

MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 10, 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, May 10, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Carman Bean, Philip Keating, Jim Shane, Mark Sweppenheiser, Michael Hulst and David Hamelund. Gordon Oliver is absent. 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 April 12, 2016 regular meeting were reviewed. Mr. Shane suggested one typographic correction. Mr. Mason stated that he would make the change to correctly identify Mr. Shane. Mr. Bean made the motion to approve the minutes with the listed correction, seconded by Mr. Hulst. The motion carried unanimously with 6 yeas.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

VI. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:

Mr. Stanek started by advising the Commission that he has received an inquiry into whether the Township might consider expanding sewer services to the west side of the US131 Expressway. The developer in question has purchased 3.39 acres of property on 220th Avenue north of 15 Mile Road for another hotel. Mr. Stanek and the developer discussed the potential costs of the project. According to the developer's engineer, directional boring currently costs about \$ 100.00 a linear foot and a lift station would cost approximately \$250,000.00 - \$300,000.00, bringing the cost of the project for this request to about \$600,000.00 - \$700,000.00. The developer may consider paying for the project initially, if they could recover some of their money as other entities hook into the system. Mr. Stanek has also discussed this with Mr. Gifford from the City of Big Rapids in the event that the City would like to extend water services to this area. The Commission asked some specific questions about whether the expansion would encompass 220th Avenue south of 15 Mile Road, as that area has some great potential for growth in the Highway Interchange District. Mr. Stanek questioned which direction growth would go, and doesn't believe that the HI District will grow further to the west at

this time. Mr. Keating asked if this sewer expansion would be accessible to other development. Mr. Stanek advised that the sewer system would be under Township control, and would be designed to allow for future growth and connections. Mr. Stanek also advised this might give us the leverage to entice the City of Big Rapids to extend water services west of the expressway as well. Mr. Bean asked if the funds were available for this project. Mr. Stanek reiterated that it is his hope that the developer may initially fund the project in order to get it operating. Later, if given the option, they may be able to recoup some of their investment when other entities tap-in. Meijer's recouped some of the cost for their sewer system expansion by having an agreement that required future development to reimburse them for a portion of the project cost over a certain period of time. Mr. Hamelund asked about how much further west the Township is going to let the Highway Interchange District expand if the demand keeps growing. Mr. Sweppenheiser said that past 225th Avenue the land is swamp and very wet. The Commission got into a discussion about future land use and available property in the current HI District. The Commission was reminded that they have some say in changing the master plan, if needed. Most of the current property would likely become available for other development if a sale price can be negotiated, so there is presently a reasonable amount of property still zoned for commercial development in the HI district. Mr. Hamelund expressed a concern about traffic increasing on Woodward Avenue. Discussion moved to The Hills of Mitchell Creek and the development of single family and duplex condos. Mr. Keating brought the topic back to water and sewer at the expressway, and asked Mr. Stanek what he needed the Commission to do. Mr. Stanek said that he would like the Commission to express that they are in favor of the proposed expansion of water and sewer services west of the expressway and be ready to support moving forward if needed. Mr. Sweppenheiser stated that he doesn't speak for the City of Big Rapids while he is serving on the Township Planning Commission, but does believe that the City will be interested in pursuing expansion of water services to the area. Mr. Keating closed this topic of discussion when Mr. Stanek advised that he was satisfied with the discussion that has taken place. Mr. Keating requested that the record show that the Commission is supportive of and interested in seeing water and sewer services expanded west of the US131 Expressway in the effort to further commercial growth in the Highway Interchange District.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Stanek provided an update on LeeAnn's Flowers, @ 1205 N. State Street. Mr. Stanek told the Commission that he did not have to write a ticket, even though he was prepared to when he visited on April 15. Conditions at the location had improved greatly and the proprietors have been working hard to get the property cleaned up and ready for business. Mr. Stanek has heard from many citizens about how much better the property appears. He provided a copy of the letter he sent on April 29, 2016, giving Mr. Engels and Ms. LeGree permission to open for growing and retail sales of flowers, plants and vegetables. Work is still continuing at the location. Mr. Stanek did state that he attempted to negotiate the removal of the hoop greenhouses, with the goal of getting them to remove one and set the large one approximately 6 – 9 feet further west on the property. They were willing to listen, but moving the large greenhouse will be a difficult undertaking after looking at the structure. Mr. Stanek did pass on that there is still one issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Engels wanted to re-side the west wall, and reframed it with a newer window, but never took out a building permit. Mr. Mason advised the Commission that the Building Official will be visiting the location on

Wednesday, May 11, for that issue. Mr. Keating asked how the neighbors are with all the changes that have taken place. Mr. Stanek advised that the neighbors he has spoken to seem to be happy, and Mr. Engels has gone to all the neighbors and apologized for the past condition of the property. Mr. Stanek stated that he is satisfied right now, and Mr. Keating thanked him for his effort and the progress that has been made. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked about whether the greenhouse structures were ever permitted by zoning and building, and a brief history of the property was given. Those structures were never intended to be used commercially. They were originally approved for personal use. The approvals were done administratively by the previous Township Supervisor. There were never any approved site plans for this operation until Mr. Engels came before the Commission last year.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Keating entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. The motion was made by Mr. Bean and seconded by Mr. Sweppenheiser. Motion carried with 6 yeas.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of April 12, 2016 by: Mr. Hults,
Seconded by: Mr. Bean. Roll call vote carried with 7 yeas:

Philip Keating, Chairman
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

Date Approved