

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 4, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Seward called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Roll was called:

Present:

T. Joseph Seward, Chairperson
Steve Anderson
Debby Dehart
Pete Meagher
Matt Slicker
Merrie Carlock, Vice Chairperson
Mona Sevic

Absent:

Robert Seeley
Scott Ruggles, Township Board Liaison

Others:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Justin Quagliata, Staff Planner
Mike Leuffgen, DLZ
John Iacoangeli, Beckett & Raeder
Hannah Kennedy-Galley, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 7, 2024

Chairperson Seward noted a correction to the minutes: Page 2, the name Seifman needed to be corrected.

MOTION by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the minutes of March 7, 2024 as corrected. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes, Meagher abstained).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. Gateway Crossing

Property described as parcel numbers 12-20-426-003 (6350 Highland Road) and 12-20-402-003 (6340 Highland Road), located at the southwest corner of Bogie Lake Road and Highland Road, consisting of approximately 5.36 acres.

Request: **Preliminary site plan and special land use approvals**

Applicant: Najor Companies

Staff Planner Quagliata gave a brief overview of the applicant's request.

Commissioner Sevic asked staff for clarification regarding ingress and egress to the property. Staff Planner Quagliata said it would be right in, right out only on M-59, and there was another proposed driveway on the east side of Bogie Lake Road

Commissioner Meagher asked staff if the distance from Bogie Lake to the driveway was an MDOT or Township issue. Staff Planner Quagliata confirmed it was a Township issue, and the applicant would need to seek a variance from the ZBA.

Commissioner Slicker asked for clarification regarding the traffic on the east side of the property. Staff Planner Quagliata said it was proposed to have traffic enter from the east driveway Bogie Lake Road to avoid drive thru traffic on the north and west, as a driveway on Highland Road. There was discussion to remove parking on the northeastern corner of the site to relieve traffic at the northwestern side of the building and to provide more safety to customers navigating the site. He added that there would be steady traffic within the site, and keeping the internal traffic moving safely was important.

Commissioner Anderson asked staff about the sidewalk. Staff Planner Quagliata said the developer was required to remove the existing shoulder and convert it to greenbelt. Sidewalk would be installed along the property's Highland Road frontage.

Commissioner Dehart asked staff if there would be a left turn lane on Bogie Lake Road. Staff Planner Quagliata said no, there was a right-hand taper that would need to be improved to the Road Commission standards.

Mr. Leuffgen briefly went over his engineering review.

Commissioner Anderson asked Mr. Leuffgen if the traffic study was reviewed. Mr. Leuffgen confirmed, DLZ reviewed the study and was in agreement with the findings.

Brian Najor, Najor Companies, was present to speak on behalf of his request. He had owned the property for many years, and was hoping to add to the Township's growth. His development was demand driven, and tried to put his best foot forward in coming up with a plan for the site. The site was challenging due to the elevation changes. He had previously worked with Redwood to provide necessary easements, and had a good rapport with Redwood.

Scott Tousignant, Boss Engineering, clarified a few items. He said regarding the drive approaches, he had spoken with MDOT and they were satisfied with those locations. If the M-59 approach was shifted, the construction feasibility would be minimal, and it would be the same with the Bogie Lake approach if it were shifted south due to the change in elevation. The one-way stub near Bogie Lake Road would help direct drivers to the drive thru lane. In regards to the circulation, the elimination of three parking spaces would help alleviate some of the concern. The site circulation would be kept predictable and there would potentially be the opportunity for a turn around.

Beau Wynn, Detroit Architectural Group, said the property would be well maintained and taken care of because it would remain a family-owned business. He briefly went over the building's elevations and materials.

Commissioner Carlock asked staff where the ordering and pick up areas would be. Staff Planner Quagliata said the drive thru would be on the south side of the building, and the window for pickup would be on the northeast area of the building.

Commissioner Carlock asked Mr. Wynn about the panels on the elevations. Mr. Wynn said they were decorative brick.

Commissioner Carlock asked staff about window coverage. Staff Planner Quagliata said the zoning ordinance required 30% window coverage on the east elevation of the building, and the applicant only proposed 9.27% coverage on their plan. The applicant would need to seek a variance for the reduction in coverage.

Commissioner Anderson asked Mr. Wynn if drivers westbound be able to see mechanical units on the top of the building. Mr. Wynn said it was possible due to the elevation of the site.

Commissioner Anderson asked Mr. Najor if all of the tenants were confirmed for the development. Mr. Najor said he was in talks with a few different tenants, and was in the process of securing the anchor tenant.

Commissioner Dehart asked if the drive thru lane was missed, would a driver have to turn around to get into the lane. Mr. Tousignant said yes.

Chairperson Seward opened the public hearing at 7:18 P.M.

Paul Cronenwett, pastor of Grace Church, wanted to know if there was impact to his church's driveway easement. It was confirmed there would be a positive impact due to the connection of the sidewalk pathway.

Chairperson Seward closed the public hearing at 7:20 P.M.

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the special land use for Gateway Crossing, identified as parcel numbers 12-20-426-003 (6350 Highland Road) and

12-20-402-003 (6340 Highland Road), subject to addressing staff and consultant’s comments and approval of ZBA variances. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Sevic, to recommend Township Board approve the preliminary site plan for Gateway Crossing, identified as parcel numbers 12-20-426-003 (6350 Highland Road) and 12-20-402-003 (6340 Highland Road), subject to addressing staff and consultant comments and approval of ZBA variances. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

B. 2024 Master Plan

Mr. Iacoangeli briefly reviewed the Master Plan process for the audience.

Director O’Neil confirmed this was the only public hearing for this matter. The next step in the process was for the Planning Commission to take action to approve the Master Plan, and then the Township Board would take action as well.

Director O’Neil thanked Mrs. Mary Earley for her help on editing the document on grammatical issues

Chairperson Seward opened the public hearing at 7:33 P.M.

Steve Woodard, 955 Schuyler, shared his concerns regarding the focus areas on the plan, in particular the area of Bogie Lake Road and Cedar Island Road. Mr. Iacoangeli said that focus area was reworked with the comments from resident participation and the Planning Commission.

Jim Runestad, 2210 Teggerdine, spoke in concern over an abundance of proposed apartments and potential congestion in the Township. He wanted the Master Plan to reflecting the concerns and desires of the Township residents.

Director O’Neil said a lot of the land use categories didn’t change in the plan, and multiple family uses were seen south of M-59, and the market has demanded the ranch style attached product that was geared toward empty nesters. There was interest in both purchasing and renting.

Commissioner Slicker stated that internal community members may not want multiple family housing, but future residents might want multiple family housing. Director O’Neil said as time and demands changed, it would be difficult to predict what the demand for people looking to move to the Township would want.

Mary Earley, 5925 Pine Ridge Court, had read the Master Plan in its entirety three times. She placed her trust in the Planning Commission and Township staff, and stated that Mr. Runestad’s comments were fearmongering.

Director O’Neil said there was a letter from a developer that was concerning the Pontiac Lake Gateway District.

The Planning Commission favored a lower building height for the Pontiac Lake Gateway district.

**MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Sevic to adopt by resolution the 2024 White Lake Master Plan and recommend approval to the Township Board. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 votes).
(Meagher/yes, Dehart/yes, Carlock/yes, Seward/yes, Anderson/yes, Sevic/yes, Slicker/yes).**

C. Zoning Ordinance amendments

Director O’Neil said he had not received a lot of feedback regarding the amendments. He highlighted the sections regarding height in the Pontiac Lake Gateway district. He added the ZBA saw countless variances regarding lot coverage, and it made sense to increase the allowable lot coverage by 5% - 10%, depending on lot size. There was discussion on renaming Agricultural and Suburban Farm. The Planning Commission favored leaving the districts as is. Parking was another significant standard that was discussed. The ordinance standard would remain the same, but the change would make the minimum the maximum, effectively reducing the standard by 75%. If an applicant wanted more than the maximum allowed parking, they would need to seek a variance.

Commissioner Slicker was concerned with parking problems in the future with strip centers with different use retailers. Director O’Neil said it was a possibility that parking could fall short in that instance, but for the most part, the change would be beneficial.

The Planning Commission shared their support of the change to the parking minimum/maximum.

ZBA approvals were extended to 12 months, and final site plan approvals were extended to 2 years.

Chairperson Seward opened the public hearing at 8:24 P.M.

There was one letter regarding the amendments to be included into the record.

Chairperson Seward closed the public hearing at 8:24 P.M.

**MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Carlock recommend the Township Board adopt the Zoning Ordinance amendments, subject to the omittance of sections 11, 12, 14, and 15. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes).
(Slicker/yes, Sevic/yes, Anderson/yes, Seward/yes, Carlock/yes, Dehart/yes, Meagher/yes).**

CONTINUING BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

LIAISON'S REPORT

The ZBA had three cases last month; three approvals were received. Triangle Trail construction was underway. The contract was awarded for Stanley Park Phase 1, the construction contract was waiting on approval. Hess-Hathaway was holding their sheep shearing on April 27.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The second reading of the Six Lake/Filling Station was approved; the Board made the decision to rezone the properties to General Business. The new Civic Center building designs were due May 15. The pre-con for the Elizabeth Lake Road reconstruction project was scheduled for the near future.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. New Hope White Lake PDA amendment

Director O'Neil gave a brief overview of the request.

Rumi Shazad, owner, was present to speak on behalf of his request. He said the addition of Sokol Healthcare Training on site would help staff his building, as well as provide training opportunities. The request was for the company to rent the office building on the property.

Stephanie and Doug Sokol, were present. They stated they were a family and veteran owned business, and the building would have three staff. Classes would be run every two weeks for 10 days. They were licensed through the state, and held licenses to hold the CNA courses. They also held clinical training, which was another benefit of sharing the location with the assisted living.

Commissioner Anderson asked Ms. Sokol what the criteria was of the applicants who would be attending the training. Ms. Sokol said she received a lot of applicants through Michigan Works, and accepted applicants from 17 years old. The applicants had to have a clear background check and a negative TB skin test. The majority of her students were high school and college graduates; the busiest time for training was late spring/early summer.

Director O'Neil asked Mr. Shahzad if there would be any additional signage needed. Mr. Shazad said there would be signage outside of the office building. Director O'Neil said the sign on Williams Lake Road could be changed to include Sokol Healthcare. Mr. Shahzad said he would also be utilizing digital marketing. Mr. Sokol suggested basic vinyl sign on the window of the office building.

Commissioner Dehart was in favor of the request. She added that more nurses were needed everywhere.

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Carlock to recommend the Township Board approve of New Hope's Planned Development Agreement, including signage amendments as discussed, subject to staff working with the developer on language. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

B. Walmart temporary use request

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, second by Commissioner Dehart to recuse Commissioner Sevic from the Walmart temporary use request due to Walmart being her employer. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes).

Director O’Neil briefly went over the request.

MOTION by Commissioner Slicker, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve Walmart’s temporary use request subject to staff memo conditions. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes).

COMMUNICATIONS

There would not be a meeting on April 18.

NEXT MEETING DATE: May 2, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, seconded by Commissioner Meagher to adjourn at 9:02 P.M. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).