

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**
7525 Highland Road
White Lake, MI 48383
JULY 15, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.
Electronic Meeting

Chairperson Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called.

ROLL CALL: Steve Anderson, White Lake, MI
Peter Meagher, White Lake, MI
Rhonda Grubb, White Lake, MI
Debbie Dehart, White Lake, MI
Joe Seward, White Lake, MI
Matt Slicker, White Lake, MI
Scott Ruggles, White Lake, MI
Merrie Carlock, White Lake, MI
Mark Fine, White Lake, MI

Absent: None

Also Present: Sean O'Neil, WLT Planning Director
Sherri Barber, Recording Secretary

Visitors: John Jackson, McKenna
Kathleen Jackson, McKenna
Leigh Merrill, DLZ

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Meagher moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Carlock supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Dehart – yes; Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes; Grubb – yes; Seward – yes; Slicker – yes; Ruggles – yes; Carlock – yes, Fine -- yes). 9 yes votes.

Approval of Minutes

a. June 17, 2021

Commissioner Meagher moved to approve the minutes of June 17, 2021 as presented. Commissioner Grubb supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Dehart – yes;

Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes; Grubb – yes; Seward – yes; Slicker – yes; Ruggles – yes; Carlock – yes, Fine -- yes). 9 yes votes.

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

No callers were waiting to speak at the Call to the Public.

Public Hearing:

None.

Continuing Business

a) Oakland Harvesters

Location: Located on the north side of White Lake Road, west of Old White Lake Road and east of Orr Road, consisting of 2 acres. Currently zoned Light Manufacturing (LM). Identified as vacant parcel 12-01-127-001

Request: **Preliminary Site Plan Approval**
Special Land Use Approval

Applicant: Oakland Harvesters
840 Sherbrooke St
Commerce Township, MI 48382

Planning Director O'Neil reported that we had a special hearing last month on this agenda item. There are some outstanding comments from the review letters. Kathleen Jackson from McKenna summarized the major issues for the site. It's a 2 acre site, they are proposing a 9,000 square foot building for storage of their equipment along with parking. McKenna is looking for building height, site condo documents and lot coverage. The applicant is trying to defer the sidewalk until the abutting properties have their sidewalks. She noted that there is a lot of old equipment on the site that won't go into the new building and Ms. Jackson recommends a bond for the removal of that equipment. The reason for the special land use is the outdoor storage and lack of screening, the screening could be deferred to a landscape plan. Planning Director O'Neil noted that there isn't currently any sidewalks near the site, and along the parking lot the sidewalk would need to be widened. They also need curbing on the site. The Fire Department is asking for additional information for their review, and they may need a hydrant well. The applicant needs to address that tonight and follow up with Fire Chief Holland.

Ty Nuottlia was in attendance on behalf of Oakland Harvesters. They are a weed harvesting company for local lakes. They have not established the building height yet. They will have a berm with trees and a gate. In the last couple weeks they have done a large cleanup. There are some remaining harvesters that will be scrapped or sold in the next few years. The building will be an office and indoor storage. They've had some vandalism and theft out there and they want to protect their investment. The Michigan winters are hard on the equipment and the new equipment will be stored inside.

Trustee Ruggles noted that he can understand his position but down the line these requirements will benefit you. There isn't much benefit for the sidewalk at this time, as long as he's willing to join in at a later date. Mr. Meagher asked Planning Director O'Neil about the frontage with the sidewalk requirement. He agrees with Trustee Ruggles logic with the

lack of pedestrian traffic. It is required by ordinance. An applicant recently went before ZBA about curbing and the ZBA did not allow the plans to be without the curbing. If we waived the sidewalk requirement at this time, we don't know if the sidewalk would get done by him down the line because he may not own it any longer. We could get the Township board to look at a deferral on the sidewalk and possibly get a bond. Could he go down to 17' long parking spaces? Commissioner Anderson wanted to understand what equipment is being stored. He's allowed to have outside storage with the special land use. It has to be screened. The Fire Department will have to look at the fuel storage. It can't be broken down equipment. Commissioner Dehart asked if there will be a well and septic on site? Yes there will. She wanted to point out that most new trucks are over 20' long. Do they use chemicals at all and will these chemicals be stored on site? Is there a possibility of leakage for oil or fuel? They are antichemical and there will be no chemical storage on site. They get their tanks from the fuel company and the tanks are up to code. Commissioner Slicker said the sidewalk should be 7', he doesn't see any way around that. On the site plan the sidewalk could be installed at the request of the Township board. If there is a large building there will be a lot of erosion without paving, or at least get the downspouts to the basin. Commissioner Seward asked if the tanks get tested? Chief Holland reported to Planning Director O'Neil that it has to be a double wall tank with locked nozzle. If it's long term it would have to be State approved per Fire Chief Holland.

Commissioner Carlock wanted to echo Commissioner Slicker's comments. She is concerned about the screening and the amount of things on the site now. She lives near industrial land that's not screened on the backside. An A-1 buffer is required on White Lake Road. Commissioner Slicker asked about the drainage easement, and Mr. Leuffgen would have a better answer on that. The design of the sidewalk has to be shown on the plan and you can defer to the Township board to allow the sidewalk to be installed at a later date by some type of agreement.

Once this gets through final site plan approval this will all be cleaned up.

Commissioner Meagher moved to recommend to the Township Board the approval of the Special Land Use for Oakland Harvesters located on the north side of White Lake Road, west of Old White Lake Road and east of Orr Road, consisting of 2 acres. Currently zoned Light Manufacturing (LM). Identified as vacant parcel 12-01-127-001. The approval is based on consultant and Planning Department review comments and subject to obtaining final site plan approval. Commissioner Dehart supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Dehart – yes; Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes; Grubb – yes; Seward – yes; Slicker – yes; Ruggles – yes; Carlock – yes, Fine -- yes). 9 yes votes.

Commissioner Meagher moved to recommend to the Township Board the approval of the Preliminary Site Plan for Oakland Harvesters located on the north side of White Lake Road, west of Old White Lake Road and east of Orr Road, consisting of 2 acres. Currently zoned Light Manufacturing (LM). Identified as vacant parcel 12-01-127-001. The approval is subject to the standards, all planning and consultant comments, the plan being amended for 7' sidewalk adjacent to parking lot and the applicant entering into an agreement to put in the sidewalk when ordered by the White Lake Township Board and curbing added to the parking lot. Commissioner Slicker supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Dehart – yes; Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes; Grubb – yes; Seward – yes; Slicker – yes; Ruggles – yes; Carlock – yes, Fine -- yes). 9 yes votes.

b) Elizabeth Lake Retail

Location: Property described as vacant parcel number 12-21-426-004, located on the southwest corner of Elizabeth Lake Road and Highland Road (M-59), consisting of approximately 69 acres.

Applicant would like to rezone approximately 8.61 acres of the northeast portion of the parcel, from **(AG) Agricultural to (PB) Planned Business District** or any other appropriate zoning district.

Requests: **Rezoning Approval**
Preliminary Site Plan Approval

Applicant: MA Archmaster
40500 Ann Arbor #105 LL
Plymouth, MI 48170

Trustee Ruggles would like to be recused from this agenda item.

Commission Fine motioned to recuse Trustee Ruggles from the Elizabeth Lake Retail discussion. Commissioner Grubb supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Dehart – yes; Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes; Grubb – yes; Seward – yes; Slicker – yes; Carlock – yes, Fine -- yes). 8 yes votes.

Trustee Ruggles went into the waiting room.

The Planning Commission received a plan on Tuesday and Planning Director O'Neil emailed the plan to all the Planning Commission members. This is a one page concept or layout. Tonight you cannot do a preliminary site plan approval. You can give them some direction, but you can't take any action. It's completely different plan, it's better. He wanted to thank the participants who met and gave the direction. Leigh Merrill is from DLZ in case any traffic impact questions came up. The traffic study he reviewed previously was for a much different layout.

Richard Shapak stated that they worked hard to shape a plan based on the comments made during the meeting. They took the comments to heart especially with the stores right on M59 and Elizabeth Lake Road. They are here tonight to look for other thoughts on how we could work on this. They would like to move forward with what we have at this point and the comments we receive tonight. He feels it has been made very walkable. He thinks your major restaurants are not interested in a space without a drive-through. Our intent is that this should be a major draw for White Lake and surrounding areas. We have done away with one entry off of M-59.

Commissioner Fine asked about 3 drive-throughs. He sees cars jamming up at lunch or their heavier times and it seems like it could be a problem, particularly in the right corner. Planning Director O'Neil asked Mr. Merrill about it, and he can't directly comment without seeing the turning radius. He sees the potential concern in the Northeast corner. It's the biggest concern he can see on the quick review he's done today. Commissioner Carlock is happier with this concept, she's assuming it's making it more aesthetic for the residents with the retention pond. She likes the small businesses and being up to the road, not looking at cars all the time. Planning Director O'Neil noted that the number of units for the residential aspect looks very congested, 9 per floor. It seems like a high concentration of units. Commissioner Dehart is okay with the number of units. Didn't we have an issue with the road in the natural features setback? Planning Director O'Neil stated that Planned Business doesn't have the residential component like this. John Jackson from McKenna noted that looking at the plan there are entrances from the parking lot side. When you look at the side of the buildings facing M59 and Elizabeth Lake Road they don't have the same type

of sidewalks going to the buildings. They don't have pedestrian access or windows facing out to the roads. Can you elaborate? The buildings will all face to the parking lot. Mr. Shapak stated that putting anything on the road side you'd have people going in to two sides of the building which you don't usually see. Planning Director O'Neil stated that the architectural character of those buildings are critical and would have to mirror the front. Ms. Carlock frequents Milford and almost every store has a back and front. Commissioner Anderson wants to see the architectural look and structure of the other buildings in the area. Mr. Shapak stated that we had a lot done in a week and we will get your input and come back in a week with architectural layout. We are looking at a rooftop terrace on a restaurant as well. Commissioner Grubb thanked them for listening to us. She's disappointed with the 3rd drive through. She would be concerned that the parking would be enough to support this. The residential area is listed as three stories, the assisted living in the area is only two stories. Nazir Jawich is happy we're meeting again, Mr. Shapak did a great job drawing this. We addressed many things suggested at the last meeting. There is a similar concept at Haggerty and 7 Mile, identical to this type of layout and they did a wonderful job. We talk about viability and it has to be economically feasible and there has to be middle ground. Mr. Shapak stated that we have three major tenants who require drive-throughs. It's mixed use and there will be demand and they will follow the names.

Commissioner Seward stated that you listened to everyone and the initial reaction was exciting. The third drive-through and the dumpster locations isn't warm and fuzzy. Do you think you can fill all the retail with open spots just across the street. Mr. Shapak stated that you have some plazas that are full and some that aren't. The three drive through tenants will draw businesses into the plaza. There are two other strong candidates. Commissioner Seward noted that we aren't being asked to approve rezoning tonight. He would like to do both at the same time. The Master Plan talks about Town Center. Thanks so much for the new plan, its encouraging.

Commissioner Dehart likes the elevations being staggered. She doesn't like dumpsters in the center of the parking lot, but she understands this is a concept. Is there enough parking for the apartments? She doesn't see the walkability from apartments to stores. They listened to our comments and have done some great things. The negative is the third drive-through. You may have some unhappy retailers. The retailers can't get their customers across the drive-through lines. Who wants to live next to a commercial center? How will the apartments park all of their cars?

Commissioner Slicker asked if the drive-throughs need an escape lane? Yes they do, they may be able to achieve this with some redesign. He pointed out that this is 8.6 acres and Applebees are about 1 to 2 acres. This is a dense site. He also noted that on the survey – your curb line needs to match up with Elizabeth Lake Road. Mr. Shapak noted that the drive matches up with Kroger on purpose. He doesn't like the dumpsters in the middle of the parking lot. Mr. Jawich stated that the dumpsters are far away due to concern about being close to the building, we want them as far away from the building as possible.

Commissioner Anderson doesn't like a 3 story building looking down on dumpsters. Mr. Jackson might be premature, but Planned Business doesn't support mixed use. The most appropriate zoning is Planned Development or Town Center. In PD, we can incorporate some Town Center elements. As the developer continues to work on this, they need guidance for the number of drive throughs, orientation, and concerns about pedestrians walking next to drive-through. The Haggerty Road example discussed earlier shows equipment, etc. along side of the road, where is this in this plan?

Planning Director O'Neil would agree with Mr. Jackson. There isn't a solid break between two types of uses, maybe putting a greenbelt area to divide two areas would work. It depends on how it stacks up, cut through traffic wouldn't meander through residential. We've done a lot of work on layout but not on architectural, he would ask them to work on that now.

If there are any other comments you want to run through Planning, we will pass them along.

Commissioner Seward asked Mr. Jackson and Planning Director O'Neil if alcohol is allowed in Planned Development? Planning Director O'Neil noted that it would be restaurants without alcohol. Town Center allows drive-throughs as a permitted use. We need to find out which one provides the best use. PD seems to be the closest fit.

Mr. Shapak thanked the entire group for their comments, thoughts and guidance and they will be back very shortly.

Old Business:

No old business.

New Business

No new business.

Liaison's Report

Commissioner Grubb reported that Parks and Recreation met last night in person. They met at Hawley park and did a walk through. CJ Bratta is no longer on the Parks Board. Picnic table delivery is backed up. The Hawley Park sign has been received and will be put up whenever the frame is completed.

Commission Dehart reported that ZBA has not met since the last PC meeting.

Planning Consultant's Report

No report.

Director's Report:

Planning Director O'Neil reported that in August we will probably meet in person again. The annual CIP update is underway. You should get it in the second August meeting. Trailside Meadow is coming back to change their second phase and amend their site plan and development agreement. They aren't having success with the active adult idea. We preserved some trees and he appreciates MI homes working with them on that. Oakland Harvesters and Pontiac Lake Apartments will go before the board next week. The Sonic is undergoing redevelopment. They will be tearing it down, there was a flood and waterline break. It will be double user with a drive-through. It's a great thing to replace a vacant building. There was a request for funding for the Civic Center and the Township is close to receiving \$ 1.6 mil for reconstruction of Elizabeth Lake Road through the Civic Center. They have asked RCOC to support on street parking along Elizabeth Lake Road.

Other Business:

None.

Communications:

There will be a meeting on August 5, 2021.

Next Meeting Dates: August 5, 2021
August 19, 2021

Adjournment:

Commissioner Meagher moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. Commissioner Fine supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Dehart – yes; Meagher – yes; Anderson – yes; Grubb – yes; Seward – yes; Slicker – yes; Carlock – yes, Fine -- yes). 8 yes votes.