

# MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 --- 7:30 p.m.

Big Rapids Township Hall, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

## I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 P.M.

Chairman Philip Keating called the regular meeting of the Big Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission to order at the township hall on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

## II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Gordon Oliver, Carman Bean, Philip Keating, Jim Shane and Mark Sweppenheiser. Michael Hults and David Hamelund are excused. The record shows a quorum is present. Also Present: Zoning Administrator William Stanek and Brent Mason, Recording Secretary.

## III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Mr. Keating asked if any of the Commission members had known conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda for this meeting. No one indicated that there were any conflicts of interest.

## IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the March 8, 2016 regular meeting were reviewed. Mr. Bean suggested one correction. Mr. Bean made the motion to approve the minutes with the listed correction, seconded by Mr. Oliver. The motion carried unanimously with 5 yeas.

## V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

## VI. SITE PLAN REVIEWS:

Mr. Alan Johns appeared before the Commission presenting his plan for the Campus Creek Cottages. This is a new plan, substantially different than the plan presented for the property last year. The new concept is 132 total units built as duplexes, providing housing for 520 students. The Fire Department requested that 3 additional fire hydrants be added to the site in order to provide better water access for the project. Access to the distant apartments is acceptable according to Fire Chief Tubbs. Mr. Stanek commented that they have done an amazing job getting this number of units on this parcel given the constraints of the wetlands present. Mr. Stanek expressed a concern about how close the buildings are together. Mr. Shane asked about why the sidewalks are not continuous on the site. He also asked about walkability from the site to the FSU Campus. Discussion continued around the walkability. Further discussion continued about the condition of Gilbert Road, which is on the list to be repaired in the future (after the apartment construction project). Substantial discussion occurred regarding the sidewalk. Future talks need to include FSU and their future plans for campus walkability. Mr. Shane commented that our engineer has done a great job reviewing this project. Mr. Johns agreed with all the recommendations from the engineer. Mr. Sweppenheiser

commented that he was proud of the commission for sticking with the sidewalk issue. Mr. Keating asked when Mr. Johns wanted to get the project started. Mr. Johns answered that he would like to start excavation this summer and hopes to be able to lease for the 2017-2018 school year. Mr. Johns asked about the material that would be required to pave the sidewalk. There was discussion about asphalt versus concrete. Mr. Shane made a motion that the site plan be approved subject to meeting the engineer's requirements and that a sidewalk be provided from the property to Northland Drive. Mr. Bean supported the motion. Mr. Keating asked for any other discussion. Mr. Keating is concerned about the fact that there is no sidewalk on the west side of Northland Drive, and requiring a sidewalk that doesn't connect to another sidewalk doesn't seem to make sense. More talk occurred about inviting MDOT and FSU into the discussion process. Discussion revolved around the timing of a sidewalk along the west side of Northland Drive and the responsibility for that sidewalk. It was mentioned that the students are going to travel along the shortest route possible and may not utilize a sidewalk along Northland Drive. The commission reviewed the aerial view of the properties to assess possible locations for pedestrian travel and sidewalks. Mr. Keating asked Mr. Johns if they had taken pedestrian travel into consideration during their planning. Mr. Johns stated that they would prefer the students walk to the north directly onto FSU's property and provide a path to Northland Drive. Mr. Keating came back to the original motion, and suggested that the approval of the motion be subject to the developer providing a pedestrian pathway for their residents out to Northland Drive. Mr. Johns expressed concern about who was going to design the sidewalk, because it would not be on his property. Mr. Johns asked what the township was going to do with Gilbert Road, and Mr. Stanek stated that the Township has a Road Committee that review and recommends which roads are considered for repair and what those repairs should be. Mr. Johns suggested that when Gilbert Road is repaired, that would be a good time for a sidewalk to be incorporated into the plan. Mr. Bean redirected the discussion back to the motion. More discussion occurred about the sidewalk. Mr. Shane restated his modified motion to approve the site plan subject to meeting the fire department and the engineer's requirements, and needing a plan to provide a sidewalk to Northland Drive before any Certificates of Occupancy will be issued. The motion carried with 5 yeas. Mr. Johns thanked the Commission for being so easy to work with.

Mr. Keating introduced the Menards Lumberyard Warehouse expansion project. There is not a representative present. Mr. Mason reviewed the engineer's letter and the changes in the storm water handling that have been modified since last year's plan submission. The new changes will provide for adequate storm water retention/detention on the site at the north side of the property along the 15 Mile Road stub. The only item that was still missing from the new site plan is a fire department access driveway from the 15 Mile Road stub to the N.E. corner of the new yard addition. This has been discussed with the previous project manager. Mr. Oezer suggested that the driveway be a condition to the approval of this site plan. Mr. Keating asked if there were requirements that have to be met regarding the construction of that driveway. Mr. Keating suggested that it be built to the requirements of a county gravel road. Concern was voiced that the roadway would need to be maintained in the winter. Mr. Bean moved that the Site Plan for Menards Expansion be approved providing that they comply with engineer's requirements and that they install and maintain the fire safety access road according to county road commission

gravel roads standards. Mr. Oliver supported the motion. The Motion carried unanimously with 5 yeas.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Mason updated the Commission with information about The Brook expansion. The original site plan review included the calculations for the expansion. Mr. Oezer and Ms. Fitzgerald were contacted to verify that no further reviews were required. There is no need for action from the Commission. When all the additions are completed, there will be a total of 42 dwelling units at the facility.

Mr. Keating asked Mr. Stanek for an update on LeeAnn's Flowers, @ 1205 N. State Street. Mr. Stanek stated that he sent a letter to them, and Mr. Engels came into Mr. Stanek's office to negotiate a solution. While Mr. Engels was here, his neighbor happened to be in the Assessor's office and came out to explain how everyone was just trying to help Mr. Engels and Ms. LeGree meet their obligation. Mr. Engels asked Mr. Stanek for more time and Mr. Stanek stated that he wasn't going to negotiate with Mr. Engels anymore. Mr. Stanek said he would be going to the property on Friday afternoon to assess the situation. Mr. Stanek said that if they are working towards complying with the requirements, he will hold off on issuing a ticket at that time. Mr. Keating asked if the Township Board had authorized the expenditure of up to \$3,000.00 for enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance on this property. Mr. Stanek stated that was correct. Mr. Bean updated the Commission on the County's blight ordinance. Apparently when the ordinance was being implemented, Ms. McClelland decided that Big Rapids Township was not interested in buying into the ordinance. Mr. Stanek stated that he is willing to write the ticket. Mr. Stanek advised the Commission about problems regarding blight at two residences on Bridge Street. Mr. Stanek will be writing letters to the property owners. Mr. Keating asked if the Mining renewal procedure is being addressed by the board. More discussion revolved around the ordinance process and the new ordinance book. Mr. Keating wondered if the Planning Commission should review the Mining Design Standards and the requirements for relicensure to determine if they are too restrictive. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked several questions about the language in the current zoning ordinance, and wondered if the language needs to be clarified and the uses need to be spelled out so later on hopefully there will not be any confusion. Mr. Stanek requested that we get the changes out that are currently being considered. The discussion continued about the Zoning Ordinance and changes that need to be considered.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Keating entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. The motion was made by Mr. Bean and seconded by Mr. Shane. Motion carried with 5 yeas.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of April 12, 2016 by: Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,  
Seconded by: Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. Roll call vote carried with \_\_\_ yeas:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip Keating, Chairman  
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION

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Date Approved