

MINUTES
Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission
Monday, August 8, 2011
7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Waalkes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Members Present: Hammond, Lewis, Logue, McCarthy, Pennington, Robinson, Sperla, Waalkes, Williams
Members Absent: none
Others Present: Planning Director Steve Peterson

ARTICLE 2. Chairman Waalkes led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Agenda.

Motion was made by Member Lewis. Support by Member Sperla to approve the Agenda. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the July 18, 2011 Meeting.

Motion was made by Member Lewis supported by Member Robinson to approve the Minutes as corrected. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 5. Case #11-3043 The Villas of Laraway Lake

Property address: 1910 & 1960 Laraway Lake Drive

Requested Action: Rezone approximately 11 acres to PUD to allow for site condominium development.

Planning Director Peterson reviewed the applicants' request. The applicant is requesting Basic Plan Review in order to rezone approximately 11 acres for a Site Condominium Planned Unit Development called Villas of Laraway Lake. The plans show 28 units made up of 21 buildings.

The property is zoned R1, single-family, and is Master Planned Suburban Residential.

The applicant will need to provide a "test plan" to measure the allowed density with what is being proposed.

The open space that is being provided is mainly located in the southern portion of the property with some no disturb zones around the perimeter of the site. The open space also includes the storm water system.

The development will be utilizing a private street. The developer will need to comply with our Private Street Ordinance. The KCRC has reviewed the project

and will not permit a second access to the property. With only one access the private street is limited to 19 units. The access points will need to be approved by the KCRC.

Planning Director Peterson pointed out three major issues with the plan.

1. The number of units on a dead end private street is limited to no more than 19; they are asking for 27.
2. The applicant references the Master Plan when indicating that they are permitted up to 3 units per acre. This is not the standard in the subdivision ordinance for properties zoned R1. R1 zoning does allow for lots of 14,500 sq ft provided they have at least 50% open space and public utilities. It appears from my calculations that this would limit the site to 13 units.
3. This area is not planned for attached units.

The Township Engineer will need to approve the storm water plan prior to the Public Hearing. As we have done with our other most recent subdivisions, the developer will have to enter into an agreement for maintenance of the storm water system.

The development plan indicates a desire to reconstruct the path along Laraway Lake to make it a separated path. The plans also show a sidewalk within the development.

Member Logue asked Planning Director Peterson to clarify how density is calculated. Peterson explained that it is based on the zoning of the property and the type of project being proposed. The more open space you provide the smaller the lots can be. It was the intent when the subdivision ordinance was written that we would not necessarily increase density but allow for smaller lots within clusters. In this area the smallest lot size allowed would be 14,500 sq ft but that is only if public sewer and water are provided and at least 50% of the developable area is left as open space.

Member Lewis asked if we count buildings or living units when we calculate the allowed density. Peterson indicated that it is living units.

Chairman Waalkes asked if we have any other projects in the R1 zone with attached units. Peterson indicated that we did allow Watermark to have some attached units but they had to reduce the overall number of buildings so they did not increase the density allowed.

Member Sperla asked if we had any traffic count information in this area. Peterson indicated that the traffic counts on Laraway Lake are low with about 2,000 trips at Laraway and Thornapple River Dr and 4,000 trips at Laraway Lake and Cascade Rd. A typical two lane road can handle about 8,000 trips so this project would not cause any traffic issues as far as we can see.

Chairman Waalkes invited the applicant to share his comments regarding the project. The applicant is Peter Engles. Peter and his wife are residents of Cascade Township. They formed Covenant Developments, LLC, headquartered in Cascade, specifically to bring zero-step senior communities to the Greater Grand Rapids area. In addition to their two zero-step communities, The Villas of Ada on Ada Drive and The Villas of Rivertown on 52nd Street, they have been looking to bring one of these communities to Cascade for quite some time.

The average homeowner in their communities is what they term as "active adults" and defined as: 50+ years old, pre- and post-retirees, and single again (meaning widowed or divorced), with predominantly no school age children at home. The typical buyer is looking to "down size" from a larger family home but prefer to stay in the community.

Rick Pulaski and Greg Raad were present, representing Nederveld. Rick explained how they plan to meet the township PUD Ordinance and the Master Plan. Each Covenant community is purposefully designed to preserve and even enhance the natural environment. There will be 7.42 acres of Open Space, or 65.5% of the entire site. There are steep wooded slopes on the property as well as existing wetland and pond. Natural resources will be preserved or replaced.

Outside building materials to be used are natural, such as cement board siding and stone. There has been extensive attention to detail. Buffering provided will be more than the average development. The buildings will be high end condos made with high end materials.

Mr. Engles concluded the presentation by assuring that there would be preservation or transplanting of trees, protection of the steep slopes, relocating the bike path, and buffering of the existing neighbors.

Member Lewis thanked the applicant for a great presentation.

Chairman Waalkes said this was the time for discussion or questions of the applicant.

Member Sperla asked about foundations/basements; or are they built on concrete slabs. Mr. Engles replied that they are built on green belt foundations

which are footers that go 42" deep into the ground and it is a concrete flooring system. All the mechanicals are on the main floor.

Member Lewis asked that more consideration be put into the plans as an R1 district as well as following the PUD and the Master Plan. Planner Peterson said he was requiring a "test plan" which would address the R1 density issue.

Chairman Waalkes pointed out that there are three main concerns. Density is one of them, as the applicant shows 28 units. It appears that the density in this area would only allow about 13 to 16 units. The second thing is, on a dead end road our Private Road Ordinance says that you can only have 19 units. You have 27 on one of the dead end roads. Thirdly, R1 underlying zoning does not allow attached units. These all need to be addressed.

Member Sperla likes the plan and feels there is a need for it but is concerned with the density issue.

Member Logue asked if there is an occupancy restriction on the units. Mr. Engles replied that there was not, but they have never had more than two people per unit.

Member Williams asked if the applicant needed to have the full 28 units to make this project financially feasible. The reply was yes, adding that it is very expensive to do all the beneficial things that are planned, such as transplanting many trees, buffering, and preservation.

Chairman Waalkes announced that there is no action to be taken at this time as this was just the presentation of the project.

ARTICLE 6: Any other business:

ARTICLE 7: Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Sperla and supported by Member Pennington to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Al Pennington, Secretary

Carol M. Meyer, Planning Administrative Assistant