
PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Members Present: Dennis Ward, Edward Resha, Wilma Luna, Christina Lirones, Julie Griess, Stuart Dowty, David Shepps.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Terry Nosan, Tad Krear, Tamara French, Matthew Jurson, Earl Ophoff, PV Roby, Harry Fosdick, Planning Director Bruce E. Fowler, and Recording Secretary Laura Ford.

1.0 Call Meeting to Order at 7:30 p.m. / Determination of a Quorum.

Chairperson Lirones called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Lirones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Resha, to approve the agenda, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4.0 Items from the Floor

None.

5.0 Public Hearings

None.

6.0 Old Business

6.1 CUP 05-09/CSPA 05-14 Sprint – Maxey Property
[submitted for conditional use permit and preliminary site plan]

Planning Director Bruce E. Fowler reviewed the report. He stated that the license agreement could be a condition of approval, to be provided in lieu of obtaining a parcel division. He said that the Township Engineer had minor comments, which the applicant is prepared to address. He added that the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner (WCDC) approved the plans.

Chairperson Lirones asked if the doors, which had two (2) parking spaces in front of them, would be addressed.

Planner Fowler replied yes.

Chairperson Lirones asked about the license agreement.

Matthew Jurson, Sprint, stated that Sprint does not intend to bring cars in. He added that it would be a pedestrian entrance, not a drivable entrance. He added that no cars would be entering that portion of the site. He said that the license agreement is drafted and being executed by the owner and Sprint.

Chairperson Lirones asked if Cayman Chemical owns this parcel and the parcel behind it.

Tamara French, Cayman Chemical, replied yes.

Chairperson Lirones asked if this site would require lighting.

Mr. Jurson replied that lighting would not be required.

Commissioner Ward stated that if there is some change at the airport, the FAA might require lighting later. He said that he would not be opposed to a red strobe at night, although a strobe during the day would be offensive.

Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Resha, to approve CSPA 05-14 Sprint-Maxey Property, preliminary site plan with the following conditions:

- 1. Address any outstanding issues in the Township Engineer's report dated September 6, 2005, on the final site plan.**
- 2. Address any outstanding issues in the Site Plan Review report dated September 2, 2005, on the final site plan.**
- 3. Submittal of license agreement between the property owner and the applicant.**

MOTION CARRIED

Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Luna, to approve CUP 05-09 Sprint-Maxey Property, subject to findings of the conditional use review of July 29, 2005, and one additional condition:

- 1. The tower shall not be lighted.**

ROLL CALL:

YES: WARD, RESHA, LUNA, LIRONES, GRIESS, DOWTY, SHEPPS.

NO: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

ABSTAIN: NONE.

MOTION CARRIED

7.0 New Business

7.1 Annual Evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan

Chairperson Lirones stated that the Commission would review certain areas and proposals in the Township that have been brought up from individuals and the Commissioners. She said that the Commission has reviewed two (2) parcels earlier this year. She briefly discussed those parcels.

Chairperson Lirones stated the first proposal is from the Pittsfield 38 Group, and the property is located along Michigan Avenue in Section 32.

Terry Nosan, Pittsfield 38 Group, stated that they own a sixty (60) acre parcel on the south side of Michigan Avenue between Moon Road and the City of Saline. He explained the history of the purchase of the property. He said that the parcel is disconnected from the Bemis Road parcel because of the Pittsfield #5 Drain. He said that they would like to combine the two (2) parcels. He said that the property could feasibly be developed with septic and well. He described previous projects he has completed. He said that the Township might be missing an opportunity in this area. He said that they would like to explore concepts with the Commission. He said that he would like the parcel to fit into the gateway of the community.

Tad Krear, Land Design Studio, stated that landscape architects have to understand the physical restraints of the property. He reviewed the City of Saline corridor. He said that Saline brought unity to their community. He said that since this property has not been developed it has more possibilities. He discussed proposed and existing developments surrounding the parcels. He said that they could connect the community with trails on the site and dedicate open space to the Township. He said that there is a tremendous need for housing in this area. He said that they reviewed the traffic study from MDOT. He said that the property is designated for low density, one (1) unit per acre home sites.

Chairperson Lirones mentioned that there is no water available in this area.

Mr. Nosan stated that they understand this and they are patient.

Mr. Krear further discussed the proposed development. He said that this is the opportunity for the Township to do something special.

Chairperson Lirones asked if they would have a package treatment plant.

Mr. Nosan stated that they are sewer neutral. He said that the Hartland community was able to provide sewer for the project. He said that sewer is an engineering challenge, and if there is a desire to change something, that challenge can be met. He said that they are patient property owners.

Commissioner Griess stated that something special for the Township is the current rural character of this area. She said that there are subdivisions and office buildings in the area. She said that in the Master Plan the Commission has tried to conserve green space. She said that all this density should not be put along

Michigan Avenue. She said that the Commission has been strong in preserving the urban service district.

Commissioner Ward stated that one of the flaws is the water and sewer service district. He said that at the last Comprehensive Plan revision they reduced the water and sewer service district to meet YCUA contract regulations. He said that the second flaw is Michigan Avenue. He said that they have been begging to have Michigan Avenue redone for twenty-five (25) years. He said that the gateway could be done under the constructs of zoning and the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairperson Lirones stated that this is at odds with what they intended in the Comprehensive Plan. She said that this is completely contrary to what the Planning Commission intended. She said that this area was to be a greenbelt around the City of Saline.

Commissioner Ward stated that that concept is reflected in the County Comprehensive Plan for small communities in Washtenaw County.

Chairperson Lirones stated that they want urban centers that are vibrant, with rural areas in-between. She said that they transition through higher density slowly. She said that they look for transition areas that allow for gradual transition from one use to another. She said that there would be concerns from an engineering standpoint as to how the property would be serviced.

The Commissioners agreed with Chairperson Lirones.

Chairperson Lirones stated that since there is a major through fare through this area it should not change into Washtenaw Avenue.

There was a consensus of the Commissioners not to open the Comprehensive Plan for this property.

Chairperson Lirones stated the next proposal is from Midwestern Consulting, and the property is located along Clark Road and Golfside Road in Section 1. She said that their letter stated there is no demand for office use in this area.

Earl Ophoff, MCI, stated that the property is seventeen (17) acres. He said that the existing parcel wraps around an office complex, surrounded by residential uses. He said that the previous zoning was office and multiple family. He said that they want to reduce the office use to one side of the site. He said that the rest of the property would be for multiple family residential use.

Chairperson Lirones asked if the lower portion of the property is zoned for multiple family residential. She said that it is zoned for nine (9) dwelling units per acre, and the other portion of the site is zoned for office up to Clark Road.

Mr. Ophoff stated that the lower portion of the site is zoned for residential use. He discussed how Washtenaw Community College (WCC) is growing and the students are looking for housing in the area. He said that it is master planned to have an internal road system so people would not have to use the major roads.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the maximum density is nine (9) dwelling units per acre.

Mr. Ophoff stated that they are proposing two hundred four (204) units on sixteen (16) acres.

Chairperson Lirones stated that this density is higher than the maximum. She said that this is more than a change to the land use map. She said that the Commission made a decision not to want to develop any more large density developments. She asked the Commission if they are interested in this large development.

Commissioner Resha stated that more greenspace is needed in this area.

Commissioner Ward stated that he does not support any higher density than what is noted in the Comprehensive Plan. He said that when they reviewed the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission wanted a mix of owned dwellings versus rented dwellings. He said that the ratio is too high for multiple family dwellings.

Chairperson Lirones stated that she is concerned that this area would become less attractive if it was filled up with high-density residential uses. She said that this could be a highly successful office use.

Commissioner Ward stated that Washtenaw Community College could soon grow out of their space. He said that there is a lot of off-site leasing occurring.

Mr. Ophoff stated that WCC is utilizing the land that they previously held as open space. He said that they are asking the Commission for feedback on moving away from an all office use.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the office component is sound. She said that the Comprehensive Plan would allow for a rezoning to nine (9) dwelling units per acre.

Commissioner Ward stated that if they came in with a proposal that mapped the Comprehensive Plan so that the southern area was multiple family residential they could create connectivity with the existing residential uses, and complete the road connectivity. He said that the northern area could expand upon the office or establishments that could benefit the multiple family residential needs.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the Park Place for Business office complex is doing very well.

Commissioner Ward stated that many of the office spaces along Clark Road are drab. He said that they could populate the office uses by making them an attractive design.

Mr. Ophoff discussed revising the Planned Unit Development.

Chairperson Lirones stated that there are concessions in the PUD that could be beneficial.

Chairperson Lirones stated the next proposal is from Homeplace Community Land Trust (HCLT), and the property is located along Lohr Road in Section 8. She mentioned that this is the Letitia Byrd property.

PV Roby, HCLT, stated that their mission is to develop housing. She said that there are 3.8 acres zoned office/residential. She said that they would like to do a PUD to construct approximately sixteen (16) homes. She said that they would incorporate a lot of open space with the church.

Chairperson Lirones stated that Ms. Byrd is thinking of making the home in front into a museum. She asked what the overall size of the site is.

Ms. Roby replied eight (8) acres including the church and the David Byrd Center.

Chairperson Lirones stated that this proposal has been under discussion for a long time. She said that the Township is open to affordable housing.

Ms. Roby stated that Urban County is financing their feasibility study. She added that they are subsidized and will retain ownership of the land. She said that for a family of four (4) the income would be sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), and the home would cost approximately one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000).

Chairperson Lirones discussed the original Waters Place development. She stated that the office use has dwindled down. She said that the office use is not transitioning well to another use.

Commissioner Ward stated that having a residential use in this area could make sense. He said that there are facilities nearby, and residents could walk to the commercial uses. He added that the Township does lack office space. He stated that he is concerned that if this is given a certain number of dwelling units per acre it could be developed to the maximum allowed.

Ms. Roby asked the Commission if they would prefer a PUD rather than changing the zoning of the property.

Chairperson Lirones replied no. She said that this land is small and even if it is developed to the maximum it would be a small development.

Commissioner Resha asked how large the parcel is that would become a museum.

Ms. Roby replied eight (8) acres.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the church is larger, in acreage, than the museum.

Commissioner Ward mentioned that this is a feasible concept.

Commissioner Luna asked how many units are proposed.

Ms. Roby stated that they might have to go up to sixteen (16) dwelling units, although their original proposal was eight (8) dwelling units per acre.

Chairperson Lirones discussed changing the Sheer property, which would be the whole triangle area.

Commissioner Ward stated that having a designation of six (6) or nine (9) dwelling units would be a nice transition for the area.

Chairperson Lirones stated that six (6) dwelling units would be a nice transition without being a drastic change.

Commissioner Griess stated that the Commission makes no exception for affordable housing.

The Commissioners supported opening the Comprehensive Plan for this section.

Commissioner Ward mentioned the site plan for AAYSA and the potential for a park. He said that the area is currently zoned AG preservation. He said that to align this parcel with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Township Comprehensive Plan, would the Commission want to consider changing the seventy (70) acres to public facilities and public/private open space.

Commissioner Resha stated that when it is zoned recreational he would not want to see it changed.

Chairperson Lirones stated that there would be a conservation easement on the Township park property, but not on the soccer fields. She said that this recommendation would be reviewed.

Chairperson Lirones stated that John Layer contacted her regarding his property on Maple Road. She added that his property is outside of the planning area because it is within the annexation boundary for the City of Saline. She added that Mr. Layer wanted to be in the PDR program. She said that the City of Saline has no PDR ordinance. She said that she would like to look into this, and have this property added to the AG preservation area. She said that Mr. Layer's brother is also interested in this type of change for his property on Maple Road. She added that there is a parcel near Marton Road, by the railroad tracks. She said that this is unappealing as a residential zoning and the owner might want to be in the AG preservation area.

Commissioner Ward stated that there is an area-wide plan for the Ann Arbor facilities, although part of that property is shown as nothing.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the white area on the map is property that has been annexed to the City of Ann Arbor.

Commissioner Ward stated that the planning boundaries should be adjusted.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the pathway plan is not sufficiently clear. She said that there is no pathway on Morgan Road, which is a mistake. She discussed the White Castle proposal on Packard Road, and stated that the plan is showing ten (10) foot wide asphalt and it should be concrete.

Commissioner Ward stated that the Commission should take time to review the pathway plan. He discussed the area planned for recreational use.

Chairperson Lirones stated that they would review this. She said that the Township parks might not be shown appropriately. She said that the area around the pump station on Morgan Road is shown for AG preservation, and this is not right.

Commissioner Ward mentioned two (2) small parcels on Bemis Road between Warner Road and Platt Road.

There were no further recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan.

8.0 Planner's Report

Planner Fowler stated that Planner Montagno and Planner McCoy are at the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) seminar on Mackinac Island. He added that the training workshop for the Planning Commission would be held Saturday, the 24th. He said that they have hired Brad Strader from LSL to conduct the workshop. He passed out a memorandum regarding what would be discussed during the workshop.

9.0 Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Lirones thanked Commissioner Griess for her service to the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the Township Board appointed John Norton as a new Planning Commissioner.

10.0 Commissioner's Report

The Commissioners thanked Commissioner Griess for her service to the Commission.

Commissioner Ward mentioned private drive. He stated that if new sites come in he would like to discourage private drives. He said that something needs to be done in the Land Development Standards and the Zoning Ordinance to encourage public thoroughfares.

Commissioner Resha mentioned the memorandum regarding stamps on the site plans.

Commissioner Ward stated that professional engineers should be stamping the plans, rather than landscape architects.

11.0 Approval of Prior Minutes

11.1 Minutes of August 18, 2005

Motion by Commissioner Luna, supported by Commissioner Shepps, to approve the minutes of August 18, 2005, as corrected.

MOTION CARRIED

12.0 Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Luna, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Chairperson Lirones adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

s/Wilma Luna, Secretary

November 17, 2005