

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The regular meeting of the Plainfield Charter Township Planning Commission was held at Township Hall on January 10, 2006.

Members present: Marie Kessler, Chair; Vic Matthews, Secretary; Scott Corder, Gary Gerber, Robert Heindricks and Ray Holland. Also present was Bill Fischer, Planning Director. Absent was Leora Godfrey.

1. Approve Agenda

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

Commissioner Holland, supported by Commissioner Gerber, moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Consent Agenda

- A. Approve Minutes of December 13, 2005
- B. Approve Minutes of Combined Meeting, Township Board and Planning Commission, December 19, 2005
- C. Schedule a Public Hearing Date for February 14, 2006
To rezone the property located at 4180 Jupiter Avenue
(Old Theater Building) from C-1 to C-3 for K&M Northfield Dodge.

Commissioner Matthews, supported by Commissioner Holland, moved to approve the Consent Agenda including the Planning Commission Minutes of December 13, 2005 and December 19, 2005 subject to minor corrections in spelling and grammar.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. **Valley Overlook, Andres Acres, Public Hearing Rezone from P.U.D. back to Rural Estate, Richard Andresen/Ronald Griffee, 3839 and 3891 Kroes Street**

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the application and public hearing notice submitted by Plainfield Township for the property located at 3839 and 3891 Kroes consisting of approximately 40 acres. The Township is requesting to rezone the properties from Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.) back to Rural Estate.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Bill Fischer, Planning Director, who explained that staff is initiating the request to rezone two parcels zoned Planned Unit Development back to Rural Estate. The Township rezoned the subject 40 acres in June of 2004. The development plan was well accepted by the Planning Commission and Township Board and staff. However the two property owners, Mr. Ron Griffee and Mr. Richard Andresen, have not come to a financial agreement and as a result they have chosen not to pursue the project.

According to the P.U.D. Chapter, if site condominium approval is not requested within one year of the approved rezoning, the Township may initiate a rezoning back to the original zoning classification. Mr. Griffee is ready to move on with attempting to sell his 20 acres but his hands are tied until the P.U.D. zone is reversed. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission make a favorable recommendation to the Township Board based on the following findings to rezone the property from P.U.D. back to Rural Estate:

1. The rezoning is consistent with the Master Comprehensive Plan and the adjacent zoning and land uses.

Chair Kessler opened the public hearing and found no one wishing to speak on the issue. Chair Kessler closed the public hearing and returned discussion to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners were all in agreement that the project could have been a good development and they were sorry that it could not go forward. However, since the project could not go forward reversing the rezoning was logical and in compliance with the Master Comprehensive Plan. Discussion was held in regards to the sewer and water line connection and extensions to and from the River Isle Development, as the Valley Overlook project was adjacent to the River Isle development. The owners of the property on Kroes are under no obligations or binding contracts to extend water or sewer. Any new project for that particular area would have to participate in bringing public utilities to any new potential development of the area.

Commissioner Heindrichs, supported by Commissioner Gerber, moved to make a favorable recommendation to the Township Board to rezone the property addressed as 3839 and 3891 Kroes from Planned Unit Development to Rural Estate based on the following findings:

1. The rezoning is consistent with the Master Comprehensive Plan and the adjacent zoning and land uses.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Advance Auto Parts, Amendment to Existing Macatawa Bank P.U.D. Taatjes & Tol, Inc. SE Corner of 10 Mile Road and Belmont Avenue Rod Alderink, John Koetje**

Chair Kessler requested that Secretary Matthews read the application submitted by Taatjes & Tol, Inc., 100 Grandville Avenue SW, Suite 300, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503 on behalf of the owner of the property Mr. John Koetje. Property address is listed as the SE Corner of 10 Mile Road and Belmont Avenue within the approved Macatawa Bank P.U.D. Contact person is Mr. Rod Alderink of Taatjes & Tol, Inc.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Alderink who shared history of the project. The approved P.U.D. development plan consists of the Macatawa Bank, a sit-down type restaurant and a mid-grade hotel. Early on during the P.U.D. approval process, it was made clear to the property owner and to Taatjes by both the 10 Mile Corridor Committee and the Plainfield Township Planning Commission that using this property for a retail strip mall or for "fast food" restaurants with drive-thru would not be permitted. Mr. Alderink explained that his firm has honored the direction and over the past 2 years turned down three (3) offers on the property for a retail strip mall development and three (3) serious inquiries from "fast food" restaurants. He shared that Taatjes had worked very hard and diligently to implement the P.U.D. dream of over 2 years ago to located a hotel and sit-down restaurant on the site. The hotel and restaurants owners have shared with Mr. Alderink that the area is too "green"; there is not enough population density and not enough traffic to support a restaurant. The area doesn't have enough large businesses or destination attractions to support a hotel. Recently the Grand Rapids Press ran a story about the oversupply of hotel rooms and the high vacancy rate among area hotels. It is not an issue of property pricing but rather marketing conditions, traffic, and population density. In light of the lack of success to land a restaurant and/or hotel, Mr. Koetje has accepted a conditional offer from Advance Auto Parts (AAP) to construct a store on the restaurant site if the amendment to the existing P.U.D. is approved.

The Advance Auto Parts proposal to construct a store on the restaurant site is being presented for the following reasons:

1. The use fits well with the existing uses that are in place consisting of the BP gas station adjacent to the site, the Meijer gas station across the street and the car wash.
2. There is a Napa Auto Parts business located in downtown Rockford, but their customers are traditionally different from the Advance Auto Parts customer base. AAP should not be principally competitive to anything within the city of Rockford's environment.

The proposed project was presented to the 10 Mile Corridor Coordinating Planning Committee on December 7th. The Committee approved a finding that an Advance Auto Parts store was consistent with highway commercial for this particular area.

Further, the Advance Auto Parts people have done due diligence and have heard the desire, that this location requires and upgraded building not the usual standard prototype building. They have upgraded their Holland and Zeeland stores using brick façade and other details. The final product should look very nice in the proposed location.

Mr. Alderink continued, just prior to the 10 Mile Corridor Committee meeting we were contacted by the Main Street Pub out of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Mr. Koetje did not think it would be fair, ethically or morally to act on the restaurant offer because Advance Auto Parts had acted in good faith to proceed with their purchase of the property, and moved forward with due diligence. The Main Street Pub has since made an offer on the hotel site. Additionally, at the 10 Mile Corridor Committee's recent meeting where they approved Advance Auto's use for the restaurant site, they also discussed other uses for the hotel site and appeared willing to recommend approval of a restaurant on the hotel site.

Lastly, Macatawa Bank was provided a letter of support for Advance Auto Parts and the amendment of the approved P.U.D.

Chair Kessler recognized Mr. Fischer who stated that the township wanted to see a restaurant go in the PUD and it still might happen on the hotel sight if negotiations continue with the Main Street Pup and an amendment to the P.U.D. is requested and granted.

Since the proposed project is located in the 10 Mile Corridor plan area, a meeting of the Coordinated Planning Committee (CPC) was called to meet with the applicants and to provide a recommendation to the Township Planning Commission. The CPC met with Mr. Alderink, Mr. Koetje and Advance Auto Parts on December 7th. After a good discussion, the CPC approved a finding that an Advance Auto Parts store is consistent with highway commercial for this intersection.

Staff is disappointed that a restaurant business has not yet occupied this site that has been vacant and available for more than two years. However, we also realize that several sit-down restaurants exist two miles down the road in the City of Rockford. With regard to the Advance Auto Parts business, we need to look at the intersection area as a whole. The site is next to a gas station and furthermore a car wash and another gas station are located on the opposite side of 10 Mile Road. Staff is comfortable with allowing an AAP at this location given the circumstances and adjacent land uses. If the Planning Commission allows an AAP, keep in mind that AAP must return for site plan approval.

Chair Kessler recognized Commissioner Corder who did not want to see the Township create anything similar to the Cedar Spring exit where the Interchange Businesses were serving as competitors to the village core. When you get off the expressway at the Cedar Springs exit, customers need only travel a quarter of a mile from the exit ramp to find most items desired. There is no need to visit the village core. He was in support of the Advance Auto Parts business as it was appropriate for this particular site. He reminded all that during the Site Plan Review process, building aesthetics and landscaping would play major roles.

Commissioner Matthews admitted that he really did not like the proposed plan as he was trying to keep commercial applications out of this section of the Township. However, he seemed to be losing the battle. He lost to the Harley Davidson application and it is hard to not sell car parts if they can sell motorcycle parts. He stated that his negativeness was not against Advance Auto Parts because they run a classy operation and would be good neighbors. He was just hesitant about extending commercialization of the proposed area.

Commissioner Gerber liked the idea of the restaurant, but if the market would not support the project in this area, he had no objections to Advance Auto Parts building on the parcel.

Commissioner Holland was disappointed that the proposed P.U.D. plan was not marketable after a two-year period of time. The proposed Advance Auto Parts business has a nice looking building and the traffic situation is a definite positive as the restaurants peak times would probably be between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm, which would increase traffic flow during the normal rush hour. The exact location of the proposed building and the interconnecting service road behind the proposed building was discussed.

Commissioner Heindrichs would be watching for nice landscaping if and when the project is complete. He had no problem with Advance Auto Parts being located within the existing P.U.D.

Chair Kessler was disappointed that the hotel and restaurant would probably not happen, however she was impressed with the aggressive efforts of Taatjes & Tol trying to market the area.

Commissioners Matthews and Commissioner Corder clarified that what was being asked was an amendment to the existing P.U.D. to allow only Advance Auto Parts to be built on the site where the restaurant was intended on the original P.U.D. If the amendment were approved it was good only for Advance Auto Parts. If Advance Auto Parts changed their mind and did not build the project, any new project other than a restaurant would need to come back to the Planning Commission and request an amendment.

Secretary Matthews labeled the letter from Phil Koning, President of Macatawa Bank supporting the proposed amendment, "Exhibit A".

Commissioner Gerber, supported by Commissioner Heindrichs, moved to grant an amendment to the Macatawa P.U.D., allowing Advance Auto Parts, to use the site designated in the P.U.D. for a restaurant.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Miscellaneous**

Mr. Fischer brought up the feasibility of inviting Mr. Dykema, Mr. Berg and Mr. Ponstein to attend a Planning Commission meeting when the agenda was light for an informal discussion of how the Township would like to see 700 acres of land, former Woodworth/Thompson McCulley gravel pits developed over the next 8 to 10 years. The general discussion would be simply an exchange of ideas of how the area could best be developed by using parks, sidewalks, interconnecting pathways, density, etc. Neither the Township nor the developer would be held accountable to the general discussion.

Mr. Heindrichs asked that Mr. Fischer check into the street light situation by the YMCA entrance/exit to its facility. Post Drive is heavily traveled and after dark entranceways is hard to see. Additionally, the YMCA has not enclosed their dumpsters.

Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Jackie Wiltzer Date
Recording Secretary

Vic Matthews Date
Planning Commission Secretary