
PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Members Present: Richard Plisko, Wilma Luna, Christina Lirones, Stuart Dowty, John Norton, Maria Constant.

Members Absent: Dennis Ward.

Others Present: Russell Banush, Michael Joss, Sue Collins, Stonewall Griffin, Natasha O'Hair, Sydni Williams, Planning Director Bruce E. Fowler, Assistant Planner Suzanne McCoy, 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 Luna, supported by Commissioner Plisko, to move Item 7.1 to follow Item 5.1.

MOTION CARRIED

4.0 Items from the Floor

None.

5.0 Public Hearings

5.1 RZ 06-01 Michael Joss
(submitted to rezone from AG to R-2B)

Director Fowler reviewed the Planning Report. He stated that the rezoning petition is requesting a change in use from agricultural (AG) to low density multiple family residential (R-2B). He said that there is one residence on site. He said that there is a one-acre wetland in the northwest corner of the property. He listed the neighboring land uses. He reviewed a previous rezoning petition from Michael Joss for a neighboring property. He said that a sidewalk would be provided on the north side of Cloverlane Road. He said that there is no Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) service in the area. He stated that eighty-four (84) units could possibly be constructed under the R-2B zoning district. He said that the requested zoning conforms with the area. He said that the proposed change would not have an adverse effect on traffic flow.

Chairperson Lirones asked if the existing residence on the property is occupied.

Michael Joss, applicant, replied yes.

Chairperson Lirones asked if the tenants would be moving.

Mr. Joss replied yes.

Chairperson Lirones opened the public hearing.

There were no comments.

Motion by Commissioner Luna, supported by Commissioner Plisko, to close the public hearing.

MOTION CARRIED

Item 7.1 moved to follow Item 5.1 of the Public Hearing.

Chairperson Lirones stated that Commissioner Ward sent comments on the rezoning. She reviewed his letter voicing support for the petition, because it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Motion by Commissioner Dowty, supported by Commissioner Norton, to postpone action on RZ 06-01 Michael Joss, and direct staff to draft a resolution recommending approval to the Township Board.

MOTION CARRIED

6.0 Old Business

6.1 RZ 97-12 Arbor Meadows/ Meadowview PUD (submitted for determination of major/minor change to the PUD)

Planner McCoy reviewed the report. She said that the applicant is requesting a major/minor change to the PUD. She said that the petition includes the Willow Pond development of single-family homes, Arbor Meadows manufactured homes, Meadowview condominiums, Meadowview subdivision, and a small commercial and office area. She said that Item #5 in the report states that the Planning Commission should be aware that every area plan approved shows areas of interior pathways that provide connectivity within the development. She said that Item #6 states that there is not an existing sidewalk in the road right-of-way bordering the development. She said that the interior pathways are the only existing network for pedestrian circulation. She said that there is a punch-list of items that need to be completed in the Willow Pond subdivision. She said that the Township has letters of credit that are due to expire and the items have to be completed by May 27, 2006, or the letters have to be renewed. She said that if the items are not completed the Township will draw on the letters of credit to complete the items in the punch list. She said that the previous Commission made points in their findings that the pathway would be located within the community, and it would help with connectivity throughout the development.

Commissioner Dowty asked about the punch list procedure.

Planner McCoy stated that a punch list is a list of items not completed on a site. She said that there are landscaping, sidewalk and pathways, and grading issues. She said that these are items that have to be completed to bring a site into compliance with the approved final site plan.

Commissioner Dowty asked if the Township staff sent an unsolicited letter to the applicant to tell them about the outstanding site issues.

Planner McCoy replied yes, the letter of March 20, 2006, outlines the items that need to be completed to release the bonds.

Commissioner Dowty mentioned the drawing attached to Planner Montagno's report, and commented on the dotted lines showing the pathways on the plan.

Chairperson Lirones mentioned that the original PUD was modified.

Planner McCoy stated that the dotted areas are shown on the area plan. She said that only a section of the pathway is located in the Willow Pond area.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the site plan called for a wood chip path. She said that the pathway loops around to Textile Road. She discussed a future bus stop and bike pathway in that area. She asked if the completion of this pathway was listed in previous punch list reports.

Planner McCoy replied yes.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the petitioner's letter discussed the installation of the pathways, and that they were indicated on the area plan although no reference to them was provided in the recorded plat. She said that the site plan is what governs the improvements onsite. She said the letter also specified that the current homeowners state that they had no knowledge that there would be public pathways behind their homes, and they are adamantly opposed to having them. She said that it was clearly shown in the common area on the site plan.

Commissioner Dowty stated that he has many questions for the developer. He said that this changes the whole character of how you get around within the development.

Chairperson Lirones stated that it does change the character of the development. She said that a change in concept, use or character of the development constitutes a major change.

Commissioner Dowty stated that the Commission does not know how many homeowners have objected to this or what their opinions are.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the pathway should have been installed so the residents could see it when they purchased their homes.

Commissioner Norton stated that he is concerned that it is calling for wood-bark pathways. He said that this could negatively affect the pathway because a wood bark pathway is not always maintained properly.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the Township has changed their standards over the years, and they are now requesting limestone pathways. She said that she is not sure if the material could be changed. She said that there is an existing bark pathway that people use, and the proposed pathway would join up to the existing pathway.

Commissioner Luna stated that this proposal is a major change.

Chairperson Lirones read the comments from Commissioner Ward. He said that it was unfortunate that they failed to include the pathway in the recorded final plat. He said that he does not support removal of the path. He said that the pathway should be constructed of limestone or other durable materials. He said that this request is a major change because it is a change in the concept, and the use or character of the development. He said that pathways are integral for all developments.

Commissioner Dowty asked what would happen if the developer did not install the pathways.

Chairperson Lirones stated that it would still be common area, although residents' yards start to encroach into it and it vanishes. She said that unmarked common areas eventually become someone's backyard.

Motion by Commissioner Dowty, supported by Commissioner Luna, to determine that the proposed changes to RZ 97-12 Arbor Meadows/Meadowview PUD are found to be a major change to the PUD, referencing Zoning Ordinance Section 52.12.C Item #1 and Item #2, having to do with the concept and character of the PUD.

ROLL CALL:

YES: PLISKO, LUNA, LIRONES, DOWTY, NORTON, CONSTANT.

NO: NONE.

ABSENT: WARD.

ABSTAIN: NONE.

MOTION CARRIED

7.0 New Business

7.1 RZ 06-01 Michael Joss
(submitted to rezone from AG to R-2B)

Item 7.1 moved to follow Item 5.1 of the Public Hearing.

8.0 Planner's Report

Director Fowler discussed the Zoning Enabling Act. He mentioned that the Township is enforcing the Sign Ordinance, and they are following up with letters and fines. He added that there are not as many signs being put up. He stated that Washtenaw County formed a task force for sign removal, and that he serves as representative of Pittsfield Township.

Russell Banush, resident, asked that if Washtenaw County is responsible for signage on county roads, would MDOT be responsible for the signage on Michigan Avenue. He asked if the Township Ordinance transcends the laws of the county and state. He said that the signs are at the exit ramps for US-23 and on Michigan Avenue.

Planner McCoy stated that these are under MDOT's jurisdiction. She said that the township should coordinate with MDOT to have the signs removed.

The Commissioners and staff discussed types of signage allowed, and enforcement issues.

Director Fowler discussed working with Commissioner Dowty concerning Nature's Garden Center.

9.0 Chairperson's Report

None.

10.0 Commissioner's Report

None.

11.0 Approval of Prior Minutes

11.1 Minutes of April 20, 2006

Motion by Commissioner Luna, supported by Commissioner Plisko, to approve the minutes, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

12.0 Adjournment

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

MOTION CARRIED

Chairperson Lirones adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

s/Wilma Luna, Secretary

June 1, 2006