

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission  
Monday, October 07, 2013  
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, Williams.  
Members Absent: Waalkes  
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 Mead to approve the Agenda. Support by Member Hammond. Motion carried 8-0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the September 16, 2013 meeting.**

**Motion was made by Member Lewis to approve the Minutes. Support by Member Mead. Motion carried by vote 8-0.**

**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**

**Public Hearing**

**Property Address:** 5901 28<sup>th</sup> Street

**Requested Action:** Rezone approximately 15 acres to PUD to allow for 89 unit Apartment complex.

Planner Peterson described the location of the project. Wal-Mart and Betten Imports are to the South along 28<sup>th</sup> Street. To the north, are the homes off of Burton, Linda, Irene, Tall Grass and Candlestick. To the west are the Chatham Woods and Chadwick Hills Neighborhoods.

This is to rezone 15 acres for an 89 unit apartment complex. The property is currently zoned office. This is a Transition area from the commercial area off 28<sup>th</sup> Street to the residential off Burton Street. The whole area from Kraft, East towards the Village of Cascade, has the transition area. Over the years some of this has been re-zoned to residential. Examples are: the Cascade town homes, Caravelle Village- Phase 7 and immediately east of this site is Emerald Meadow. As a result, when we look at the Master Plan this area is under the designation of

Community Residential. This is the district that would allow for multi-family residential. Our Master Plan allows for 4-6 units per acre for Community Residential. The 15 acre site will support the 89 unit complex that they are proposing.

The project will be served by Public Sewer and Water which was accounted for when the Wal-Mart project went in. The Wal-Mart addition accommodated extensions to the sewer/water system that will support the redevelopment of the area. The storm water retention pond was planned for this property to be developed. The retention pond will accommodate this project.

Charlevoix Woods Court, as well as the service road that connects you out to Kraft Drive, will accommodate the additional traffic.

In July, the Applicant introduced the project to the Planning Commission and we asked them to provide information for some issues and they have done so. The Fire Chief requested the roads be looped rather than T intersections. The Applicant has provided two looped roads for the 89 units. The Fire Chief noted that the loops and a sidewalk are along the north and south side, and there is a large retaining wall, so he would like to see design specifics.

The Township Engineer has stated that the infrastructure is in place but wants approval from the City of Grand Rapids for Water and Sewer. The applicant has already started this process with the City.

Planner Peterson further explained these are one story apartments. The units are approximately 1300 sq. ft. Price points are \$1,200-\$1,300 per month. Lighting is in line with normal residential expectations. Two large light poles are on the south side of the project and the intersection with Charlevoix Woods Court.

The sidewalk on the north side of the property and the south has been included. A connection to the Wal-Mart property will be provided.

This development will have access to 28<sup>th</sup> and Kraft Avenue. According to the ITE manual a development like this will project somewhere between 5.5 and 6.5 trips per day per unit. At 6 trips per day that would total an additional 534 trips per day as a result of this project. KCRC has indicated that a typical three lane road has a capacity of 22-25,000 trips per day and a 5 lane road about 35,000. The most recent traffic counts have Kraft at almost 11,000 and 28<sup>th</sup> at 18,000 trips per day, well under their capacity. The current road system has plenty of capacity to handle the traffic from this development.

One of the reasons for the rezoning to PUD is because we do not have a designation for multi-family residences.

This project does fit in with the Master Plan and it is similar to the existing residential uses in the neighborhood for site/zoning use in the area. There is more green space than what could be developed in the area.

My recommendation is to approve the plan with conditions. A pedestrian connection to the Wal-Mart is needed. The landscape plan needs to be updated to reflect the changes of the looped roads. Lastly, compliance with the Township Engineer and Fire Department needs to be met. The Fire department is looking for a few more hydrants and the Engineer is looking for follow- thru with utilities and more detailed information on the retaining wall.

Chairman Sperla requested the height of the lighting and the lumens. Planner Peterson stated that all of that information has been provided by the Applicant.

Chairman Sperla requested the Applicant come forward with comments.

John Lateulere, Development Director for Redwood Acquisition, stated that the units will be 1,300 sq. ft ranch style units.

Redwood Acquisitions has been developing apartment projects for over 20 years. We currently have 3,800 units and are at 99% leased within our portfolio. We are currently building units that are pre-leased.

Our standard building is a mix of stone, shingle and lap siding. Our units have two bedrooms and two baths. We typically rent to the 55 plus age group. The unit looks and feels like a single family home. The floor plan is designed as an open floor plan. We provide washer/dryer hookups. Our units are energy efficient and fair housing accessibility compliant. We provide a maintenance free living environment. We have an on-site maintenance superintendant as well as on site resident manager.

Units will rent at around \$1,400/month. We typically have long term renters. We sign one year leases and the typical renter stays 4-6 years. The affordability of a house that the leaser is leaving is around \$230,000-\$250,000.

This is good for Cascade as there is an increase in tax revenue as the renters our units attract, have a very small impact on municipal services. The land use plan shows that senior living is at a deficient level in Cascade Township. This style of housing allows people who are currently in Cascade and looking for an alternate living arrangement, who don't want to own a property for one reason or another, to stay in Cascade.

The properties in purple are currently zoned office, the B2 to the south is Wal-Mart, and to the north is single family residential. There's a small parcel between us and Chatham Woods that will remain office. That parcel is not part of this request.

The land use plan for this area is a step down in intensity. You have the single family use to the north, the Wal-Mart land use to the south. This is a transition between the two. To the east is assisted living which is more of a commercial use in terms of traffic. Mr. Lateulere views this as largely a step down to that commercial use and a bit of a buffer. But then if you look at what's to the west of our development you have attached single family home use which he believes are compatible home uses. The rear setback is required 50 feet and the closest building we have is 83 feet to the property line. This is a result of conversations they have had with surrounding property owners. The closest pavement is 62 feet which would otherwise be 35 feet if it were office. What you will see in the landscaping plan is that we're proposing 122 new trees along the north property boundary as well as preserving the trees that are already there. That number is up because of conversations with some of the residents and considering topographic reveal we've added some trees in other areas.

Mr. Lateulere highlighted where the development has added trees. There's an area that is solid flat land and the development has added a triple row of staggered pine trees. We also moved a unit from 50 feet to his property line to the north down to the very south of the most west building. That allowed for the 85 foot setback and the 62 foot pavement setback.

Mr. Lateulere stated the development hoped to use T type turnarounds but the Fire Department preferred the roads looped, which is different than the turnarounds they had discussed with the neighbors previously.

Chairman Sperla wanted to see a plan for lighting.

Mr. Lateulere stated he was unable to get a plan for pedestrian connection to Wal-Mart. He'll work with Planner Peterson to get that ironed out.

Mr. Lateulere will provide an updated landscaping plan as he was unable to get it ready in time for this meeting.

Mr. Lateulere stated the development was good with the requirements of the Township Engineer and the Township Fire Department.

Mr. Lateulere stated that the light poles they typically use are 16 feet tall. The reason why they did not provide more lighting than they did was to allow more

lighting at the intersections where there would be more traffic. They try not to light up the entire community because they use coach lamps on the front of the garages and those provide adequate lighting on the street to keep the community safe and it doesn't shed light onto the neighbors. The lights are on a breaker and if someone did turn them off at the breaker the development would know immediately.

Chairman Sperla wanted to know where visitor parking was located and if street parking was allowed.

Mr. Lateulere stated that the development wanted to provide parking throughout the development rather than in just one area. In providing a two car garage with a full two car driveway there is available parking in the driveway of each unit to enable four cars to park for each unit. Parking in the roadways is prohibited by the lease. There are a substantial amount of parking stalls by the Leasing Office and more visitor stalls mid-block in two areas to provide intermediate parking access. Any overflow parking would be by the Mailbox kiosk and the Manager's office. On-site parking is policed by the on-site manager and the Police Department as part of the lease.

Chairman Sperla verified with Planner Peterson that the service drive is privately owned not publicly. Will we have any guarantee that this drive will remain open in the future?

Planner Peterson stated that the rest of the service drive has to remain open as mandated and that someone else down the line could not block it off. The drive connects to Charlevoix Woods Court and the service drive is not part of this development.

Mr. Lateulere stated that the development has easement rights to get to Wal-Mart to that signal.

Mr. Lateulere stated that all garbage pickup would be curbside and the arrangements would be made by the development.

**Member Lewis made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Support by Member Hammond. Motion carried 8-0**

Chairman Sperla requested anyone wishing to speak on the Public Hearing to come forward and state their name and address before speaking. He stated they could speak for three minutes and should not repeat anything that has been stated by anyone before them.

Cindy Laird, 2581 Chatham Woods of Chatham Woods Condominiums, stated that there have been eight new businesses built on Kraft between 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Burton. This summer 28<sup>th</sup> Street was closed. They cannot get out of their driveway during rush hour and now the Township wants to add 400+ cars exiting onto Kraft because no one will want to turn left onto 28<sup>th</sup> Street. What plans does the Township have for traffic flow in front of Chatham Woods Condominiums? The Lairds experience is that they cannot turn right or left out of Chatham Woods Condominiums due to traffic. It's not all day and it's not every day. It's during the peak times when people come and go to work. MVP Sports gets out on Saturday morning and they can sit there 5-10 minutes before being able to get out on the street because everyone's getting out on that exit. These look like nice apartments but if you allow these apartments to go in what is going to be done about the traffic increase they will create?

Another concern of the Lairds and other condominium owners (for which she has a petition of 50 signatures) is that there never used to be children in the two bedroom condos and now there are a lot of them. The condo owners are concerned because the plan does not designate a place for them to play. The only place for play seems to be in the streets.

Beverly Earls, 2687 Chatham Woods, Chatham Woods Condominiums, stated that she agreed with Cindy Laird's statements 100 percent. She, too, is quite concerned with how condo owners will be able to get in and out of their entrance.

Kathleen Stahl, 2642 Knightsbridge, stated that there have been several high-density developments considered by the Planning Commission. None of them exist except Cascade Place. Several years ago there was a 100 unit condo development approved for the corner of Burton and Kraft which took down all kinds of trees and tore up Burton putting in the sewers. Nothing has happened there since. This corner used to be fairly attractive and natural but now has turned into dumping grounds. There is also a high density development going on by the golf course. Her concern is how many other high density projects are going to be approved and does Cascade really need them all in Cascade Township. There is still a fair amount of housing available on that side of town with homes for sale which would not take \$1,200 a month to own. Is there a level of need for this kind of high density housing in Cascade Township?

Her other concern, which was addressed by a letter from Cindy Laird in the packet the Commission has, if there is a high vacancy rate in this housing development would this turn into a Section 8 or subsidized housing which would drastically change the demographic of this area.

Planner Peterson talked a lot about green space with this project. Mrs. Earl feels that green space used for an office project is a lot different than green space used for a housing project. Our development already has a lot of foot traffic crossing from Wal-Mart to Meijer's and we do not welcome additional foot traffic in our association.

**Member Hammond made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Support by Member Lewis. Motion carried 8-0.**

Member Lewis stated that there are lights on 28<sup>th</sup> and Kraft. Is there any way to synchronize the lights to allow them entrance and exits in a timely fashion?

Planner Peterson stated that the Road Commission routinely monitors these things but will request them to look at these. Peterson also stated that you need to remember that they have to account for much more than just one or two signals.

Chairman Sperla stated that a lot of the fears that he anticipated on previous projects did not materialize and he believes there is more capacity than people realize and that this is not a high density development. It is about as good a buffer as you can expect. The developer has been very sensitive to what the current residents concerns are and they have addressed them. It follows the use of the Master Plan and it is better than it being used as commercial which would add traffic during the peak times. I am very pleased that the developer has been so sensitive to the neighbors and I am in support of the plan.

Member McCarthy stated that she agrees with Chairman Sperla. She is also aware that this company has used this development type in the past and we have the advantage of them being very successful in their developments.

Member Mead asked Planner Peterson what the odds would be that the small parcel described, between Chatwick Hills and Redwood, would be usable. Planner Peterson stated that it will be a tough piece to develop given its shape and size but it is useable.

Member Lewis stated that the Planning Commission has been asked to approve gas stations and banks. They meet the ordinance rules so they are approved. Member Lewis agreed that he is concerned at the developments that were approved and never built. We have to base this decision individually and not on the other developments. This fits the use and the intent of the Planning Ordinance and this has a lot of positive things going for it. I am impressed that the developer has talked to the neighbors and has fulfilled all of our requests immediately. I feel very comfortable in supporting this project.

**Member Mead made a motion to approve the rezoning of approximately 15 acres to PUD to allow for 89 unit Apartment complex with Planner Peterson's conditions. Support by Member Hammond. Motion passed 8-0.**

Chairman Sperla stated that recommendation to the Township Board goes forward with the four conditions Planner Peterson had plus subject to any commentary regarding commitments made by the developer.

**ARTICLE 7. Any other business**

Planner Peterson reminded the Board of the Complete Streets Meeting taking place on Wednesday, October 6 from 4-6 PM at the Wisner Center.

**Article 8. Adjournment**

**Member Lewis made motion to adjourn. Member Hammond supported. Motion carried unanimously 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

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