

MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 12, 2017 --- 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, September 12, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Philip Keating, Carman Bean, Zach Cook, Gordon Oliver, Mark Sweppenheiser and Amanda Wethington. Mary Davis is excused. The record shows a quorum is present. Also Present: Zoning Administrator and Recording Secretary, Brent Mason and Supervisor Bill Stanek.

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 a conflict of interest existed.

IV. MINUTES:

Mr. Keating asked the Commission to review the minutes of the August 8, 2017 regular meeting. Mr. Bean made a motion to approve the August 8, 2017 minutes as presented. Mr. Sweppenheiser seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed with six ayes.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

VI. SITE PLAN REVIEW:

Mr. Keating asked Mr. Mason to present the site plan for the Tesla Supercharging Station at the Meijer Property at 15400 Waldron Way. Mr. Mason advised the Planning Commission that the Site Plan met all the requirements of a Class B site plan required by the Zoning Ordinance, and that the district requirements were also met as indicated on the Staff Report to the commissioners. Mr. Mason stated that he has already given the charging station a separate address for emergency response concerns. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked how long before the construction would start, and Mr. Mason told the commission that the Building Permit application was already on his desk, and the construction plans were supposed to arrive tomorrow. Mr. Sweppenheiser made a motion to approve the Site plan MI018_Big Rapids as presented, seconded by Mr. Bean. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked why this site plan came before the Planning Commission for review, since it seems to be an extremely accessory use, and Mr. Mason explained that all commercial site plans are required to come before the PC according to the ordinance. There was no further discussion, and the commission voted unanimously with six ayes to approve the site plan.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Mason advised the Commissioners that the Meijer Gas Station should be sending in a site plan for expansion, possibly for action at the October Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Keating asked Mr. Mason to present his draft proposal for a future land use map that might be considered for the next Master Plan update. Mr. Keating asked why Mr. Mason had suggested certain changes, and Mr. Mason responded that the suggestions more accurately represent the current and foreseen use in the areas. Mr. Mason explained why he felt that previously residential/single-family uses were better described by the agricultural designation. Mr. Bean asked several questions about how the determinations were made. Mr. Sweppenheiser suggested that the area around Woodward seems to be residential in character and since utilities haven't been provided to the area, it doesn't seem likely that commercial development would occur there. Discussion about the areas described as medium density residential occurred. Mr. Mason stated that those areas represented apartment complexes, with the exception of the complexes that are in the commercial districts. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked about the original approval for the Hills of Mitchell Creek, specifically about the higher density use that was approved at that time. Mr. Mason stated that Mr. Weaver and Ms. Glatz received approval in 2015 for 15 site condos in the area previously approved for the 44 apartments, and that is now the approved use for that area, negating the apartment approval. Mr. Sweppenheiser asked what would prevent a use like that from being requested in the future, and Mr. Mason stated that he wasn't sure if anything would prevent a PUD request in the A-Residential District. Mr. Stanek thought that they would not be able to reapply for the PUD. Mr. Sweppenheiser said that the condo/apartment/high density use is so much different than the single family residential use, that it seemed contrary to the intent of the area. Mr. Mason did research the issue, and found that there is no provision for special uses, including PUD's, in the A-Residential District. Mr. Sweppenheiser mentioned that he is most concerned with protecting areas, and needs to make sure that the decisions the Planning Commission is asked to make are defensible. He continued by saying that the township has the land to make growth orderly, and that we should make sure that development occurs in a way that serves the interest of the citizens first. There was additional discussion about possible commercial growth to the east along M-20 and other changes that impact commercial development. Mr. Stanek and Mr. Keating asked about some areas near 14 Mile Road and 190th Avenue being considered as residential v. agricultural uses. Mr. Keating asked if everybody thought the 2017 proposed map was a pretty good representation of vision for the township, and everyone seemed to be in agreement that it was. Mr. Mason did mention that these changes would only be implemented during the Master Plan updating process, and that isn't required to occur until 2020. He also mentioned that since our current Master Plan is relatively minimal, that all member of the Planning Commission could make suggestions for additions and improvements they feel would be beneficial to the plan. Additionally, any changes would have to be presented at a public hearing and all the appropriate notifications would have to be made beforehand. Mr. Mason also suggested that public workshops could be held for input on the Master Plan, but historically, our requests for public input have been minimally attended, unless someone has a vested interest in the items being discussed.

Mr. Keating mentioned that he and Mr. Mason had met last week to go over the format for the Planning Commission Annual report and that it is progressing well, and it will be brought to the Planning Commissioners later in the year for final approval before it is sent to the Board of Trustees.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Keating entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. The motion was made by Mr. Sweppenheiser and seconded by Mr. Bean. Motion carried with 6 ayes.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of September 12, 2017 by: Mr. Bean, Seconded by: Mr. Sweppenheiser. Roll call vote carried with 5 ayes:

Philip Keating, Chairman
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

Date Approved