with bank drive thru traffic. On this site, there is retail towards the back and the site does not restrict movement from the bank towards the retail even though there will be signs, people do not pay attention to. Planning Director Peterson noted that one solution could be to widen that lane of travel from 16-feet to 18-feet to allow for two travel lanes. Member Koessel noted the use on this site has increased dramatically and Planning Director Peterson commented that the site also includes the green space and the Meijer Drive, it is larger than when the restaurant was there. Member Koessel noted there appears to be a lot of difficult traffic movements within the site and is concerned with traffic exiting the drive thru and trying to cut north with the right-turn-only traffic. Mr. Fulk noted that the areas do have very clear sight and the internal stop signs will be necessary along with any striping.

Chairman McDonald asked the Developer the Road Commission's comments regarding the right-in from Kraft Ave. and it seems if the ingress from Kraft Ave. were removed, it would alleviate some of the traffic concerns. Mr. Fulk noted from a retailer's standpoint,

the right-in is important to access the retail. Chairman McDonald suggested access from the north of the retail and Mr. Fulk noted that entering retail from the back is not preferred.

Member Koessel also referred to the parking located at the bank. There are parking spaces indicated along Kraft Avenue and what will deter people from entering the one-way drive indicated on the plan? He noted the most logical bank drive-thru traffic flow is to go to the south and then proceed towards the back and exit onto Kraft Ave. Member Koessel questioned if it would be better to force traffic to the north and Chairman McDonald supported the suggestion. Member Koessel said this would help prevent traffic on the north side from turning and heading south. Member Koessel said he is attempting to eliminate conflicting traffic with that of the drive thru as he has seen it at his bank even though there are traffic signs.

Chairman McDonald asked if lines and arrows would be painted on the pavement indicating traffic movement and Ms. Scales said they would.

Member Koessel expressed concern regarding the parking along Kraft Ave. and Mr. Fulk noted there are five (5) spaces with three (3) of them being for handicapped parking. Ms. Scales noted that they do not know which bank will occupy the building and if their entrance would be facing Kraft or towards the north of the site.

Member Logue suggested that the ingress/egress be moved to the area of the four (4) most northern parking spaces that would allow for circular traffic. Mr. Fulk noted that this could potentially increase traffic flow to the entire site and are trying to provide quick access to the bank instead of driving through the entire site to get to the bank.

Member Robinson expressed his concerns regarding traffic flow for the handicapped parking and the one-way drive that is on the south of the site. If the five (5) parking spaces are full and a couple of cars drive to the full area, how can the vehicles manipulate out of the parking area without conflicting with the encroaching one-way traffic on the drive? Planning Director Peterson suggested widening the southern driveway to allow for 2-lane traffic. Member Koessel noted that if the southern drive were made into a 2-way, it would cause additional traffic flow problems and Chairman McDonald agreed.

Mr. Fulk noted that they intend to sell the bank outlet and the plans submitted this evening could change depending on the buyer. Mr. Fulk intends for the owners to come before the Planning

Commission with their Site Plan and this bank plan is a demonstration of what could be developed on the site. Chairman McDonald clarified that the bank site plan is hypothetical and Member Koessel noted it is difficult to approve something that hypothetical. Ms. Scales noted it provides an idea to the Planning Commission of what could be developed for a 4,100 sq. ft. bank.

Member Robinson noted that the developer has referred to the handicapped parking area as “not choice spots” then the handicapped parking would have to be moved depending on the bank’s entrance as they are the best parking spaces to any business and Mr. Fulk agreed and said the bank could change the lay out. Member Robinson asked that if the bank can change the lay out, then the Planning Commission is not approving the lay out being presented this evening. Planning Director Peterson noted the Planning Commission is approving the submitted lay out because when the bank comes in for Site Plan approval, it would be measured against the approved plan. Chairman McDonald noted that what the Planning Commission approves is what the bank receives and Planning Director Peterson said that is correct. There could be minor modifications to the plan or if there were major modifications, they would go back through the process.

Chairman McDonald asked if the five (5) parking spaces along the east side of the bank are necessary and Planning Director Peterson said those spaces are necessary to meet the required number of parking spaces for a bank. Ms. Scales noted the bank has three (3) spaces over the required minimum. Member Robinson asked if the drive thru traffic could be forced to exit towards the west through the lot and Chairman McDonald noted there would be a lot of traffic through the parking lot. Mr. Fulk noted that the reason for the right-out onto Kraft Ave. is to alleviate the site traffic and the majority of the bank’s traffic will be for the drive thru. The southern drive is to minimize the drive thru traffic onto the site.

Member Koessel noted that the bank is three parking spaces over the required minimum and asked if the two (2) east parking spaces could be moved into the northwest corner and Ms. Scales noted you could probably add one or two spaces.

Ms. Scales also noted another possibility is to add angled parking with the employee parking to the far north that is currently two (2) spaces short in meeting the minimum requirement. There could be a cross-agreement reached with Meijer since these are their least desirable parking spaces. Member Koessel asked how many parking spaces are available for the bank and Ms. Scales said sixteen (16). Planning Director Peterson noted the Township

requires three per 1,000 sq. ft. and Member Koessel noted that in a 4,000 sq. ft. bank there could easily be eight (8) employees.

Member Koessel asked the Developer how quickly they needed to begin on their retail project. Mr. Fulk noted their pressing issue is their contract with Meijer that has a deadline of January 31, 2008. The construction is low priority and the high priority is closing on this land to meet Meijer's fiscal year-end targets.

Member Koessel said he is personally fine with the retail portion of the site and believes it works. He is concerned with the corner site plan for the bank and the traffic flow issues and believes it could be redesigned to improve traffic flow. He believes the bank site is more troubling to the Planning Commission than the retail center.

Chairman McDonald asked the Developer if it is too much of a hardship for them to come back before the Planning Commission the first meeting after the New Year with revised plans suggested this evening? Mr. Fulk said that his understanding with the Meijer timeline is that the ordinance needs to be written and the Planning Commission would approve the P.U.D. in two weeks and it would need to go before the Township Board and this would push them back approximately into early February of 2008.

Member Robinson asked if Meijer would grant a 30-day allowance and Mr. Fulk said absolutely not, they have done past projects with Meijer and they adhere to their fiscal deadlines.

Member Koessel asked the Developers why they cannot close on the deal with Meijer as they already know they are inclined to approve the development and asked what is stopping them from closing on the property? Mr. Fulk noted there is a lot of risk on their behalf if the site is not fully approved and the financing of the site is dependent on selling the out lot. A buyer would purchase the land if the site is approved, not contingent upon the site's approval.

Mr. Fulk said they do have a clean plan that they can make the suggested revisions heard this evening to as they have complied with the other requests of the Planning Commission.

Member Koessel asked if three (3) drive thru lanes is critical to the bank site plan and Mr. Fulk noted that one lane is designated as an ATM drive thru leaving two lanes for drive thru.

Member Logue suggested moving the bank entrance more towards the center of the parking to the north of the bank instead of

attracting traffic towards the southern drive that is one-way as people have a tendency to drive forward.

Member Koessel supported Member Logue's suggestion and suggested entering the site at the north and can drive to the other parking but there is curbing indicating traffic flow. Member Koessel noted the Developer has some options and may possibly encroach in some green space.

Member Robinson said he is willing to meet with the Developers between now and the holidays and form a sub-committee. Chairman McDonald supported forming a sub-committee in developing a revised plan and provides the Developer confidence in an approved plan. Chairman McDonald said he would serve and Member Lewis also agreed along with Member Logue to meet on Thursday.

Staff was asked if they are comfortable developing the P.U.D. without an approved site plan and have both the P.U.D. and site plan approved at the next Planning Commission Meeting and Planning Director Peterson said he can proceed accordingly.

Mr. Fulk said they are willing to work with the Commission to give the Township the best site possible.

Member Logue supported having the Developer incorporate the suggestions made this evening for the sub-committee to review. Chairman McDonald suggested tabling the case this evening, the developer meet with the sub-committee and suggested the Developer provide two or three site plans for the sub-committee to choose from and then submit it to the Planning Commission for final approval. The sub-committee this will provide Staff confidence of the plan's approval and can write the P.U.D. for the first meeting in January selects once the preferred site plan.

Member Koessel noted that if Staff is comfortable posting the Public Hearing notice prior to the Planning Commission's approval for the Township Board Meeting, he is comfortable and Planning Director Peterson agreed noting that the Planning Commission is sending a recommendation. Member Koessel noted to the Developer that the Township Board still needs to approve the site plan.

Member Robinson motioned to table Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer so the sub-committee may review revised site plans on Thursday, December 20th, supported by Member Logue.

Chairman McDonald called the motion to question. **All in favor with none opposed, Case # 07-2908: Paragon Development/Meijer tabled.**

ARTICLE 6.

Any Other Business

Chairman McDonald opened the meeting for other business.

Member Lewis asked if this was Member MacAllister's last Planning Commission Meeting and she confirmed it is. He asked her to reconsider as she has been a valuable member of the Commission and Member Robinson also asked her. Member MacAllister said there has been some concern regarding her attendance record and does not want the Board to function inappropriately. Due to her increased workload she may have some future attendance conflicts.

Member Robinson noted that she served on several sub-committee meetings and Member Lewis noted that is a good point, as the Reibel Development project was very demanding. Member Lewis said he hates to see Member MacAllister resign from the Planning Commission based on attendance.

Member MacAllister said she enjoyed serving and her work demands will be increasing and appreciates the Commissions' comments.

Member Lewis asked Staff if his understanding is correct in that Member Postma has not been reappointed and Planning Director Peterson said that is correct, Member Richards has been reappointed and there are two (2) vacancies come January 2008.

Member Koessel noted that Member Postma is also unable to serve the Planning Commission due to work commitments that will take him to Allendale and he may have conflicts with upcoming meetings.

Member Lewis noted that these two Planning Commissioners have background in building and hates to lose them both at the same time. Member Koessel noted that during the Board's discussion it was brought up that if someone is appointed to serve, they are expected to be at the majority of the meetings.

Member Lewis asked if anyone has been appointed to fill the vacancies on the Planning Commission and Member Koessel said there has not been.

Member MacAllister said she has offered her services for the Master Plan study. Her project should be well underway after the

next eight to nine months and Spectrum Health schedules her meetings. She is willing to step down for the one-year period and revisit serving the Planning Commission after the year.

Member Lewis said he personally would welcome her back after one-year and Chairman McDonald asked her to consider and will speak with her after some time.

ARTICLE 7.

Adjournment

Chairman McDonald requested a motion for adjournment.

Member Koessel supported by Member MacAllister moved to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Lewis, Secretary

Lisa Hern, Recording Secretary