

**Minutes**

Cascade Charter Township  
Planning Commission  
Monday, August 7, 2023  
7:00 pm  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

**ARTICLE 1.** Chair Nooryke called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.  
Members Present: Noordhoek, Richardson, Moxley, Noordyke, Engel, Rissi, Bruneau, Rowland  
Members Absent: None  
Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Leslie Abdoos with Foster Swift, and others listed on the sign-in sheet

**ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda**

**Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Moxley. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Disclose any conflict of interest**

There were no conflicts of interest disclosed.

**ARTICLE 5. Approve the Minutes of the July 10, 2023 Meeting**

Member Engel proposed an edit in Article 10 to change the word “me” to “be”.

**Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the July 10 meeting minutes with the proposed change. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 6. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak**

There was no one that wished to speak.

**ARTICLE 7. Case #23-3781/Cascade Charter Township**

**Requested Action:** Planning Commission recommendation to amend the Centennial Park Overlay District pertaining to permitted density for residential uses.

Planning Director Hilbrands presented the case and explained the current Overlay District allows for High-Density Residential Uses exceeding 12 units per acre as a Special Use, whereas the proposed amendment would not allow for more than 12 units per acre as a permitted Special Use.

The Centennial Park Overlay District was created in 2010 as a recommended implementation strategy of the Centennial Park land use and design plan created in 2008. Planning Director Hilbrands explained the park had minimal regulations on uses or appearance and suffered from high vacancy rates. This resulted in the township and the Centennial Park Business Association partnering to create a design plan and split the

costs of plan development. The plan was created to establish consistencies with site improvements and regulate permitted uses, design standards, architectural controls, and site requirements.

Density and land use throughout Cascade has been a concern of Township leadership, and the proposed amendment limiting residential density to 12 units per acre would bring it in line with recommendations made in the 2019 Master Plan. A review of the 2019 Master Plan has been initiated to bring further alignment to the 2022 Strategic Plan, as well as further investigation of appropriate densities and land uses for various areas.

Planning Director Hilbrands stated he believed Centennial Park could be a good candidate to allow for higher residential density, given the location. He explained there would need to be additional research completed to reach any firm conclusions, and that this can be looked into further as part of the review of the Master Plan.

Member Bruneau questioned what would make this area acceptable to add more than 12 units per acre, given that comparable sites have 10 or fewer units per acre. Planning Director Hilbrands said the public roads, the buffer between lower and higher density, and the mix between residential and office buildings are factors that would make it an appropriate area for higher density.

**Motion was made by Member Engel to open public hearing. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

Glenn Turek (7199 Mooring Heights) purchased land 28 years ago with the hope to build a luxury multi-family development. He explained that the current overlay was created in 2010 by the township and business owners who each shared the cost. He said adding high-density residential as a permitted use has been essential for encouraging a growing economy and to support local businesses. Turek further stated the capping at 12 units per acre will not support the luxury apartments.

Drew Nelson (386 Pebble Beach) attended the meeting to represent developers that will be impacted by this decision. He explained there is a need for renters and limiting the complex to 12 units per acre will not fulfill the need for housing.

Kevin Lipke (4900 Streamside Pointe) has family members that own land in Centennial Park. He was very impressed with the luxury apartment plans and other business owners in the area share the same opinion. Lipke stated that the practicing doctor at the Cancer and Hematology Center of West Michigan expressed a need for high-end apartments for employees. He proposed creating a subcommittee to discuss this further, as this will impact developers greatly.

Mark Davis is the president of Redhawk Multi-Family and he explained the Master Plan and overlay was designed to provide a housing density of over 12 units per acre. There is limited space in Grand Rapids to provide Luxury dwellings. He said this complex will add life and new businesses to the area. He suggested rather than capping the density, the township should work with developers to make alternative restrictions.

Kevin VanHaitsma (7625 Aspenwood Dr) works for Bradly Company Commercial Real Estate and is representing the property owner and Redhawk Multi-Family. He stated there have been thousands of hours put into this project already and it is a very needed development. He proposed creating an alternative solution since capping the density is extremely limiting. VanHaitsma added that the Grand Cascade apartment complex will be exceptional and sophisticated.

TJ Vansluton is a software engineer looking to move into the area but has limited housing options. He presented the commission with pictures of the proposed high-end apartment complex.

Kenvin Einfeld, the property owner of 5010 Cascade Road and founder of BDR, expressed support for this project. His company is currently building 348 apartments in Gaines Township and he reiterated the need for additional housing. Einfeld said there is not much sense in capping the density.

Dave Mills (7425 Kenrob Drive) has lived in Cascade for 34 years and supports the project. Mills may even consider moving to the project in the future since he desires a high-end home in the Forest Hills district.

Kirk Driesenga (2851 Charlevoix) works for the Hinman Company which owns four parcels within Centennial Park. He explained the need for apartments for high-income earners and retirees.

Mike Kasmauskis (1769 Laraway Lake) is president of the Centennial Park Business Association. He said the overlay was created for guidance purposes and was made in the interest of all parties involved in the future. Kasmauskis stated that this simple amendment will be detrimental to the development of this community.

Karen Kilner (2253 Palmdale Dr) explained the hardship she has endured locating a high-end 1–2-bedroom apartment for her daughter in the area. She wants the growing population of young adults to benefit from modern, new luxury options. These apartments will contribute to economic growth.

Callaway Greener, who lives in the Grand Rapids area, recently graduated with a degree in supply chain management. He believes that in order for this area to develop, there needs to be more housing.

Sarah Diamond, an employee of a Centennial Park business, has been looking for a luxury one-bedroom apartment for her and her husband. The area proposed for this apartment is in an extremely convenient location and will help the economic growth of Cascade.

Sherry Hooper, resident of the Forest Hills Northern District, said she loves the residential feel of Centennial Park. She said these apartments would only add to the value of the park.

Brian Lake (3422 Aspenwood Ct) expressed how much he cares about Cascade and has loved watching the development of the township. He recruits executives and has seen firsthand the difficulty people have in finding one-bedroom luxury apartments.

**Motion was made by Member Rissi to close public hearing. Supported by Member Moxley. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

Member Rowland expressed concern about setting a precedent and mentioned he is not in favor of 3 story developments.

Member Bruneau found it difficult to support almost triple the number of units per acre. He questioned what the residents of Cascade would truly want, and he was unsure if they would want high density.

Member Rissi asked if there are any designations in the future land use map or Master Plan for a high-density residential and Planning Director Hilbrands indicated 12 units per acre is the highest.

Member Engel commented that offering forward-thinking housing options could not only draw in potential residents, but also attract desirable businesses to the area. He saw this as a potential opportunity given that the infrastructure, roads, and utilities are already in place.

Member Moxley expressed his fondness for visiting relatives who lived in a similar dwelling, featuring up to 4 stories and a higher density. He had no issues with higher-density developments in this area.

Member Richardson empathized with the need for luxury apartments, especially for young professionals, but felt there are other places with more space for this development. He did not want to set a precedent.

Member Noordhoek said there is a responsibility for current residents, as opposed to potential residents. The current traffic levels worried him, and he felt that there are more suitable locations with greater land area for this development.

Chair Noordyke stated when his company looks to develop new offices, they gravitate towards higher-density areas. Cascade residents highly appreciate and prioritize green space and they are opposed to plans that may lead to increased density. He also expressed concern about the deviations between the overlay and the Master Plan.

Member Rissi found there are a few ways to go through this, the first being to follow the proposed amendment to cap the density at 12 units per acre until the Master Plan process has been worked through. The other option is to table this decision.

**Motion was made by Member Bruneau to recommend approval of amending the Centennial Park Overlay District to limit residential density to 12 units per acre. Supported by Member Rowland. Motion carried 7 to 1.**

**ARTICLE 8. Case #23-3780/Cascade Charter Township**

**Requested Action:** Planning Commission recommendation to amend the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the Airport Commerce (AC) Zoning District, revisions to the mapped AC zoning district, and the creation of three overlay districts.

Planning Director Hilbrands presented the case and explained that Chapter 14 of the Zoning Ordinance currently includes two subzones around the airport. Subzone 1 includes a majority of the airport area extending out from the runways, and allows for a variety of uses by right with no site plan review. Subzone 2 includes the outlying areas adjacent to public streets and requires a site plan review for nonaeronautical uses.

The amendments consist primarily of items within Chapter 14 of the Zoning Ordinance and will replace subzones with new overlay districts, which will help to regulate permitted uses in the area around the airport. Overlay A restricts uses permitted on the east side of the airport and Overlay B allows for aeronautical uses to be located within a larger area on the southwest side of the airport. There will be a site plan review required for all non-aeronautical uses, except those located in Overlay C. The Township Stormwater Ordinance requirements must continue to be met for non-aeronautical uses in all areas.

Legal Counsel Abdoo stated a letter was received from the airport with comments regarding Act 95 which deals with the creation of the GRR Authority. She stated airport officials believe that the township lacks the authority to regulate any activities on airport premises, irrespective of whether they are related to aeronautical use or not. Abdoo explained her opinion that the township has the ability to regulate and require a site plan review for non-aeronautical uses. She also noted that the proposed changes are more consistent with the Airport Approach Plan and the Airport Layout Plan and create a safer environment.

**Motion was made by Member Engel to open public hearing. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

Casey Ries with the Airport Authority claimed that significant changes in state law have occurred since the implementation of the current airport zoning. The first change requires community Master Plans that house an airport to consider the airport's Master Plan and Airport Approach Plan. He explained that, upon amending the Township's Master Plan, it would be an excellent time to align both airport and township plans to be more cohesive. Ries also reiterated the need for improved communication between township and airport officials, as he did not believe the airport had received responses to the letters that they provided.

Legal counsel Abdoo clarified there was a letter sent discussing Act 95. The letter was the township's interpretation of Act 95 in response to the airport's interpretation. This was specific to the Conrac facility as a potential land use and further explained that the reason behind Overlay C was to give the airport more flexibility in that area. She stated there were two letters that had been sent from the Township. One letter was related to Conrac and the other was referencing distinctions between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance and was sent to MDOT.

Member Bruneau sought more precise documentation regarding communication exchanges with legal counsel, specifically letters that are sent.

Member Rissi asked for feedback regarding Overlay C. Ries appreciated the implied intent of the overlay, but believed this made a complicated zoning approach even more complicated. There were a few fundamentals that he addressed. The first was the township's and airport's need to define aeronautical and nonaeronautical facilities. Understanding how the State, Drain Commission, and Township's review of site plans for stormwater purposes apply to this situation was another point. Lastly, he wanted to help the Township's Master Plan consider those safety zones and protections put in as part of the airport's Master Plan.

Some other areas of misalignment include the zoning overlay suggesting residential or recreational gathering, and the Airport Approach Plan's appropriate use of the land in terms of noise.

Dave Caldon, legal counsel representing the airport, clarified they had received one letter in regard to the Conrac facility, only referencing the Dewitt case, which did not appear relevant. He also wanted to ensure the Planning Commission has thoughtfully read through the comments provided in a letter received on August 4.

Chair Noordyke suggested that Ries put together a list of items to discuss with either Staff or the Planning Commission.

**Motion was made by Member Rissi to close public hearing. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

Abdoo stated that, from the proposed revisions and letters received from the airport, it is their position that the Township has no regulatory authority over any use of airport property which she strongly disagrees with. There does need to be a more defined definition of aeronautical use. She believed it could be appropriate for the Township to consider amendments to the Master Plan that would incorporate the Airport Layout Plan and the Airport Approach Plan.

Member Rowland expressed concern with the proposed amendment that may allow for a shopping mall or various businesses around the airport.

Member Rissi said the subcommittee aimed to provide the airport with a reasonable level of flexibility for development while taking into account the existing zoning regulations.

**Motion was made by Member Rissi to recommend approval of the proposed zoning amendments as presented. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 7 to 1.**

#### **ARTICLE 9. Old Business**

Chair Noordyke said the Wormies case will be brought back to the Planning Commission in September.

Member Moxley will be putting together notebooks with information, notes, and letters for the Township Board regarding the airport rezoning.

**ARTICLE 10. Any Other Business**

Member Bruneau stated he had two of his cars broken into and advised to keep car doors locked. He also asked about the PFAS issue and mentioned a household close to his had received water testing due to a potential new plume. He wondered what could be done to spread awareness.

Chair Noordyke said that there is some information available on the Township website.

Member Rissi supported looking into restricting compression breaking on certain roads.

Member Moxley said he had water testing completed by EGLE and they offered a free filtration system.

Member Engel commented about wake boats playing extremely loud music and wondered what the enforcement of the noise ordinance is. He also thanked Member Rissi for being the chair of the AC Zoning District Subcommittee.

Member Richardson is concerned with the changes made to the Cascade Road and Whitneyville intersection and believes it is dangerous. He also had reservations about the public comment in Article 7 because a team of coordinated individuals spoke for 30 minutes.

Member Rissi will be Chair of the Farmland Preservation Subcommittee. The other subcommittee members will be Member Bruneau, Member Engel, and Member Moxley.

Member Moxley said the junk yard property off of Grand River has been cleaned up.

**ARTICLE 11. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.**

Mike Kasmauskis (1769 Laraway Lake) said EGLE had completed water testing and concluded he did have PFAS in his water. He wondered what additional information he could have. Chair Noordyke said there are resources that will be discussed with him.

Supervisor Lesperance thanked the Commission for their hard work and appreciated their diligence. She said there were letters sent out to residents regarding the new PFAS issues and that EGLE is handling a lot of the new cases.

**ARTICLE 12. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Noordhoek to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 P.M.  
Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 8 to 0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary