



PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
November 17, 2009

DRAFT COPY

Present: Steve Schaftenaar, LeeAnne Jachim, Bill Cole, Nicki Arendshorst, Ed de Vries, Joseph Lampen, Bob Ellis, Dan Martin, attorney and Eric Davis, Zoning Administrator

Absent: None

Nicki Arendshorst, Chairperson, called the regular meeting of the Park Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION

A motion was made by De Vries and supported by Jachim to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE

Motion carried: 7-0

MOTION

A motion was made by Jachim and supported by Cole to approve the minutes for the October 20, 2009 regular meeting as presented.

VOTE

Motion carried: 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dan VanEerden, 745 Lakeside Dr., stated that he wanted to speak about the Pt. West discussion item on the agenda. He stated that his main concern is the density. He asked that the Planning Commission (PC) remember that this is already an overcrowded peninsula.

Sally Pollock, 2285 Ottawa Beach Rd., stated that she wanted to speak about the Pt. West item. She stated that she wanted to ask the PC to make sure that there is a path for foot traffic to the lighthouse.

Kirk Briggs, 1950 S. Shore Dr., stated that he was a lifelong Park Township resident and had “worked” for the Planning Commission for many years. He stated that, regarding the Pt. West item, he is in favor of the developer being able to develop the property. He stated that the “township planning commission master plan setup” requires a parallel plan. He stated that he hoped that the developer presented a parallel plan this evening that would help “lay that out” for the PC.

Joel Welch, 679 Bosma Ave., stated that he agrees with preserving access to the lighthouse and also wants to see provision for access to the pier.

AGENDA ITEMS

Davis introduced item #1.

Item #1 PUD Amendment – Benjamin’s Hope - 15468 Riley St.

MOTION

A motion was made by Schaftenaar and supported by Jachim to remove the item from the table.

VOTE

Motion carried: 7-0

Arendshorst stated that the attorney had drafted a resolution and report recommending approval of the PUD amendment to the township board. She stated that the Ottawa County Drain Commission (OCDC) and the Ottawa County Road Commission (OCRC) had sent conceptual approval letters. She asked about a letter from the Ottawa County Health Department (OCHD).

Pete Lazdins, Design+, 230 E. Fulton, Grand Rapids, submitted a letter from the OCHD. He stated that the project would be served with on-site septic service and wells.

Arendshorst asked for clarification on the walking paths.

Lazdins explained the changes to the site plan. He stated that the paths would be able to support bikes and golf carts in addition to pedestrians.

Arendshorst asked for the resolution to read “Chair” rather than “Chairman”.

Martin stated that he would change that and also the date of plan to November 10, 2009.

Cole asked for some clarifications on the resolution and report. He then asked about adding “parking areas” to letter “K” in the report.

Martin stated that he would make that change as well.

Cole asked about the completion date.

Krista Mason, director of Benjamin’s Hope, stated that it would be four and one-half (4 ½) years at the most. She stated that they hope to be “well phased-in” way before that time.

Cole stated that there are some recommendations (as compared to “requirements”) from the OCDC and OCRC. He wanted to make sure that the developer would have to meet these recommendations.

Davis stated that the PC could have the recommendations as conditions of approval.

A discussion ensued.

Arendshorst wanted to make sure that the PC thought that this was a good use of the land for the next fifty years.

Ellis stated that he thought it was. He stated that he likes the density and it fits with the surrounding agricultural use.

MOTION

A motion was made by Lampen and supported by Schaftenaar to approve the resolution recommending approval of the Benjamin's Hope Planned Unit Development (PUD) amendment to the township board.

VOTE

Motion carried: 7-0

Item #2 Preliminary Presentation – Pt. West I, LLC

Arendshorst stated that she wanted to make it clear that this is not a formal application and no public hearing was being held this evening. No decisions would be made this evening. She clarified that she and her husband own a cottage at Macatawa.

Mark Harmsen, 6648 Blythfield, Rockford, stated that he was representing the owner, Pt. West I, LLC, controlled by the Van Andel family. He stated that this was a preliminary presentation looking for feedback and questions. He gave a brief history of the area. He explained some existing agreements such as the one that includes the operation of a gate to restrict access to Macatawa and the Pt. West property. He stated that there is an agreement with Holland Harbor Lighthouse Historical Commission, owners of the lighthouse (Big Red), to provide parking and access to Big Red. There is an agreement for the use of the beach and eventual redevelopment of the Pt. West property. This agreement allows all Macatawa residents to use the beach. It also outlines, in detail, the future use of the property including restaurants, motels, condominiums, residential lots which are similar in size to lots surrounding the Pt. West property, piers, docks and commercial marinas. This agreement states that the Macatawa Park Cottage Association would not “unreasonably object” to the development of the Pt. West property including rezoning and variances. This agreement does not preclude individual owners from objecting. He stated that they met with the cottagers in August of 2009. They have met with Wade and Herb Eldean, owners of neighboring Eldean Shipyard, discussing boat slips, traffic, etc. They have met with Scott Gamby, Park Township Fire Chief. They have met with public utility companies. He stated that this project would not be dependent on bank financing and it would be something to be proud of.

Greg Raad, Nederveld Associates, gave a power point presentation showing the long resort history of the area and the current state of the area. He stated that this project would be submitted as a PUD. He stated that this was the same plan that was shown to the cottagers in August. The condos would be similar in style to the current homes in the area. The property is 8.3 acres, zoned C-2, surrounded by R-4 zoning. They are allowed the density that is allowed by a parallel plan. Using some of the uses allowed in a C-2 zone they worked to find what the allowable density would be. For a hotel resort it would be one hundred (100) units with one hundred (100) parking spaces plus a restaurant seating eighty(80). The former Pt. West was seventy (70) units and a restaurant. For a multifamily residential development seventy-two (72) units would be allowed by ordinance. Their plan would include 230 parking spaces which would allow for one parking space for each proposed boat slip.

Raad stated that this is how they came to a density of approximately seventy (70) units for their proposed project. He stated that their vision is to preserve the history of the area and build something that would blend with the existing cottages. They had nine design elements to consider: neighborhood-scale, good vehicle access, good pedestrian access, parking, preserve the history with a building similar to the old hotel, amenities/conveniences, neighborhood green/park, boat slips and waterfront access. There would be a similar vehicle circulation to what is currently there, the roads would be improved, there would be pedestrian walks, there would be detached and attached cottages, the hillside building would be rebuilt, a ship/coffee shop out by Lake Macatawa and an underground parking garage with a

community green space on the top of it. He stated that the cottages would not all be the same design. They would be of various sizes and placement; some would have detached garages, etc. They are proposing 8.3 units per acre and the existing cottages are 8.2 units per acre. The proposed plan has forty-four (44) units in the hillside building and twenty-six (26) surrounding cottages. He wanted to clarify that it is their belief that buyers in the hillside building would most likely purchase several units, combine them into one dwelling and the final unit total would be less than forty-four.

Arendshorst asked if the entire piece is zoned C-2.

Raad stated that the entire PUD property is zoned C-2.

Davis stated that it has been looked into and the township agrees that the majority of the property is C-2, although there may be a small piece that is R-4.

Raad stated that it appears that there has been a slight “translation problem” when the zoning was transferred to a colored map.

Schaftenaar asked about the dune.

Raad stated that there would be no further impact to the dune.

Schaftenaar asked about the hillside units.

Raad stated that these would not be time-share units. They would be single-owner condo units.

Lampen asked who the underground parking would be for.

Raad stated that the parking garage would contain eighty-eight (88) units which would be two for each of the forty-four hillside units. Some would be available if the hillside building ends up with less than forty-four units. The entrance would be near the gatehouse and under the structure. No parking would be allowed on the streets.

Lampen asked for clarification on the single cottages in the “green”.

Raad stated that they probably wouldn’t be built as large as shown in the allowable footprint. Perhaps one buyer would buy multiple lots and put one bigger cottage there.

Arendshorst asked if these would be year-round residences.

Raad stated that they would be.

Lampen asked about access to Big Red.

Raad stated that the public would still have access by foot, but the parking location may change.

Arendshorst asked about marketing.

Raad stated that they were not going to build this “real soon”.

Harmsen stated that this project wouldn't get built "today" because houses are not selling and also financing for purchases is not readily available. They are not interested in building a project to have it sit empty. He stated that they have done studies near Chicago and Ludington. These units would sell for \$400-\$500 per square foot, or \$600,000-\$3,000,000.

Arendshorst asked if they were thinking their market would include young families, wondering about the impact on the local school system.

Harmsen stated that most likely not a lot of families with young children would be moving in. He stated that some of the existing cottagers have expressed an interest. He stated that they expect the final project to have a value of \$50-\$60 million.

Lampen asked about the proposed redesign for the road from the south hill.

Raad stated that the road would stay there but would be improved. The residents would exit the hill as they do now. Fire trucks would still be able to go up that hill backwards. He clarified that all units would have sprinkling systems.

Harmsen clarified that the grade of that road may improve and there may be a snow melt system installed there.

Arendshorst asked about the gate house and the road that goes up to the south hill.

Raad stated that they have looked at different ideas to improve traffic but they can't really change that corner.

Ellis asked about parking by the tennis courts.

Raad stated that they won't be putting parking there.

Ellis asked if any of the land is in Laketown Township.

Raad stated that it is all in Park Township.

Ellis asked about sightlines for the existing cottagers.

Raad stated that no unit would be higher than thirty-five (35') feet. They may ask for three stories rather than 2 ½ stories. He stated that they would install "view corridors". The roof of the hillside unit would be below the cottages above. The existing cottages on the north of the "green" are already elevated.

Ellis asked about parking underground relating to water issues.

Raad stated that the floor of the garage would be above the 100-year flood elevation. Fifty percent of the garage would be under the current grade level.

Arendshorst reminded the developer that this is a flood plain area and Eldean's area was underwater for "quite a while". She stated that she felt that there is a safety issue for ingress and egress. She stated concern about a fire with that many more people.

Raad stated that they don't have the elevation details in hand.

De Vries stated that the threat of fire is a major concern for him.

Raad stated that the final plan may not have the units as close as this shows and reminded the PC that each unit would be sprinkled.

Ellis asked about ingress and egress in an emergency.

Raad stated that this is no different than when the restaurant and hotel were there and in addition the roads would be wider.

Harmsen stated that there would be an improvement to the entrance and gatehouse area.

Arendshorst asked if some of the existing parking spots would be compromised.

Harmsen stated that the walk is a platted walk and some of the parking spaces shouldn't even be there, but they would try to accommodate the cottagers who currently use those parking spaces.

Ellis asked about any other accommodations for the cottagers.

Harmsen stated that they will explain those when they present the PUD preliminary.

Arendshorst stated that the West Michigan Strategic Alliance asks all planners to think of the future impact of proposed developments on the overall west Michigan area. She stated that she felt that the density was a concern. She asked about access to Big Red.

Harmsen stated that there are four designated parking spots for Big Red and pedestrians are allowed to visit it. They will continue to honor that agreement. The parking spots may be relocated.

Ellis asked about timing.

Harmsen stated that the best case would be the installation of the infrastructure starting in the fall of 2010. The project might be built in phases over time, but the infrastructure would be put in all at once. He stated that if the economy cooperates there may be cottages available in the spring of 2011, but most likely not until the following year. No units would be built on speculation.

Ellis asked about the timing of the hillside unit.

Harmsen stated that they don't know which would be built first.

Schaftenaar asked about the private roads. He wondered if the PUD would have a different association for the roads than the Macatawa Cottagers Association.

Harmsen stated that they don't know all the answers yet. The PUD would have its own associations.

Arendshorst stated that she felt that there should be some type of proposed benefit to the neighborhood and asked what it would be.

Harmsen stated that a \$50-\$60 million tax base would be added to Park Township. The project would provide jobs in construction, snow plowing, landscaping, dock hands, etc. The benefit to the current cottagers would be improvement to the roads, the improved gateway, improved fire protection, etc.

Arendshorst asked Harmsen what the cottagers main concerns were at the August meeting.

Harmsen stated that they were the “six subcategories of density”.

Ellis stated that he would like to remind them to be “green”.

Harmsen clarified that the project and the units would be LEED certified and the marina would be “Clean Marina” certified. All storm water runoff would be filtered before heading to Lake Macatawa.

Arendshorst stated that it is the owner’s right to develop her property but she hopes that the density concern is conveyed to the owner, because it affects most every other concern. She stated that her other main concern is the flooding/infrastructure issue coming into the area.

Item #3 Master Plan – Five Year Review

Arendshorst stated that, by law, the master plan has to be looked at every five years. She stated that almost two years ago the township began a review of the master plan. A consultant was hired and a community survey prepared almost to completion. The township manager decided to provide a more integrated plan with parks and recreation, strategic plan, etc. She clarified that the master plan is under the purview of the PC so they need to record a review within the five year time limit. She stated that she does have questions about how the new process will go and who will be chosen to be on the master plan committee. She stated that while she understood the integrated approach, she did not find the proposed process completely satisfactory. She wanted to make sure that the PC is well-involved with the process.

Cole asked if the work that had been done with the consultant and the survey would be thrown out.

Arendshorst stated that that was correct.

Cole asked how much money had been spent on that.

Davis stated that it was approximately \$7,000 (or half of the budget). He stated that the contract with McKenna had been cancelled, at the board level.

Cole stated that he was disappointed that the PC had not even been told that all of the work had been scrapped and that they were going in a different direction.

A discussion ensued.

MOTION

A motion was made by de Vries and supported by Lampen to acknowledge that a review of the Park Township Comprehensive Plan (the Master Plan) has been done. No changes were made at this time. The Planning Commission members support the township manager and township board pursuing a multi-faceted plan and ask that the Planning Commission be involved in the process for the review of the master plan portion.

VOTE

Motion carried: 7-0

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Arendshorst stated that the S-2/Tiara subcommittee would be meeting December 3, 2009.
2. Arendshorst stated that the Oath of Office would be given to the PC next month.
3. Davis handed out the zoning ordinance section of the newly adopted Municode ordinance.
4. Ellis asked about the process for the Spaces & Places book. A discussion ensued. Arendshorst asked the PC members to bring their books next month.
5. Ellis asked if the PC thought perhaps the township would want to use a consultant for the Pt. West project. A discussion ensued.
6. Arendshorst asked for feedback on “stepping down” and/or voting for the Pt. West item because she owns a cottage with her husband in Macatawa. A discussion ensued.

MOTION

A motion was made by Lampen and supported by Jachim to adjourn at 9:32 p.m.

VOTE

Motion carried: 7-0

Sandy Brodie
Recording Secretary