

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The regular meeting of the Plainfield Charter Township Planning Commission was held at Township Hall on February 14, 2006.

Members present: Marie Kessler, Chair; Leora Godfrey, Vice Chair; Vic Matthews, Secretary; Gary Gerber, Robert Heindrichs and Ray Holland. Also present were Bill Fischer, Community Development Director; and Dennis Cole, Township Engineer from Prein & Newhof. Absent was Scott Corder.

1. Approve Agenda

Chair Kessler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and introduced the agenda.

Commissioner Godfrey, supported by Commissioner Heindrichs, moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. K & M Northfield Dodge, Public Hearing request to rezone from C-1 Commercial to C-3 Commercial, 4180 Jupiter Avenue (Old North Kent Theater Site) Hank Makarewicz

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the application submitted by K&M Northfield Dodge, 4100 Plainfield Avenue, NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525. The applicant is requesting to rezone the property located at 4180 Jupiter Avenue NE approximately 3.75 acres from C-1 to C-3 to allow for vehicle sales.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Roger Lamer from W. L. Perry, an architectural engineering firm that was working with K&M Dodge. Mr. Lamer explained the proposal to take the old theater building and convert it into a dealership for Dodge vehicles. The old facility would be utilized and reworked to accommodate oil change bays, repair bays, a showroom and office areas. A portion of the canopy would be enclosed to create a vestibule between the showroom and the outside. The traffic pattern throughout the parcel would be adjusted and become safer as traffic patterns today meander throughout the parking lots with no clear guidance. A defined traffic pattern would be created about 300 feet to the north of the old theater creating a specific driveway for delivery semi trucks for K&M Dodge, K-Mart and Lowe's.

Mr. Lamer pointed out areas where vehicles, new and used would be displayed, customer parking would be provided, staging areas of vehicles, and warehousing of inventory would be located. Additionally, a generous landscaping design was included in the prepared plans and discussed briefly.

Chair Kessler opened the public hearing and recognized Ms. Hildegard Adkins, 4356 Northgate Drive NE. Ms. Adkins wanted to know the differences between the C-1 and C-3 zoning classifications and asked if the outside speakers, intercom system, could be toned down as the one they use at their present location is quite loud. She emphasized that today's electronics provide such items as beepers and cell phones and the noise factor could be eliminated or at least softened.

Mr. Fischer explained that the C-1 Commercial zone was intended to provide for retail and service uses necessary to serve the residential areas of the Township. It is to encourage the concentration of business uses to the mutual advantage of the consumers and merchants. The listing of uses includes retail, smaller shops, businesses that are less intense types of uses. A listing of such businesses and service is provided in the C-1 chapter. The C-3 Commercial zone allows for more intense uses which encourage higher traffic flow such as banks, arcades, restaurants, taverns, theaters and vehicles sales and rentals. In this particular case, K&M Dodge will be selling vehicles and that business may not operate in a C-1 district. Additionally, the noise factor and intercom system would be looked at closely during the site plan review phase of the project.

Mr. Kerwin Keen, 3990 Suburban Shores, was recognized next. He commented that the property had sat dormant for about 10 years and that the proposed use was probably the best use for the property. However, he did not want to see the existing property develop into an ugly stepchild allowing it to deteriorate because there was a new facility being built. He wanted assurance that a vital, good-looking neighborhood would be maintained at the older facility.

Chair Kessler found no others who wished to speak on the issue therefore she closed the public hearing and returned discussion to the commissioners.

Commissioner Godfrey confirmed that the dealership would be selling both new and used vehicles, probably newly designed larger Dodge trucks. She commented that the site had been vacant for about 10 years and each year the site became an even greater eyesore. The area located along Jupiter Avenue has become one of the most visible eyesores of vacant commercial properties in the Township. Any green space that was there many years ago had turned brown and almost nonexistent today. It was good to see something vital happening in the area and the proposed landscaping would

definitely be welcomed. The proposed project fits well with the myriad of cars that are already parked within the K-Mart and Lowe's adjacent parking lots.

Commissioner Holland had no problems with changing the zoning to C-3 to allow K&M Dodge to operate at the old theater site. The landscaping, improved traffic flow and curb stripping would all be definite improvements. He confirmed that K-Mart had not been contacted yet about working with K&M Dodge in regards to landscaping and K-Mart's adjacent parking facilities. K&M wanted to obtain rezoning prior to contacting K-Mart about improving the parking facilities that K-Mart enjoys.

Commissioner Gerber had no issues with rezoning the property given the history of the property. It should be done at this time.

Chair Kessler recognized Secretary Matthews who read the letters marked Exhibit "A", a support letter from John C. Flikkema, Dealer Principal from Van Andel Flikkema and Exhibit "B" a letter of support from David and Carol Rice, 2452 Holtman Drive.

Commissioner Matthews commented that he was glad to see K&M Dodge grow and concurred that the old theater building had become an eyesore.

Commissioner Heindrichs confirmed that the parking lot would receive blacktop repair and final dressing, curbs and landscaping. The traffic pattern being established illustrating where vehicles should travel to enter/exit Jupiter Avenue to Plainfield Avenue was a definite plus.

Chair Kessler concurred that the proposed project is compatible in character with the other businesses in the area and the requested zoning of C-3 would not endanger the safety of the residents. She reminded K&M that they should contact K-Mart and encourage them to spruce up their parking lot once the rezoning issue was completed.

Mr. Dennis Cole, township engineer, reminded the developer that the new drive connection at the north end of the site will likely require Jupiter Avenue to be widened, extending the center turn lane far enough to the north to accommodate turning movements into this site. The Road Commission will determine this issue. Additionally, the drive entrance should be reconfigured to allow traffic to go directly towards the rear of K-Mart and Lowe's and eventually out to 5 Mile Road.

Mr. Fischer commented that he was looking forward to the area becoming a functional, commercial asset to the community. Overall, K&M has been very cooperative and they recognize the aesthetic improvements that will be expected by the Township in order to receive site plan approval. Staff is supporting the rezoning request because the proposed rezone is consistent with surrounding commercial land uses, zoning, and the Master Plan. If the property is rezoned to C-3 and K&M backs out, the zoning stays with the property. The other permitted uses in the C-3 District are uses compatible in this location with the understanding that site plan approval is required for any improvements.

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the findings for the recommendation of the zoning change as follows:

1. The rezone request is compatible in character and will be harmonious with the adjacent land uses.
2. The existing use of the property will not endanger the safety of the residents in the area.
3. The existing use of the property is adequately served by the necessary services and facilities.

Commissioner Gerber, supported by Commissioner Heindrichs, moved to make a favorable recommendation to the Township Board to approve the requested rezone from C-1 Commercial to C-3 Commercial for K&M Northfield Dodge, 4180 Jupiter Avenue based on the findings listed above.

Motion carried unanimously.

**3. T-Mobile, Public Hearing, Special Use Permit, Ken Kuszpit
Wireless Communication Monopole Tower, 4325 Plainfield Avenue**

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the application submitted by T-Mobile, their agent Mr. Kenneth A. Kuszpit, for a Special Use Permit to allow the construction of a 150-foot high monopole cellular tower in the parking lot behind (north) the old Montgomery Wards/North Kent Mall building. The tower will be placed on a portion of the property addressed as 4325 Plainfield Avenue.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Ken Kuszpit who briefly shared his 14 page narrative what was included in the Commissioner's packets. Some of the reasons listed by Mr. Kuszpit why the subject parcel was deemed the best site available are as follows:

1. The proposed site is located on Plainfield Avenue a heavily traveled surface street. It is approximately half way between 1-96 and Northland Drive, and ideally located for highway coverage, including 911 services.

2. The area of Plainfield Township lying between the Grand River, Four Mile Road and the East Beltline is densely populated and the proposed site is centrally located to service that area.
3. The stretch of Plainfield Avenue between Four Mile Road and Northland Drive is one of the largest concentrations of commercial activity in Plainfield Township.
4. The proposed location is identified as site # 9 in the Township's Cell Tower Master Plan.
5. The site is far enough removed from homes on Jupiter Avenue to have minimal visual impact on them.
6. The wetlands and woodlands north of the proposed site serve as a natural buffer between the site and the houses to the north.
7. The proposed location does not displace the Mall's prime parking like a location in front of the Mall would.
8. The location does not interfere with the operations of the Mall merchants, particularly their loading docks.
9. The location is the optimal location given the underground utilities in the parking lot, particularly the water and storm sewer lines.
10. The location takes the less desirable parking spaces.
11. By placing the tower in the northwest corner of the parcel, the visual impact on the homes to the north was minimized. The existing trees will serve as a natural buffer between the base of the tower and the homes.

Mr. Kuszpit summed up his remarks by stating that the proposed site would provide an excellent location for a standard monopole tower.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Bill Fischer who explained a map prepared by Mr. Dennis Cole illustrating a "future possibility" of extending 5 Mile Road looping behind the proposed tower location, Lowe's and K-Mart to Jupiter Avenue. A meeting was called to discuss the possibility of an extension of 5 Mile Road to Jupiter. Persons attending the meeting included Mr. Dennis Cole, Mr. Andy Felde, Mr. Ken Kuszpit, Mr. Daniel Stern (property owner), and the Kent County Road Commission. As a result of the discussion, it was decided to have T-Mobile propose the tower farther into the parking lot, towards the building, to be out of a possible future road right-of-way. T-Mobile and Mr. Stern were and have been very cooperative in this process. Additionally, the proposed site is consistent with the adopted Wireless Master Plan illustrating a need for a wireless communication facility such as the proposed new cell tower somewhere around the old North Kent Mall area. The proposed T-Mobile tower addresses that need and therefore the application is consistent with the Township Wireless Master Plan.

Mr. Fischer explained that Mr. Feldy, was not able to attend the meeting, however he had provided a concise, extensive, informative 5 page report confirming that the proposed site met the standards and needs established in the Township Wireless Master Plan. Mr. Feldy suggested working with the applicants to provide a larger equipment compound than shown thereby planning for future growth and collocation of other antennas on the proposed new tower. Mr. Feldy expected one-two collocation requests within the first 12 months after construction of the new tower was complete.

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission grant a special Use Permit for the proposed cellular tower subject to three conditions.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Dennis Cole who further explained his drawing and the "concept" of extending 5 Mile Road. It would be good to see a 5 Mile Road extension over to Jupiter Avenue, as it would enhance the circulation throughout the area. Having access in the back area of the mall would be desirable. Additionally, the final lease area should be exclusive of all water main and sanitary sewer easements that currently run throughout the site.

Chair Kessler opened the Public Hearing and found no one who wished to speak on the proposed issue. She closed the Public Hearing and returned discussion to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners were in complete agreement that staff, Mr. Feldy and the applicant had provided a very thorough job of explaining the facts in regards to the proposed new cell tower. Commissioner Matthews complemented the applicant on the outstanding application provided and complemented Mr. Feldy for the very informative review of the proposed project.

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the conditions of approval as follows:

1. The screening details of the equipment enclosure shall be approved by the Community Development Department.
2. The plans shall be revised to enlarge the equipment compound for future growth as approved by the Community Development Department.
3. The final lease area shall be exclusive of all water main and sanitary sewer easements.

Commissioner Heindrichs, supported by Commissioner Godfrey, moved to grant a Special Use Permit for the proposed T-Mobile new monopole tower located at 4325 Plainfield Avenue subject to the conditions listed.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. **West Michigan Whitecaps, Amendment to PUD, 4500 West River Drive Fifth Third Ballpark, Carnival / April / Jim Jarecki / Lew Chamberlin**

The West Michigan Whitecaps did not provide a formal application; instead they sent a letter to the Planning Director requesting permission to hold a carnival at the Fifth Third Ballpark the week of April 3rd. through April 9th. The season opener is April 6th. and another baseball game on April 7th. According to the letter, the plan is to cross-market the two events.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Jim Jarecki who explained they had been contacted by Playworld Amusements to hold a carnival at the ballpark the first week in April. There would be 18 rides such as Super Shot, Fire Ball, Gondola Wheel, Himalaya, Orbiter, Pharaoh's Fury, Bumper Cars, Cliff Hanger, Sizzler, and (9) kiddy rides including a Merry Go Round. There would be 15 game booths and 5 different types of food booths.

Arrival dates and set up for the carnival would be April 1st. and 2nd. and loading out date would be April 9th. Hours of operation would be weekdays 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 10:00p.m.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Fischer who explained that the Whitecaps were seeking approval for a non-baseball event to coincide with the baseball season opener the first week in April. The Township has permitted small carnival events in the front parking lot annually; however the planned event is a much larger scale. As usual the Whitecaps are well prepared with the planning and layout for the event. He shared that when the ballpark was first approved, the Township was reluctant to allow non-baseball events. Over time, Fifth Third Ball Park has evolved into a true "entertainment" facility that has hosted many popular events, bringing many people into the Township. These various events in the past have been well planned, run professionally and safely, and there have been very few complaints over the years.

The Commissioners discussed such items as the potential noise level of the equipment, outside speakers, music from such rides as the Merry go Round, hawking of the game booths, overflow parking and the spring/winter weather. It was agreed that the normal music and speakers would be allowed and if complaints were heard, affirmative action would be taken to take care of any particular problem that might arise. If the event ran well, it could be added to the list of events allowed without a future visit to the Planning Commission.

The Commissioners were all in agreement that Fifth Third Ball Park has done a great job in monitoring and running securely the non-baseball events. They have proven to be an asset to the community.

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the condition of approval as follows:

1. The layout of the carnival rides and facilities shall be approved by the Fire Department.

Commissioner Heindrichs, supported by Commissioner Godfrey, moved to approve the non-baseball event, Playworld Amusements Carnival, from April 3 through April 9, 2006 subject to the condition listed.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Koinonia Woods Condominiums, P.U.D. Site Plan Approval**
Georgetown Development, 3411 5 Mile Road, Todd Ponstein

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the application submitted by the applicant, Georgetown Development, 6601 Wilshere Drive, Jenison, Michigan 49428. The project name is Koinonia Woods Condominiums located in a P.U.D. zone on approximately 34.8 acres of land. Contact person is Todd Ponstein.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Todd Ponstein who introduced himself as President of Georgetown Development Inc. He shared that Koinonia Woods is a proposed condominium village of approximately 81 homes located on 35 acres on the north side of Five Mile Road just east of the East Beltline. The project history began about three years ago when Mr. Ponstein found the hilly, heavily wooded 50 acre site owned by Dan and Sue Falk. He shared his vision to save as many trees as possible and to build a first class upscale condominium project taking into account the beautiful features of the land. Working with Plainfield Township, Georgetown Development was able to preserve 12 of the 35 acres in it's natural wooded state and incorporate a woodchip walking path creating a beautiful nature hike for the residents right in their own community. In addition to the 12 acres of preserved woods, seven acres of open space were also created within the project. Most of the seven acres will be developed into a park area with a lighted walkway surrounding two ponds, man-made waterfalls, a bridge over a babbling brook, fountains, beautiful landscaping, park benches and a gazebo. Mr. Ponstein stated that his goal as a developer is to have no bad lots within his developments.

Mr. Ponstein continued, Georgetown Development has teamed up with Oosterhouse Builders and Douglas DeHaan of Homescape Communities to create a unique and distinctive condominium village. The village will not be a run-of-the-mill condominium project. There are different architectural styles, colors, materials, and side-loading garages. The goal is to create one of the finest condominiums projects in Plainfield Township.

Mr. Ponstein introduced Mr. Douglas DeHaan who presented renderings of what the condominiums could look like when finished. Mr. DeHaan stated that he has been working with the owners of Thousand Oaks Condominium project and has done theme neighborhoods in about 13 states. It was his goal to create individuality for each unit, something unique. One way to achieve that goal is to use what is called 4-sided architecture. The choices available should make it so there are no duplicate condominiums. One goal is to create condominiums with character like its clients. The condominiums will be marketed between \$275,000 and \$300,000.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Fischer who reminded the Commissioners that in 2003 the Township granted a short-term soil removal permit and rezoned this parcel from R-1 to P.U.D. The soil removal efforts are almost complete and now Mr. Ponstein is ready to proceed with the residential development. The project is proposed in two phases, with the first beginning this spring.

The landscaping plan is generous. The plan illustrates that the northern one-third of the site is to be preserved with the existing trees. Preservation of the wooded area was an important expectation when the Township approved the project as a P.U.D. Another amenity of the landscaping is that the trees proposed in the landscape plan will be about 4-inches in caliper at time of planting. Decorative landscaped retaining walls will be created in a few locations where steep cuts will be made. The exact location and details of these walls will be determined in the field as part of construction. Staff approval is required prior to constructing the decorative walls. There will be landscaping along the berm on Five Mile Road, specifically the west half of the existing trees will remain and the east half will be significantly landscaped with evergreens and deciduous trees. This will provide a great buffer zone between 5 Mile and the first condominiums.

Mr. Fischer stated that he was impressed with the many housing styles and the many choices of construction materials. The proposed condominiums fit the area well and are very compatible with the condominiums next door and across the street. The proposed condominiums will compliment the entire area. Staff has reviewed the application and the site plans have been well prepared. The proposed project has the potential to be one of the most attractive condominium developments in the Township. Staff recommends approval subject to minor conditions.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Dennis Cole who shared that he had already been reviewing the construction plans for water, sewer and storm water and they were close to approval. The site utilities and roads will be constructed in two (2) phases. However, a bond will be posted for the portion of uncompleted water main to ensure future looping. Additionally, all the sand remaining on the site should be removed prior to granting occupancy permits during the first phase. The trucks hauling the sand must use the westerly current drive entrance making sure that the contract that was proposed to the residents is continued to be honored.

Commissioner Matthews was interested in the size, depth and construction of the clear water ponds that will create the waterfall system. Additionally, he led discussion regarding interior walls and the potential for noise traveling from one unit to another. Mr. DeHaan explained that all plumbing is internal, all exterior walls are insulated, and units are built with energy star rating so that all exterior walls are insulated. A poured concrete foundation wall is constructed through the center of each unit so that wall becomes an exterior wall and insulated. Noise traveling from one condominium to another should never happen.

Commissioner Heindrichs stated that the proposed project was one of the best condominium projects he had seen and complimented the developer on the generous landscaping plan. Mail delivery, trash pickup, and overflow parking accommodations for visitors located throughout the proposed project were also discussed.

Commissioner Godfrey stated that the proposed plan looks nice. She was pleased to see that the proposed plan is even better than what was proposed during previous discussions.

Commissioner Holland congratulated Mr. Ponstein on the way he handled the challenges and concerns from the neighbors; the sand removal process and the P.U.D. process. Mr. Ponstein has worked with the neighbors and the Planning Commissioners attending site walks and provided a benchmark named "Maple Grove" to go and physically see the condominium neighborhoods he has previously constructed. As advertised, he is proposing to produce better than promised. The proposed condominiums are fantastic!

Commissioner Gerber stated that Mr. Ponstein "may" have unknowingly set a benchmark for all new condominiums in the Township. The proposed condominiums are a quality development and he was enthusiastic about the idea of the 4-sided architecture.

Chair Kessler was also impressed with the proposed condominiums and her question was how to pronounce the name of the development and what did it mean? Koinonia Woods Condominiums is pronounced, "Coin-o-knee-a", from the Greek word meaning "Fellowship".

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the conditions of approval as follows:

1. The applicant shall enter into an open space preservation and maintenance agreement as approved by the Township Attorney, prior to the issuance of any building permits.
2. The applicant shall provide a bond for any portion of uncompleted water main as approved by the Water Department and Township Engineer.
3. All sand mining shall be completed prior to the issuance of occupancy permits for any unit.

Commissioner Holland supported by Commission Gerber moved to approve the site plan as presented for Koinonia Woods Condominiums subject to the conditions listed.

Motion carried unanimously.

