

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission
Monday, October 21, 2013
7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Sperla called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Members Present: Hammond, Lewis, Mead, Robinson, Sperla, Waalkes,
Williams.
Members Absent: McCarthy, Pennington
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 Lewis to approve the Agenda. Support by Member Hammond. Motion carried 7-0.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the October 07, 2013 meeting.

Motion was made by Member Lewis to approve the Minutes. Support by Member Mead. Motion carried by vote 7-0.

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

There was no one wishing to speak on non-agenda items.

ARTICLE 6. Case #13-3139 – Redwood Acquisitions

Property Address: 5901 28th Street

Requested Action: Planning Commission recommendation to rezone approximately 15 acres to PUD to allow for 89 unit apartment project.

Planner Peterson stated the Public Hearing was held at the October 07, 2013 meeting. We gave them a few items to follow up on and they have done those. They have updated all of their plans and they are in your packets. The PUD Ordinance is in the packet and all the loose ends have been tied up. I did propose we get a landscaping bond based on the scope of the project and the significant amount of landscaping that is involved. I recommend that you forward a positive recommendation to the Township Board for these plans and the PUD Ordinance. This will go to the Township Board and another Public Hearing will be held.

Chairman Sperla stated that he noticed there was a \$10, 000 Landscaping Bond; I did see there was another guarantee for an unspecified amount requested in the PUD Ordinance.

Planner Peterson stated that this is standard language that we can require a performance bond but we typically do not specify an amount in the PUD Ordinance.

Chairman Sperla asked whether the pedestrian connection to Wal-Mart had been added.

Planner Peterson stated that it has been included and it does not affect Wal-mart as it will be on the property of Redwood Development.

Chairman Sperla asked if the Township Engineer and the Fire Department are okay with the plans.

Planner Peterson stated that both the Township Engineer and the Fire Department have signed off on the plans.

Member Lewis asked if the intersection that is being reconstructed will lead to more confusion or disrupt traffic.

Planner Peterson stated that this would not be an issue once the intersection is reconstructed. Wal-Mart did reconstruct the intersection of the road to allow for traffic ease. Once that work is completed, Redwood will not need to make any improvement to the intersection.

Member Lewis asked if there would be a stop sign at the intersection to protect pedestrian traffic.

Planner Peterson stated that the pedestrian connection would be much further down.

Chairman Sperla stated that it may be a good suggestion to slow traffic from the private street for safety reasons.

John Latealure, the Applicant, indicated that they will put a stop sign up when exiting the development.

Member Waalkes made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Township Board. Support by Member Hammond. Motion passed 7-0.

ARTICLE 7. Case #13-3156 – Watermark Country Club

Property Address: 1600 Galbraith Avenue SE

Requested Action: Site plan review for an approximate 3,200 sq. ft. banquet room addition.

Planner Peterson presented that it is a relatively small addition of 3,200 sq. ft. It is part of the clubhouse of the Watermark Planned Unit Development Ordinance. We limited that building to 30,000 sq. ft. It was not clear if that was total size or useable area. This building is very close to 30,000 sq. ft. if you count the lower level which is used for cart storage and mechanical rooms. It is my opinion that we do not typically count this toward the usable square footage. If we take the storage area out of the allowable square footage, with the addition they will still be under the 30,000 sq. ft. The addition is for added banquet room. It isn't for additional banquets but for additional room within the existing facility.

We have several uses for this property including the Swim Center, Fitness Facility and Golf Course. We calculate a need for 324 parking spaces and currently there are a little over 300 available parking spaces. Although they do show they would defer construction of about 50 spaces, they also have an agreement with Golf View to utilize 50 parking spaces within their development. We encourage the deferring of parking spaces, but we do want to see that additional spaces could be created and they have done this.

When the Fitness Facility was built, the developer requested a separate lot for the facility. It has caused an issue with this addition as the addition will be within 14 feet of the proposed property line. They are going to combine the two properties and have one property with two buildings. They are aware that there may be certain building code issues they may have to address due to the building separation. This will need to comply with our requirements as well.

There was bit of work in regards to storm water. There are some leaching basins that they plan to take advantage of with this addition. The Township Engineer report states he is recommending approval with verification that the storm water system utilizing the leaching basins will work as they have designed it. I would recommend approval with the conditions that the field tests passed. If the field tests were to fail, they would be required to come up with a new storm water plan before occupancy of the addition.

The Fire Chief reviewed the plan and did not have any issues.

I am recommending site plan approval as seen, with the condition that they comply with the Township Engineers memo and that it is addressed before occupancy.

Member Lewis stated that when the Fitness Facility was built, the parking lot was long and narrow. They were going to add parking spaces initially by the Fitness Facility. We need to add as much as possible by the clubhouse so people do not use the fire lane.

Steve Plakmeyer, the Applicant, stated that they have addressed the issue with paint and signs. The fire lane is posted as a no parking zone.

Member Lewis asked if it was possible to add more spaces by the clubhouse to further alleviate the demand for close parking.

Steve Plakmeyer, the Applicant, stated they do have room to create more parking but they would rather not develop the green space. The greatest demand for parking is in the summer and people are interested in parking in the rear of the lot near the pool.

Planner Peterson stated that the Applicant, Steve Plakmeyer, has indicated employees will be instructed to park in the further out parking. It is the convenient parking that is an issue but they are aware of the issues and are addressing the situation.

Chairman Sperla stated he is in favor of the plan but he is always concerned with changes in a PUD because you are throwing the balance of trade offs out of balance but this is enough of a continuation of the clubhouse that I am comfortable with this plan. They did change the two tier parking plan as we requested. I would be hesitant for a future request to be approved.

Member Hammond stated that he is in agreement with Member Lewis on the parking issues. The lot does get full during the summer and he is concerned with the deficit of parking and if the shared agreement changes.

Planner Peterson stated that we have required them to show that they have space to expand parking if necessary and they have been able to do this.

Member Hammond stated that he is in favor but will bring this issue back to the forefront in the future if parking becomes an issue.

Steve Plakmeyer, Managing Member/Owner of Watermark stated that our whole purpose is to expand and remodel the banquet facility. We are mindful of the parking situation but at the same time we do not want to overbuild. The

green space is nice to have. We can park cars on the green space when necessary as well. We were unaware that we had the 50 spaces available that we can direct our employees to use which will allow more room for guest parking in front of our facility. Our goal is to create more space within our banquet facility for better function of the space. We need more room for our guests to move more freely. This is our attempt to bring more business back to Cascade Township. They have been losing business to the downtown area and the larger facilities. Having a larger banquet room will allow them to have a much nicer facility for weddings.

Member Hammond asked if the same main entrance would be used or if there is a separate entrance for this added banquet room?

Steve Plakmeyer, the Applicant, stated that no additional entrance will be included with this project.

Member Hammond asked if they were working on the deck area because it looks as if there's something being done back there.

Steve Plakmeyer, the Applicant, stated that they were changing the deck area to create a nicer patio experience for the restaurant as well as the banquet area. They have plans to have a covered area for dining as well to try to attract more business during the summer for outdoor dining.

Member Waalkes stated he is supportive of keeping a business like this in Cascade Township and keeping them viable. He applauds their efforts in doing so. He has been to an event on a Sunday afternoon with a number of people and it was tight in the banquet room. He has experience with the current ballroom area on the southwest portion of the building. He understands their issue about having space for their events. He sees a lot of parking lots in Cascade Township that never have anyone parking on certain areas of the parking lot. Meijer has way more parking than they need. Wal-Mart has a significant portion of their lot that is never used. His personal feeling is that there is a sea of asphalt out there that is not needed. He understands there are times when there are different events happening on this property all at the same time as discussed. But his general feeling is that there is too much parking around. He likes the fact that they have an agreement with a neighbor to utilize some of their parking as well as deferring some parking. He likes the concept of that.

Member Waalkes made a motion to approve the site plan as it was presented with condition they comply with the Township Engineer report. Support by Member Williams.

Member Lewis stated that he wanted to make clear that he is not opposed to having smaller parking lots. That is not the case. If all parking lots were the same in configuration he could understand that. He stated that this is a situation where he has observed cars continuing to parking in the fire lane and he is concerned that because of the layout of the parking lot itself and the demand for parking places. If the applicant has taken steps and put up signs and repainted the area for fire lane parking that helps. I appreciate that. His concern is also for the additional spaces up there that may create additional demand for spaces up closer to the buildings and to the fire lanes. But as the Applicant explained, he doesn't expect too much of a demand for additional parking, but rather people having more space when they're inside the building. That's an interesting concept and he's still digesting that. He still maintains that this addition will create more demand for additional parking areas.

Chairman Sperla stated that he's been out here for 30 years and that this is one of the nicest things going on in Cascade Township. He's attended events there from his work and he noted a parking problem, they've experienced it, and the applicant has addressed it. He frequents the restaurant with his family and it's probably the nicest place they choose to go in their neighborhood. He likes what applicant is doing on the outside patio; it will be a nice addition. He stated applicant should be mindful of the parking and if it becomes a problem they ought to fix it and expand it in order to keep doing the good things applicant is doing.

Member Robinson stated that he has been there when the fire lane was all parked with cars. It still happens.

ROLLCALL VOTE:

Waalkes – yes.

Mead –yes.

Sperla –yes.

Hammond –yes.

Williams –yes.

Lewis –yes.

Robinson –yes.

Motion approved 7-0.

ARTICLE 8. Any other business

Planner Peterson stated that he had no other business. The next Planning Commission meeting will be held November 4, 2013.

When asked about what was coming up at the next meeting Planner Peterson stated there was a large accessory building in Tamarron North- Ballybunion neighborhood. Also discussion regarding some of the changes in the laws regarding telecommunication. He has been working with the Township Attorney and they had drafted some amendments to address those as well.

Chairman Sperla talked about the Planning Commission wanting to do something with the corner where Tuffy Muffler is located. Maybe going back and amending that so at least if that use discontinues another similar use could not come in there. He believes that will be the heart of the Township at some point and that it is a great opportunity for maybe a park and a restaurant and would really make this a destination place for people wanting to go out to eat and capitalizing on the river. He believes they need to clean up Tuffy and Verburg over time. The office will be available for the Township to acquire. He's looking ahead a few years and that's an amendment he would like to see at a high priority in order for the Township to capitalize on that space.

Planner Peterson stated the Planning Commission has made that recommendation before, but the Board doesn't want to make anyone non-conforming. He stated the Planning Commission could certainly try that again.

Member Hammond suggested that the Planning Commission wait for the Complete Streets Plan to come out and that becomes the methodology they could use going forward.

Member Hammond asked if the Planning Commission Master Plan had been given to the Complete Streets Committee. Planner Peterson stated that they had all of the reports.

Member Lewis stated that the Planning Commission may want to make that one of their goals for next year - to investigate this opportunity. There is also a car repair facility on Old 28th Street that should be included in the plan.

Planner Peterson stated that there are many auto related businesses that could be included in the amendment.

Article 9. Adjournment

Member Hammond made motion to adjourn. Member Mead supported. Motion carried unanimously 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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