

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GRAND RAPIDS
Minutes February 25, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Grand Rapids Charter Township was held at the Township Hall on Tuesday, February 25, 2020.

Present were Chair Wayne Harrall, Vice Chair Scott Connors, Secretary Dave Van Dyke; Commissioners Doug Kochneff, Dan Ophoff and Mark Prein. Also present was Township Attorney Jim Scales and Planning Assistant Lindsey Thiel. Commissioner Bill Culhane was absent.

1. Approve minutes of January 28, 2020 regular meeting.

Scott Connors, seconded by **Mark Prein**, moved to approve the minutes of the January 28 meeting with the following changes:

On the second page, first paragraph, sixth sentence, change “protect” to “save” and add “existing trees and”.

On the second page, in the motion, second bullet point, change “property” to “properties”.

Motion approved, 6-0.

2. Public Hearing – Potential amendments for Additional Permitted Uses for the “C” General Commercial District.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review. He noted that there were changes offered in the proposed ordinance amendments for clarification.

Dan Ophoff, seconded by **Dave Van Dyke**, moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:05 pm.
Motion approved, 6-0.

John Clark, Northtown Shopping Center, said he was available if anyone had any questions or concerns.

Dan Ophoff, seconded by **Scott Connors**, moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:06 pm.
Motion approved, 6-0.

Dan Ophoff, seconded by **Dave Van Dyke**, moved to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendments to allow for additional Special Land Uses in the “C” General Commercial District, with the recommended changes from legal counsel.

Motion approved, 6-0.

3. **Initial Review – Grand Forest Townhomes – Rezoning request, R-PUD, for an 11.41 acre parcel located at approximately 1137 Forest Hill Avenue.**

John Wheeler, Orion Construction, gave an overview of the application. They are proposing a 62 unit community with plans to convert to a condo association in the future. The units on the ends will be zero step. The site is 11.41 acres and currently houses a 61 bed nursing home, which is slated for demolition in April. They have recently completed a traffic study, which will be shared in the next submittal. Kelly Kuiper, Nederveld, also commented on the application. She said they are proposing 7.97 units/acre with 50% open space, with some of the open space on the perimeter. The proposal is 4 and 6 unit buildings with a total of 13 buildings. They believe the proposal brings a variety of housing to the area. They would bring public utilities to the site, with sewer coming from the back of the property. They had Progressive AE complete a preliminary traffic study and the traffic count showed 428 trips/day. The assisted living facility currently on the site had 200 trips/day and a single family neighborhood would generate 348 trips/day.

Wayne Harrall commented that if it were single family homes and had 30 homes on the site, it would generate 300 trips/day. He asked if the applicant had looked at developing the site with the current zoning. Kelly Kuiper responded they laid out an option showing 25-26 would fit houses on the site.

Attorney Jim Scales gave the legal review.

Scott Conners expressed concerns with the density of the proposal. He said the proposal is pushing limits with the open space and the tight driveways. He wanted to hear public comment before he could make a decision.

Wayne Harrall asked about the open house that was held for residents in December. Kelly Kuiper responded that the concerns were traffic and the intersection at Cascade and Forest Hill. She said they also received positive comments on the architecture. Wayne asked what radius they sent the invitation to for the open house. Kelly Kuiper responded they used a 500 foot radius and invited about 100 people.

Wayne Harrall asked if they had received any feedback from the Drain Commissioner on the proposal. Kelly Kuiper responded they had not received any feedback; they had only sent preliminary packets to the Drain Commissioner and the Kent County Road Commission.

Dave Van Dyke commented that the first 30-40 units are so crammed in, that there wouldn't be any available parking on the street. Mark Prein agreed and added that he doesn't think the proposal meets the intent of greenspace and lacks access to the greenspace. He also commented that he is concerned for the units that back up to the secondary street that would have lights out their back doors. Mark Maier, Orion Construction, responded that he would encourage the Commission members to visit The Knoll site in Cascade. He said that project is very similar and they do not have parking problems. Dave Van Dyke responded the density is located on only half of the parcel, so they couldn't add additional parking spots even if the Commission asked.

Dan Ophoff asked if the applicant had considered not having their drive on Forest Hill and instead using the existing Medical Parkway drive. Brett Bolt, owner of Heather Hills, responded they had originally looked at using that drive, but it is used as a shortcut by many to avoid the intersection at Forest Hill and Cascade. Kelly Kuiper added they felt the separate drive kept the neighborhood feel. She also commented on the grid network of streets in the neighborhood across Forest Hill and the ability of their residents to go right and use the grid network as needed.

Wayne Harrall mentioned the other R-PUDs in the Township, noting that they are all on major streets, including the East Beltline, Fulton, and Cascade. He also commented on how everything surrounding is residential, and the Commission will have to look at if the new zoning is appropriate for the area and consistent with the Master Plan.

Dan Ophoff said he travels that road quite frequently and has severe reservations with the layout and the proposed number of units. Mike Maier responded he believes this is a good transition property going from multi-family to single family. He commented that he uses the intersection a lot and it isn't the worst one he uses and he believes the project will have minimum impact. Dave Van Dyke responded that they are asking for the maximum allowed density. He commented that fewer units could solve a lot of the concerns.

Mark Prein stated that he is concerned with the density of the proposal and thinks another outlet is necessary for the flow of the property. Scott Connors agreed and added that connectivity to the open space is also a concern. He said he would also like to see templates of moving and garbage trucks; he is unsure of the ability for larger vehicles to navigate. Mark Maier responded that he would invite the members to tour other properties that are very similar. He thought the scale may be misleading.

Jim Scales remarked that to achieve the density they have proposed they would need 50% open space. He said that the proposal doesn't meet the dimensional requirement on the perimeter open space currently. Dave Van Dyke asked if the Commission felt comfortable sending the proposal forward to Public Hearing or if they would like to see a revised proposal. Mark Prein responded he thought the density and roads should be addressed before it is advanced.

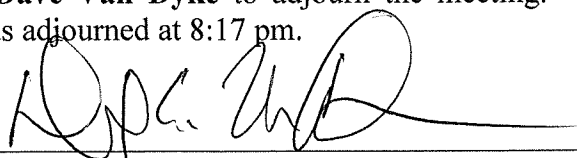
John Wheeler said they don't want to push the proposal uphill, so they would like to go back to the drawing board and resubmit. Wayne Harrall agreed and asked the applicant to come back to the next meeting with changes, focusing on density.

4. General Public Comment.

The Planning Commission Chair invited general public comment on Planning Commission matters.

There were none.

It was moved by **Dan Ophoff**, seconded by **Dave Van Dyke** to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.



David A. Van Dyke, Secretary