

To: Commerce Township Board of Trustees

From: Commerce Township Planning Department
David Campbell, AICP – Planning Director

Date: September 2, 2020

RE: September 2020 Monthly Planning Department Report
(covering August 12 through Sept. 1, 2020)



Development Proposals

- **Mobil station reconstruction (3004 Union Lake Road)** – The owner of the existing Mobil station proposes to demolish the existing convenience store and a portion of the existing canopy and replace with a new & larger store. The property is zoned B-3 (General Business) and a gas station is a special land use in the B-3 zoning district, so to rebuild/expand the existing building requires special land use approval from the Planning Commission concurrent with approval of the site plan. The Planning Department has scheduled the public hearing for the special land use for the Planning Commission’s regular meeting on September 14. It is worth noting that the owner is not proposing at this time to add off-premises alcohol sales, which itself would require special land use approval and would be subject to spacing standards that the location likely does not meet based on the location of existing alcohol retailers including Kroger, Speedway, Shell station, etc.
- **84 Lumber** – A public hearing has been scheduled during the Planning Commission’s September 14 meeting for the conditional rezoning petition submitted by 84 Lumber to occupy the existing building at 4158 Pioneer with a retail lumber yard incl. outdoor storage on the two undeveloped lots adjacent. The three properties 84 Lumber hopes to occupy are currently zoned TLM (Technology & Light Manufacturing) and they have petitioned to conditionally rezone the property to I (Industrial) because that is the only zoning district that permits outdoor lumber yards. Correspondingly, the Township Board approved an amendment to the Township’s Zoning Ordinance on August 18 to remove a prohibition for outdoor lumber yards on properties zoned Industrial when those properties are within the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) district.
- **The Reserve at Crystal Lake (westernmost Sleeth Road gravel pit)** – The potential developer of one of the three decommissioned gravel pit properties along the north side of Sleeth Road between Bass Lake and Duck Lake Roads has had multiple meetings with the Township Board, staff, and consultants regarding financing the development via the State’s Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act. The formal first step in that process would be creating and submitting a brownfield plan for consideration by Commerce Township, Oakland County, and the State of Michigan’s Land Bank. The developer has received enough initial feedback from the Township and the County to make the investment in having his consultants draft a plan.

- **Goddard School** - The DDA is working toward finalizing the sale of Parcel L (west side of Haggerty between Pontiac Trail and Oakley Park) to the prospective owner/operator of The Goddard School that would be constructed on the property. One of the items that has been a point of discussion with their negotiations and will continue to be discussed through the site plan review process is the property's connectivity to the pathway network through the Merrill Park neighborhood and the Commerce Towne Place development. The DDA Director and Planning Director have been discussing multiple options.

Projects in process

- **Commerce Memorial Cemetery** – Commerce Township is considering options for making improvements along the south side of Commerce Memorial Cemetery (Benstein Road south of Glengary) to create a better buffer between the cemetery and the public pathway that was relocated to make space for the newly-expanded parking lot for the Benstein Grille. These improvements may include a decorative fence, landscaping, or a combination of both. The Township Board intends to discuss their options during the September 8 Board meeting, with the intent of installing the improvements in the fall.
- **Barrington apartments** – The Planning Director and DDA Director met with the superintendent of the Barrington project (west side of Martin Parkway north of Pontiac Trail) and their excavator to discuss restoration/relocation of the DDA's pathway that once traversed through the site but has been closed during construction. All involved agreed on a slight modification to the trail's route through the site. Barrington's developer hopes to have the trail restored and re-opened by mid-fall. While there, we were able to tour the project's clubhouse and what will be the model ranch unit. The developer hopes to have the clubhouse opened as a leasing office in the fall, and have the first apartment buildings open and occupied before the new year. Their intent is to complete and occupy around 2 buildings per month over approximately 20 months.
- **Zerbo's Market**– The Zerbo's project on the south side of Maple east of M-5 is asking for their final inspections from the Building & Planning Departments, which should mean they are finally close to opening shop. The owner (Ryan Adams of Uptown Grille) says he's hoping to be open by December. Construction started during the Obama administration.
- **Comfort Care of Commerce** – The Comfort Care assisted living facility (14 Mile & Decker) is holding an open house in mid-September in anticipation of their opening.
- **Kroger drive-through flu shots** - Kroger received approval for a temporary outdoor event to provide drive-through flu shots on Sept. 12th, 14th, and 16th within the parking lot of the former Hiller's at Commerce and Union Lake Roads (a property Kroger holds the ground lease on).

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

- The ZBA canceled their regular meeting of September 24, 2020 because no petitions were made. The Planning & Building Departments would like to believe the ZBA has cancelled two meetings in a row (July and now September) because the friendly and

well-groomed staff of the Building and Planning Departments do such a commendable job working with potential petitioners to find solutions that avoid the need for an appeal to the ZBA.

- The next regular ZBA meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2020. The ZBA will definitely be holding that meeting (via Zoom) because there are several annual housekeeping tasks to be completed, including election of officers for 2021 and approval of the 2021 meeting calendar.

Planning Commission

- The Planning Commission's September meeting will be held on September 14 (moved from the typical first Monday for Labor Day). Two public hearings are scheduled for the 84 Lumber conditional rezoning and for the Mobil gas station reconstruction (both discussed above).