

Meeting Minutes

Cascade Charter Township Planning Committee

Airport Commerce AC District Zoning Review Sub-Committee

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

Cascade Charter Township Offices

ARTICLE 1: Call the meeting to order

Meeting called to order by Chairman Rissi at 7:35 am. Sub-committee members present include Joe Engel, Ralph Moxley and Scott Rissi. Also present was Planning Director Brian Hilbrands. Also present was Windy Korstange.

ARTICLE 2: Approve the Agenda

Member Engel moved to approve the meeting Agenda. Member Moxley seconded the motion. Motion approved.

ARTICLE 3: Approve minutes of the March 28 meeting

Member Rissi requested a change on page 2, paragraph 4, last sentence to say “and depends on the Planning Commission to give them a well thought out and clear recommendation regarding zoning Overlays around the airport.”

Member Engel moved to approve with this revision included. Member Moxley seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Member Moxley noted that he had revised the March 14 Meeting Minutes to take out the one paragraph requested by member Korstange. Revised meeting minutes were then sent on to Planning Director Hilbrands.

ARTICLE 4: Disclose any conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were noted.

ARTICLE 5: Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak

Casey Ries, Engineering and Planning Director for Gerald R. Ford Airport, and David Caldon, attorney with Varnum Attorneys, also representing the G.R. Ford Airport.

ARTICLE 6: Review of Overlay areas and AC Zoning Amendments with airport representatives

Planning Director Hilbrands started the conversation by noting that AC Subzone 1 has no zoning review by the Planning Commission. AC subzone 2 has zoning review by the Planning Commission for non-aeronautical projects. Sub-committee primary focus is on Chapter 14 of the Zoning Ordinance. Proposed changes to Chapter 14 were sent over to Casey Ries for review in advance of the meeting. Also sent was the Zoning Map showing Overlays A and B. It was proposed that AC-1 and AC-2 be changed to AC, and all non-aeronautical proposed uses would come before the Planning Commission for review and approval. Overlay A (section 14.06 of Chapter 14) is restricted at east side of the airport and does not extend into the ARC zoned areas east of the Airport. Overlay B (southwest side of airport) allows for Industrial uses and also aeronautical uses.

Overlay A was originally extended into the ARC area east of the airport. Section 14.07 of Chapter 14 lists nine uses that would be allowed in Overlay A area and is more restrictive than AC-1. The Planning Commission considered three options for zoning restrictions and ended by selecting Option 2.

Casey Ries appreciated being invited to attend the sub-committee meeting and the chance to review the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments and map. David Caldon is an attorney representing the airport and was invited by Casey to join him for this meeting. Casey reviewed the records of meetings with the previous Cascade Charter Township Planning Director from 2001 and 2002. Casey requested that Chair Rissi provide context for the meeting and some history of the proposed changes to zoning for this area.

Review of this area east of the airport started about two years ago with review of a temporary structure by the Planning Commission. We looked at the long-term zoning of the ARC areas and the AC-2 areas of the airport property. Original thoughts were to allow a hybrid of uses in this area (including Light Industrial and Warehouse uses). Planning Commission did not want to see hotels and gas stations in the area east of the airport (along Thornapple River Drive).

Casey showed the sub-committee a land use plan developed by the Airport. It reflects about 3200 acres owned by GR Ford Airport. This plan was included in a thumb-drive given by Casey to Brian Hilbrands. Every 10 years the airport Master Plan is updated (last done in 2019).

There are areas that were acquired to make the airport land development functional, such as the golf course and the farm land SE of the north-south runway. Casey agreed, residential uses are not compatible with airport uses. The FAA has input on what is allowed in terms of structure heights. Land parcels in Kentwood (west of Patterson) are more compatible with Industrial and Warehouse uses, and do not conflict with airport operations.

Examples of use designations on Airport Master Plan:

O: Open space (no intent to develop due to grade changes)

S: Support

CO: Corporate GA

NAE: non-aeronautical development

CA: Cargo

Airport access from 36th street is a priority. Airport access from M-6 and 48th street is not a priority. A second road access into the airport off of Patterson just north of the existing parking lot is being planned. They are planning to remove the two merge lanes at the current airport entrance at 44th street.

Any development of airport land will be a long-term lease of that land. The airport will not sell any parcels.

Concerns were voiced by residents along the east side of airport that Industrial uses would generate truck traffic in the area. CCT Board members also preferred that we keep the ARC zoning east of the airport. Mixed use in that area would have been an uphill battle.

Chair Rissi asked for input from Planner Ries on Section 14.09 Overlay Standards that call out minimum lot size of 3 acres. Is that a problem for the airport when you may not have clearly defined lot sizes due to leasing arrangements? Setbacks between buildings may be more critical on leased land.

Planner Ries would like some time to review the Overlay A uses that are proposed and get back to us with his comments. He would like three weeks to review this and seek comments from others at the airport management. He wants to overlay the airport protection zones on the Overlay A plan and Overlay B plan to see if there are conflicts. He does not see Churches as a permitted use in Overlay A.

Planner Ries stated that there is no current intent to develop hotels or gas stations in the Overlay A area east side of airport.

Moving forward A-1 and AC-2 will now become AC, which will simplify things along Patterson Ave.

ARTICLE 7: Goals of next meeting

Next meeting will be Tuesday, April 18, at 7:30 am. Goal is to review mark-ups on Chapter 14 document with red-lined Amendments by legal counsel.

ARTICLE 8: Any other business

Member Korstange asked that the airport land use plan somehow be included in the meeting minutes or made available.

ARTICLE 9: Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak

Planner Ries stated that Brian Hilbrands could keep the thumb-drive for future reference.

He also thanked us for the opportunity to meet and discuss zoning changes around the airport.

ARTICLE 10: Adjournment

Move to adjourn by member Engel at 8:37 am. Seconded by member Moxley. Motion approved.

Ralph W. Moxley, AIA, LEED AP

Recording Secretary