

Springfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes May 15, 2018

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the May 15, 2018 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Dean Baker
Ruth Ann Hines
Dave Hopper
George Mansour
Linda Whiting

Commissioners Absent

Kevin Sclesky
Jason Pliska

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Carlisle Wortman, Associates
Randy Ford, Hubble, Roth and Clark, Inc.

Staff Present

Collin Walls, Supervisor
Laura Moreau, Clerk
Erin Mattice, Planning Administrator

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Hines moved to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the April 17, 2018 meeting

Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing:

None

New Business:

**1. Final Site Plan Review – General RV Center, 8665 Dixie Highway
Parcel #07-24-101-005**

Craig MacDonell, Architect, provided an overview of the project consisting of a 34,000 square foot facility, General RV, with showroom and service facility.

Mr. Doug Lewan provided a summary of his review letter dated May 4, 2018. The outstanding items include landscaping issues such as a waiver of the parking lot landscaping requirement, install 33 additional evergreens within the 30 foot wide buffer strip along the western property line to meet the screening alternative. He summarized the review table showing all of the ordinance requirements. For the buffer, there is a combination of large conifer trees, medium conifer trees, deciduous trees and shrubs. The applicant is proposing six additional new trees which are above and beyond what is required. The applicant is proposing 84 medium evergreens and there are 166 required so there is an 80 plant deficit with the medium/smaller conifer trees. The ordinance allows the developer to use existing trees and the applicant is proposing to save 124 existing trees in addition so there is actually a 96 tree surplus for the deciduous trees in the buffer. The applicant is not proposing any new shrubs, although 55 are required. So, looking at an overall plant number, the applicant is at a 33 plant deficit. The intent is to create a good buffer between the General RV site and the adjacent condominium project. The opacity is the amount of visible light that you can see through something and in the ordinance, the standard is an 80% opaque buffer. The landscape architect at CWA determined that the landscaping that is currently proposed meets the 80% opacity. But, since there is a 33 plant deficiency, it is CWA's recommendation that this 33 plant deficit be placed where the parking lot of the General RV site is closest to the condominium project. He suggested that 33 additional coniferous trees be located in this area to make sure that the screen is more intense than they would get otherwise. They are trying to create a very opaque buffer between these two uses, low shrubs did not make sense and the use of small evergreens also wouldn't be recommended. The suggestion is to add an additional 33 coniferous trees in this strategic area. This will more than provide the adequate buffer for these two uses. Since it is a residential use abutting a commercial use, the recommendation is for screening alternative 3. The alternative 4 buffer would be a solid wall but he does not recommend this wall because it would do more to damage the look of the area, it would require the removal of many trees and would change the character of how this site looks. It is also his recommendation that after the project is constructed, have the landscape architect from CWA inspect the site to insure that 80% opacity is met and if it is not, additional plantings be required.

Mr. Lewan continued his review by addressing the landscaping screening to the east. It is residentially zoned but not residentially used. The Planning Commission waived the screening requirement her and should reaffirm that waiver if there is a motion made tonight to recommend final site plan approval.

Commissioner Mansour asked how they would enforce an additional visit by the landscape architect.

Mr. Lewan stated that once they make a motion, that becomes part of the approval motion. The 80% opaque buffer is a requirement and if they don't meet it, it would be a zoning violation.

Mr. Randy Ford summarized his review dated April 25, 2018. There are two driveways off of Dixie Highway for access. The westerly drive is an existing drive and will have secured gate access. The easterly approach, which will be shared with the adjacent church, is intended to be modified. The RCOC permit application has been submitted. There will be one lane ingress and two lane egress. The applicant provided trip generation information and information regarding hours of access for the church making sure that the two owners will be able to share the drive with no conflicts. Mr. Ford stated that according to the Institute of Transportation Engineers Manual and the information given by the church, there will not be any conflict. They did ask for additional information regarding the internal access to make sure that there were no issues with fire truck access and also to make sure that the vehicles could pull into the site to drop off the RVs. The applicant provided a truck maneuvering plan in the site plan showing the longest template of a truck pulling a trailer at 65 feet in length. Based on the maneuvering plan, it does fit within the lanes. The item that they spent the most time on was site grading and drainage. There are several things that can be done to demonstrate conformance with the Township ordinance. The plan demonstrates a retention basin and the storage is based on two inches of rainfall over the tributary area. If this is used, the applicant must demonstrate a permeability of the soils and an overflow assessment. He did have concern because of the sensitive rear of the site comprised of a couple of ponds and a fairly large culvert under Blue Water Drive. He met with the applicant and engineer and he felt that they needed to provide better protection. The onsite soils are permeable and the applicant provided a soils study which documents that which is a positive measure. He wanted to make sure that the detention basin has a controlled outlet so the basin will dewater over an extended period of time. He ended up recommending that the applicant upsize the basin with a 50% increase in storage as well as a restricted outlet so the basin has a chance to dewater. He wanted to make sure that the outlet is based on what is currently draining to the rear of the site. It is important to mimic the current conditions. He stated that the applicant provided the best approach and protection for the downstream property owners. There are a number of upland infiltration basins that will take advantage of the permeability soils.

Mr. Ford continued with his review. The applicant has three storm mechanical structures that capture and filter out contaminants in the run off. These structures are in the parking lot area. They also have a forebay detention basin that is designed to help filter as well.

These features are positive and they are included in the plan. The applicant has a well permit issued by Oakland County. The septic permit is still outstanding. The engineer has indicated that they are in the process of getting that permit.

Mr. Lewan added that page 13 outlined the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines. A decorative split rail cedar fence is proposed but the detail showing all of the features in the Design Guidelines are not in the plan. He wants to make sure that the fence detail with the natural fieldstone pillars and limestone cap on the corners is all reflected in the project.

Commissioner Mansour asked about the sewage dumping station on the plan. He asked if it was within the overall capacity for the site.

Mr. Ford answered that Oakland County Health Division will review this.

Chairperson Baker asked about the lighting plan because several of the details are difficult to read. He noted that the applicant shows .5 foot-candle at the property line. He asked where the light level would be at the maximum.

Mr. Macdonell stated that he would have to review the photometric plan to find the maximum point.

Chairperson Baker asked where the applicant is relevant to Oakland County Health Department septic permit.

Mr. Tim Zimmer, Livingston Engineering, stated that he had a meeting with the Health Department on May 11, 2018 working through some of the final details on the septic system. He received an email from Oakland County today from Mark Hansell indicating that the system plan is being sent to the State for an additional review because of the anticipated flows. After consulting with the State, they will come back with any additional comments or concerns but at this point, everything has been addressed.

Commissioner Hopper asked if Mr. Zimmer has seen Mr. Ford's review and if he has any comments.

Mr. Zimmer replied that yes, he has seen the review. He believes it is a very robust system and they have looked at it very closely over additional meetings. They now have a very sound plan. He commented that they are going to have very positive results and he is very comfortable with it. He has no concerns.

Commissioner Hines asked what are the hours of operation for General RV.

Mr. Bill Brown, Operation Manager for General RV located in White Lake, replied 9:00 am – 8:00 pm Mondays through Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. During daylight savings time, that is more restrictive when they close at 5:30 pm. They are closed on Sunday.

Clerk Moreau indicated that some audience members wanted to see the elevation drawing displayed and she provided it to the audience members.

Commissioner Hopper commented that the .5 foot-candle is located at the eastern entrance, shared drive.

Mr. Lewan added that this is in conformance with the ordinance.

Mr. MacDonell indicated that the details for the columns and the cedar split rail were on sheet A-200.

Commissioners agreed that they did not have sheet A-200.

Chairperson Baker opened up the discussion any questions or comments from the audience members.

Mike Bradley, (address indiscernible), stated that this is going to affect them. The items that he is concerned about are the resale of their properties, light and the sound from I-75. He stated that he would like the wall added to the screening. The tree line is so close to the corner of their condos. He asked who was responsible for the new trees planted.

Chairperson Baker answered the applicant.

Mr. Bradley asked if there was going to be a chain link fence to segregate the trees from the dealership to keep the people off. There will be a lot of people back there.

Chairperson Baker responded that from the property line there will be a 30 foot wide buffer that is trees, then there is space, then you get to the paved portion of the facility and that is where the chain link fence starts.

Mr. Bradley asked if they were planting pines.

Chairperson Baker answered pines and deciduous trees.

Mr. Bradley commented that the pines get very wide at the bottom and he asked about the maintenance and the dead grass. He is concerned about the lights and the noise.

Chairperson Baker replied that the lighting plan has been submitted and it indicates that at the property line, it will be less than .5 foot candle of illumination. The trees will be a mixture of conifers and deciduous trees up to 50 feet high. The light poles are 22.5 feet tall.

Mr. Lewan suggested getting a listing of all of the public comments and answering them at once.

Mr. Bradley stated that he is also worried about the sound from I-75. He stated that there are trees around the ponds and trees are not going to solve the problem.

Chairperson Baker stated that the applicant does not have an obligation to correct the I-75 noise.

Mr. Bradley stated that the only thing that would help the I-75 noise would be the wall. The maximum wall would be 10 feet.

Chris Miller, 9026 East Bluewater, commented that the light and noise pollution is still a problem. He asked how tall the trees are when they are put in. He commented that no one has talked about how this is going to put a burden on law enforcement service and emergency responders having this entrance on Dixie Highway. Anyone in the Township can tell how overburdened law enforcement is on the corridor and it is the deadliest corridor in the Township. Having the RVs coming in and out and the pedestrians in this overburdened area which is already not managed as well as it could be is problematic. They already have truckers disobeying State Law by pulling into Al Deeby across the street. They are using the left turn lane like a parking lot and it will become a bigger problem. He appreciates the split rail fence but he asked if there is an obligation for some sort of usability to the Township residents to allow commercial entity to come into the Township. There has to be some benefit for them since they are taking away the beautification. They are saying that a wall doesn't fit but neither does a 18 acre trailer park. He would like more information because they are talking about putting raw sewage in his drinking water in what they admit is extremely permeable soil. He asked what are the remedies that are going to be put in place if it goes bad. He commented that he is not happy about this development. He commented about the other junk yards on the Dixie Highway and he thinks there are better uses for this site that would benefit the whole Township.

Ms. Pam Merritt, condominium resident at 9030 East Bluewater, provided a summary of her professional background. She stated that the topography of her property is a hill which goes down to a drainage area. She asked what are they doing to address this. Some of the condos are down on the slope and she questioned if anyone looked at this. She is worried about flooding in her basement.

Chairperson Baker indicated that whatever is moving off of the site today, there will be no additional after development.

Ms. Merritt asked if they could have a guarantee so that if it ever flooded, the Township would take care of all of the problems. She would like all of the Commissioners to meet her there and walk the area. The traffic noise is still there and now they are going to rip beautiful trees out. She asked what ever happened to green belting. The condo at the end is 15 feet from where they are going to have their fun. They object but no one asked them because no one has been out there. She stated that now they get to look at trailers and chain link fences. The woods should be left alone. She asked what are they doing to protect them from the trailers emptying their deluge into the ponds.

Chairperson Baker replied that they are not emptying anything into the ponds. The waste is going into certified receptacle built for that. These are facilities regulated by the Health Department to regulate sewer.

Ms. Merritt stated that it wasn't clear what it was. She continued that they do not want lighting back by them. Her living room faces back there and they love the quiet and trees. She says with a motion sensor they are going to light up her yard. She moved out here because she loved it out here and she has been here since 1986. She stated her real estate person says to sell now because she will never be able to sell with that in front of her. She asked what the purpose of the mulch walking path because no one walks back there.

Chairperson Baker indicated it was to allow the employees to have access to the property they own and when they are off duty, they can walk the area.

Ms. Merritt asked what they are doing with law enforcement watching this site.

Chairperson Baker indicated that the applicant has chosen to secure their property which is their right. Because of the tree buffering that is there, Ms. Merritt will not see the chain link fence. Some areas are going to have trees removed to allow the applicant room to access and fully utilize the property they are purchasing. Trees will be placed in areas which provide the necessary opacity. Ms. Merritt will look out her windows and see trees.

Ms. Merritt stated that she would like the lighting considered.

Chairperson Baker stated that the applicant has agreed to dim their lighting after hours to 50% of the levels that they would be allowed to maintain.

Ms. Merritt commented that the residents want an 8-12 foot wall either in the middle of the woods, front of the woods or wherever because they are worried that it is not going to be enough to protect them from the noise.

Chairperson Baker stated that there are areas now with no opacity. The applicant is going to put in a 30 foot wide buffer of trees.

Ms. Merritt stated that they would like to be insured that the landscaping gets done during the building of the site and not twenty years later because that happens a lot.

Chairperson Baker commented that the opacity will be part of any motion granted.

Ms. Merritt commented that this development will lower their property values. There could be a better use of that property.

Chairperson Baker commented that when a property is zoned a particular zoning, this sets up a certain set of guidelines as to what can be put on this property. This use was approved to be put on that zoning. Once this is determined, no Township has the ability

to come in and say the use fits but you can't develop it because we don't want it there. This is contrary to the law.

Ms. Merritt reiterated that there are five groups of condos back there and they are causing their street a problem with this according to lower property values and higher noise levels. She commented that she thought the church would have been there forever and had she known what was coming, she would have left. She suggested that the company buy their condos after an average appraisal.

Chairperson Baker asked if anyone else had comment and no public comment was offered.

Mr. Lewan stated that he has already voiced his opinion regarding the wall versus landscaping. It is the Township's ability to require a wall if they thought it was not going to be landscaped properly. Regarding lighting, the plan indicates that it will be reduced 50% at night.

Mr. Lewan stated that the chain link fence is not the first thing the neighboring condo owners will see. There will be at least 20, some cases 30 or more feet before the fence would be there. There would be landscaping in between. The minimum height for coniferous trees at the time of planting is 6 feet. The site plan indicates a large number of existing trees are remaining and actually, all trees along the property line are remaining and the applicant is adding trees to fill in the gap. There is a heavily wooded area in the very southern part of the side and besides the detention basin, that wooded area is not being touched.

Mr. MacDonell held up a site plan copy showing all of the wooded area that will remain.

Mr. Lewan stated that he understands the noise concern but the buffering trees will help. Regarding emergency response, the Road Commission has reviewed this and looked at the driveway access. There are some tapers that are suggested to make it safe as possible and the applicant must comply. This plan is designed to the Road Commission specifications. This use is a relatively low impact user of a septic system because it is a single office building and other uses could have substantially more impact. The septic impact will be minimal and the Oakland County Health Department will have to review and approve any septic system. His report points out a number of existing trees to remain; 124 deciduous trees are being kept on site.

Mr. MacDonell commented that they also will be clearing out the dead trees and replacing them with new trees.

Mr. Lewan stated that once the site plan becomes approved, it has the same effect as a zoning regulation so those trees will have to be maintained because they are part of an approved site plan.

Mr. Brown stated that General RV has a professional company come in and maintain their landscaping at all facilities. They also have an after-hours security system that will be added on all of the fencing so people cannot walk on their lots without them knowing about it. This security company is the same for all of their facilities. This will protect the condo side of the property as well and he is on call 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Ms. Merritt asked if they had overnight bays.

Mr. Brown replied no.

Mr. Bradley asked if the walking path had access to the ponds in the back.

Mr. Brown replied that it will go to the back of General RV property within the fence.

Mrs. Merritt asked if there were going to be speaker systems on the outside of the building.

Mr. Brown replied they have an internal speaker system inside the building.

Commissioner Hopper asked how many people come in during a busy day in the summer.

Mr. Brown replied 12-15.

Commissioner Hopper commented that Al Deeby probably has that in an hour.

Mr. Brown commented that the RVs are a want, not a necessity. If people do walk the lot, they have a salesperson with them. He added that off-season is a very quiet time.

Mr. Miller asked when the trees that are planted would be mature. A concrete fence would offer relief from the sound and light pollution. Now, they will have to wait ten to fifteen years to get relief from the trees. They are comparing apples to oranges comparing Al Deeby to this development to an over-taxed Dixie Highway at rush hour.

Mr. Lewan stated that there is an 80% opacity requirement. As planted, the landscape architect said that in the planted condition, it will be 80% opacity.

Mr. Ford commented on drainage. One of the infiltration basins is along the western property line and the drainage from this portion of the site is being routed through the infiltration basin whereas in the current conditions, a fair amount of the property drains toward the condos. When they do the improvements, they are actually going to be capturing the drainage and it will run back toward the detention system so it will all be captured on site.

Commissioner Whiting reiterated that the busiest time of the day is between 9:30 and 10:30 am and noon and 1 pm so these do not conflict with rush hour.

Commissioner Hopper moved to recommend to the Township Board Final Site Plan approval for General RV Center at 8665 Dixie Highway, Parcel ID#07-24-101-005 subject to:

- **Prior to scheduling pre-construction meeting, address Township Engineer in regards to discharge storm water storage volume due to relatively poor soil infiltration in the rear of the site and address his concern regarding overland overflow routes and provide the Township with copies of all required approved permits**
- **The plan as presented appears to address Planning Commission and Township Board Special Land Use requirements and therefore meets the Special Land Use approval**
- **The project must meet a Type 3 screen requirement per plan on the west property line which must be verified prior to occupancy by the Township consultant to achieve a Type 3 screen additional evergreen trees might be required at that time**
- **To waive the strict screen required along the east property line allowing the preservation and installation of the plant material as depicted on the plans**
- **To waive the interior parking lot landscaping requirements due to the extensive perimeter landscaping. The intent of this requirement has been met with that.**
- **The plan as proposed addresses the intent of the Dixie Highway Overlay District Standards with the use of BMPs, bioswales, inlot infiltration basins, extensive pedestrian pathways and benches**
- **The plan as proposed addressed the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines with the inclusion of the acorn style lighting fixtures at the front, after hours light dimming and the natural stone piers for the decorative split rail fencing along Dixie Highway**

Supported by Commissioner Hines.

Supervisor Walls asked if the extra 33 trees that Mr. Lewan recommended were included in the motion.

Commissioner Hopper replied no because the Landscape Architect at Carlisle Wortman Associates indicated that it probably meets the opacity requirement. They have had the problem of planting too many trees and they overcrowd and die. The intent for the 80% opacity was the intent of the motion.

Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

2. Ordinance Amendments – Invasive Species - Discussion

Mr. Lewan provided a summary of the ordinance amendments that were included in the Commission packets regarding amendments to Section 40-136 and Section 40-721 as

reflected in his memo dated May 3, 2018. The Invasive Species ordinance was adopted by the Township Board. This is a clean-up and to provide a link to the stand-alone ordinance section that exists.

Supervisor Walls indicated that the word “identified” prior to invasive species was not included in the adopted ordinance, in g. and the last sentence in the bottom. He suggested the word “identified” is removed.

Commissioner Hines moved to schedule a Public Hearing at the next available meeting amendments to Section 40-136, Site Plan Review and Section 40-721, Landscaping, Greenbelts, Buffers and Screening to note the invasive species control as modified this evening. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Old Business:

None

Other Business:

1. Priority Task List

Commissioners reviewed and made changes to the Priority Task List.

2. Pathway Committee Update and Information

Clerk Moreau and Ms. Mattice provided an electronic presentation summarizing the Pathway Committee’s work and recommendations.

Commissioner Hopper moved to set amendments to zoning ordinance Section 40-851 as amended and discussed tonight adding the language granting the easement and Section 40-2 adding definitions of pathways, sidewalks and trails. In Section 40-851, note that there is a priority pathway plan to be incorporated in the ordinance for Public Hearing at the next available meeting. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Comment:

None

Adjournment:

Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary