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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
7525 Highland Road
White Lake, MI 48383
August 1, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Meagher called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called: Mr. Lewsley, Ms. McNulty, Ms. Novak-Phelps and Mr. Pierson were excused.

ROLL CALL: Steve Anderson
Debby Dehart
Rik Kowall, Board Liaison
David Lewsley - Excused
Peter Meagher, Chairperson
Sarah McNulty, Vice Chairperson - Excused
Gail Novak-Phelps - Excused
William Pierson - Secretary - Excused
Stan Woodhouse

Also Present: Sean O'Neil, AICP, Planning Director
David Birchler, Township Consultant
Greg Gucwa, Township Engineer
Lynn Hinton, Recording Secretary

Visitors: 2

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Anderson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Dehart supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (5 yes votes)

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes of May 16, 2013

Mr. Anderson moved to approve the minutes of May 16, 2013 as corrected. Mr. Woodhouse supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (5 yes votes)

Call to the Public (for items not on the agenda)

Mr. Meagher opened the discussion for public comment on items not listed on the agenda, but none was offered.

New Business:

- a. **File No.** 13-011 Gateway Commons
Location: Located on the southwest corner of Highland and Bogie Lake Roads, currently zoned (GB) General Business, identified as parcel numbers 12-20-426-003 (6350-6358 Highland Road) and 12-20-402-003 (vacant property), consisting of approximately 5.32 acres

Request: 1) Preliminary Site Plan Approval
Applicant: Mr. Tony Seagraves
3467 E. Commerce
Commerce, MI 48382

Mr. Birchler reviewed his report dated July 16, 2013. The current application proposes the development of the property with 2 drive-thru restaurants and a bank with a drive-thru, which would require Special Land Use approval. There are currently no tenants, but the applicant is soliciting contingent on approvals from the township. He noted that they will only get a single entrance off Highland Road and the drive-thru's are going to be problematic, however, the applicant has revised their design on how the circulation would work. There's not a lot of need to enter the site and make the continuing westbound movement on Bogie Lake and it would make more sense to enter and exit from Highland Road. The wetland situation will not make the connection from the church property possible.

Mr. Birchler noted this area may need a traffic study, but until they have users, there is no reason to require the study at this point.

The applicant is seeking preliminary site plan approval so they can find prospective tenants first. There are a number of items they cannot provide at this time, but Mr. Birchler is happy enough with the basic circulation plan and parking layout with 2 access points to allow them to proceed.

Mr. Woodhouse stated he has reservations with the site plan. They've tried to clean up things, and with preliminary approval, there are site approval costs. As tenants are acquired, he wants to make it clear that approval of the preliminary plan will not suggest that the township will grant any relief from variances to the requirements. Any queued up cars in circulation will create problems and this will be very tight on the site with what they want to do.

Mr. Gucwa reviewed his reported dated July 23, 2013. He indicated that the second submittal had improvements, but he would like to see the plans sealed by an engineer. Sanitary sewer should be extended to the property line, but he noted that the water main extension across M-59 and down Bogie Lake Road is shown on the plan. Storm water management has been included with a treatment structure at the outlet and Mr. Gucwa feels final details can be taken care of at the final review. No sufficient grades are shown on the plans to determine if ADA compliance has been met, but he feels this can be done later as well. Prior to approval, he is recommending that plans need to be signed and sealed by the engineer.

Mr. O'Neil indicated that this is a corner that the township is interested in seeing developed. When this concept started, there was an understanding there were tenants in mind. Without Special Land Use approval, the project can't go any further. If a tenant comes in with a larger sit down restaurant, this plan could change at Special Land Use approval.

Mr. Seagraves stated that his main problem right now is that prospective tenants can't see the potential for the site. Some of them feel the site would be best suited for a strip mall, but he thinks he has the best possible proposal. They are coming as close to the wetlands as possible and will keep them natural with a retaining wall.

Mr. Meagher asked if they would build low or raise the grade of the property. Mr. Seagraves stated they would raise he grade somewhat, but it would still be lower than the street. Most of the fill would be on the far south side of the property. The site is very challenging and he would like to get a canvas to work with so prospective tenants aren't looking at an open pit.

Mr. Kowall asked Mr. Seagraves what would "lock him in". Mr. Seagraves responded that he would have 31,000 sq. ft. to fill and the retaining wall to the south and west. Mr. Kowall supports the project and feels from a marketing standpoint, if they could remove the blight and put something on the site, this project could come to fruition by getting a plateau in place.

Mr. O'Neil said the township is in favor with whatever Mr. Seagraves can do to prepare the site to get some interest to go forward with vertical construction. Given the fact there is an active site plan, it doesn't make sense to put this through the Ordinance #88 process and heavy bonding requirements at this time. His thought is if Mr. Seagraves progresses with a favorable recommendation, he would be prepared with a grading plan to seek approval from the Board with conditions. Whatever is done will be an improvement to what is there now. Mr.

Seagraves is preparing for future development. This is a unique request, but at a department level, Mr. O'Neil is comfortable with the plan, but with restrictions in place.

Mr. Anderson stated he appreciates what they are doing to move forward with the process. They've looked at restaurants, etal. He asked Mr. Seagraves what he would need to move forward. Mr. Seagraves said his best option at this point is to enhance the property. Ultimately, he'd like to secure the corner site. He can do the site without securing tenants, but there is no financing.

Ms Dehart asked where he would get fill dirt. Mr. Seagraves stated he has secured the Anderson property, but he can't reserve it, it would be on a first come first serve basis. If he can't get, it will be 660 trips @ 28 miles per trip, which would cost a significant amount of money. Ms. Dehart also asked if there were testing on the soil to make sure it's not contaminated.

Mr. Kowall moved in File 13-011 to recommend to the Township Board to grant Preliminary Site Plan approval, subject to the Final Site Plan review and Special Land Use approval, and recommendations of the engineering and planning department, with the applicant returning to the Planning Commission for further approval. Ms. Dehart supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: Kowall – yes; Dehart – yes; Woodhouse – yes; Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes. (5 yes votes)

b. Discussion on the (PG) Pontiac Lake Gateway District

Mr. O'Neil indicated that Mr. Birchler put together a presentation to present to 7 waterfront property owners on Walt's Point. This rezoning initiative would benefit all property owners by adding value to their parcels. This proposal is pulling info from the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance and the intent is to educate those 7 property owners in an informal meeting. Mr. O'Neil drafted a letter to those property owners and wanted the commissioners to review it and offer comments/suggestions.

There was some discussion regarding the mobile home park in that area. There is a need to connect to sewer and the state may be getting involved because the lot is pump and haul at this point.

The presentation material developed by Mr. Birchler is exciting and the hope is to get MDOT to do something with the bridge area when they come through to replace the road. There is a lot of synergy and opportunity for this area with a bridge and fishing pier.

Mr. Birchler added that the Gateway is the best bet for potential that would resolve problems. The concept is to have an informal meeting with those property owners and give them a tutorial explaining that the township has created a special zoning district that has potential and also adds value to their land. This would be an opportunity for those property owners to ask questions and there are a lot of resources to use to help them through the process.

Mr. Meagher understands the concept, but questioned how this affects him as a property owner since the township can't force those property owners to get on board. Mr. Birchler explained that the benefits of rezoning can be costly and time consuming, at which the township would be taking this on. Secondly, the way the property is zoned right now is a hodgepodge mix of classifications and there is no opportunity to market property now with how it is zoned. This proposal would be getting these properties into a zoning classification package where a developer can talk to them individually. The township is positioning the area to be a redevelopment site. Mr. O'Neil added that this saves time and money of having them come in individually. And, while all this is going on, the Gin Mill will be under construction, and they have helped bring water and sewer to the area. Ideally, Gin Mill cleaning up their site demonstrates there is potential for that corner.

There was discussion on how to go about approaching those 7 property owners. The consensus was to have Mr. O'Neil hand deliver the draft letter to the property owners and have a very informal open house at the Dublin Center in lieu of a regular Planning Commission meeting, possibly the 2nd meeting in September.

Mr. Anderson asked whether these waterfront property owners have a formal organization or hold group meetings. Mr. O'Neil responded that they all know each other and all try to help each other out. When Gin Mill was going through their approval process, there was only one property owner that was not represented at that meeting.

Liaison's Report

Ms. Dehart reported that the Parks & Rec held a very nice ribbon cutting ceremony for Bloomer Park and there was an article in the Oakland Press. Horse trail signs have been ordered and the cost was very reasonable. They have requested a letter from the supervisor's office to the RCOC to put the signs up.

Mr. Kowall reported there have been a number of board meetings. A few highlights from those meetings include consideration of a new township facade by utilizing a grant available from HUD in the amount of \$147,000 that is non-matching. There has been much discussion on whether to proceed with building enhancements or market the property. The building would not pass many audits and the administration needs to come up with a long term plan. He encouraged input from everyone on what to do with the property.

Next week the board will look at the garbage removal contract. It is likely an increase is coming based on fuel consumption. This could amount to an extra \$1.50 per household.

Planning Consultant's Report

Mr. Birchler had nothing further to add.

Director's Report

Mr. O'Neil indicated that the public hearing on the CIP will be held on September 5.

With regard to Fisk Corners next to Sonic, the township has called in the developer's letters of credit with the bank. The developer has a window in which to clean this area up before the township hires someone to do it.

Projects on the radar include an interest in retail space at Hill Road and M-59 with the possibility of the twin building being built. The developer just has to pull a building permit and they can proceed.

There is also interest in the corner of White Banks and M-59 for a possible retail center.

There are large parcels down Bogie Lake Road primed for residential and we may see some rezoning requests.

Communications:

Next meeting dates:

- Regular meeting – August 15, 2013
- Regular meeting – September 5, 2013

Adjournment

Mr. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Kowall supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (5 yes votes)