

To: Commerce Township Board of Trustees

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

Date: September 4, 2019

RE: September 2019 Monthly Planning Department Report
(covering August 8, 2019 through September 5, 2019)



Development Proposals -The following are high-profile private properties that the Planning Department regularly has conversations about with prospective developers, although none have yet made a formal application for review (in no particular order):

- Baypointe golf course – A potential developer is doing their due diligence on purchasing and re-developing the Baypointe property with a new residential development. The Township has received inquiries from property owners along Middle Straights Lake who are concerned about the impact to the lake if the property redevelops, and particularly whether the new homes would have lake access. Until the Township has a better idea of what the developer has in mind, it would be premature to speculate on those potential impacts. And since most of Baypointe’s lakefront is in West Bloomfield Township, their leadership would have more authority over what would happen with Middle Straights Lake than would Commerce Twp.
- Sleeth Road gravel pits – The potential developers of the westernmost of the three gravel pit properties are working on partnering with the owners of the other two to get municipal water and sewer mains to the properties to facilitate residential development.
- Crumb Road PUD – A group of investors led by Harvey Weiss and Steve Samona have applied to develop a vacant 5.3-acre parcel on the north side of Crumb Road west of Haggerty (just west of the Goodwill store) with a multi-family apartment development consisting of 100 units in five 3-story buildings (20 units per building). They’ve opted to utilize the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process because of the flexibility it offers, and particularly because of the density (approx. 19 units per acre) they’re proposing. The Planning Commission will hold the PUD Preliminary Review during their regular meeting on September 9.

Zoning Ordinance text amendment – An attorney representing two of the Township’s existing gas stations w/ beer & wine sales made a formal application to amend the Township’s Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance currently designates Off-Premises Alcohol Sales Outlets (stores where you buy your alcohol for consumption elsewhere) as a special land use to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. Approval of the special land use is subject to specific use standards, the most notable of which is a standard that there can be only 2 of any such stores within any 1 mile. The petitioner’s intent will be to create an exception to the special land use requirement for pre-existing alcohol sales outlets that want to upgrade their liquor license from an SDM (beer & wine) license to an SDD (spirits) license. If the Zoning Ordinance text amendment

is approved, existing beer & wine retailers could add spirits to their offerings without being required to seek special land use approval from the Township. The Planning Department estimates there are currently 15 stores operating in Commerce Township (not including Walled Lake, Wolverine Lake, Wixom, etc) that currently sell beer & wine that could potentially add liquor if the proposed text amendment were adopted. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the text amendment during their September 9 meeting. As with any amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission would make a formal recommendation to the Township Board, who would make the final decision.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) – The ZBA’s meeting scheduled for September 26 was cancelled due to lack of petitioners. The Planning Department would like to believe this is due to the Planning and Building Departments working with property owners to find agreeable solutions that do not require them to appeal to the ZBA. The next regular ZBA meeting is scheduled for November 21.

Planning Commission

- The Planning Commission’s regular meeting of August 5, 2019 was cancelled, not for lack of development activity but for lack of any of that activity being quite ready for PC action at the August meeting.
- At their regular meeting on September 9 the Planning Commission’s agenda will include the following:
 - The Preliminary Review for a potential Planned Unit Development (PUD) on an undeveloped 5-acre property along the north side of Crumb Road west of Haggerty. The applicant hopes to construct five 3-story 20-unit apartment buildings on the site.
 - A public hearing on the text amendment discussed above.
 - A parking lot expansion for two properties owned by Real Green Systems located at 4305 and 4375 Pineview Drive. While it’s one company, they are two separate sites and are being processed as two separate site plans.
 - Informal conceptual discussion of a proposal to develop two adjacent properties totaling 3 acres located on the west side of Benstein just south of Glengary for a 16-unit multiple family development (4 buildings of 4 units each)
 - Informal conceptual discussion to re-develop the former Dick Morris Chevrolet dealership at 2199 Haggerty into a mix of retail, restaurant, market (with packaged alcohol sales), and gas station.

M-5 non-motorized bridge

Wave panel installation has been progressing more slowly than anyone would like. The Township is told by the engineer overseeing the project on behalf of MDOT that the panel installation by the general contractor’s (Davis Construction’s) subcontractor (Action Traffic) is being slowed by a shortage of manpower and the struggles they’re facing getting the panels to line up as perfectly in the real world as they lined up in the AutoCAD file. Action Traffic’s work plan is to get the wave panels installed on both side of the western half of the bridge (over the southbound lanes of M-

5) then move everything over and do the same on the eastern half of the bridge (over the northbound lanes).