

**To:** Commerce Township Board of Trustees

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

**Date:** June 3, 2020

**RE:** June 2020 Monthly Planning Department Report  
(covering May 13 through June 3, 2020)



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### Development Proposals

- **Zainabia Center addition** – On June 1 the Planning Commission approved a special land use and corresponding site plan for the Zainabia Center of Michigan to construct a new 13,000 sq ft gymnasium / multi-purpose building next to their existing worship building at 2230 Crumb Road. The proposal originally came before the PC on May 18, but the PC opted to table any action due to resident concerns primarily about overflow parking impeding traffic along Crumb. Zainabia submitted additional materials relative to these concerns, including agreements with nearby properties (a daycare and a church) to use their parking lots for overflow parking for Zainabia. Based on the Zainabia Center's written commitment to not allow overflow parking on Crumb, along with some enhancements to the plan for the proposed new building, the Planning Commission approved both proposals at their meeting on June 1.
- **84 Lumber** – The Planning Commission offered their non-binding comments during their May 18 meeting to 84 Lumber, who proposes to acquire the existing building at 4158 Pioneer Drive along with 2 adjacent undeveloped properties and re-purpose them as a retail lumber yard. While the properties are not zoned for a retail user, the Planning Commission was generally receptive to the possibility of a conditional rezoning for a well-screened, well-landscaped lumber yard.
- **Five & Main** – Nothing substantial to report regarding the proposed mixed-use development at the NE corner of M-5 and Pontiac Trail beyond that stated in the Planning Department's last report. The Covid-19 pandemic will likely change how businesses offer goods, services, food, and entertainment, but those changes are still being figured out.

### Projects in process

- **Benstein Grille** – Benstein Grille continues work on the expansion of their parking lot onto an acre of land adjacent to their restaurant that they purchased from Commerce Township. The land was an unused portion of Commerce Memorial Cemetery, and the Township is aware of the concerns of those with loved ones in the cemetery along with those who saw a portion of the paved pathway through the cemetery get temporarily removed. Benstein Grille has been working closely with the Township to ensure that their work proceeds as expeditiously as possible, with as little temporary construction impact on the cemetery as possible. Upon completion, Benstein Grille will have planted a landscape buffer between their expanded parking lot and the cemetery, and replaced the

removed portion of the path with a new paved portion that will run between the expanded parking lot and the cemetery.

- **Rolling Hills of Commerce** – The Planning Department and Township Engineer have been working with the developer of the Rolling Hills of Commerce independent living facility currently under construction at the southwest corner of Haggerty and Crumb. Buckeye Pipeline has an underground gas main that traverses across the Rolling Hills property, with strict restrictions on what is permitted above their gas main. The geometry of the Rolling Hills project’s paved pathway along the west side of Haggerty Road had to be significantly revised to reduce the depth of cover over Buckeye’s gas main to no more than 6 feet, while still maintaining ADA standards for the pathway’s maximum slope. The outcome will be a “switchback” in the path and a tall retaining wall between a section of the new pathway and the Rolling Hills parking area. A future user of the paved path may someday wonder why it couldn’t be built in a straight line along Haggerty, so the Rolling Hills contractor has offered to install signs saying “This unique pathway configuration brought to you by Buckeye Pipeline”.

**Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** – The ZBA held an online-only (Zoom) meeting on May 28, and acted on the following:

- The ZBA removed an item from the table from the November 21, 2019 ZBA meeting, where a petitioner proposed to demolish an existing home and replace it with a new single family home at 3990 Watuga. In November 2019, the proposed new home would have required three variances, and at that meeting the ZBA directed the petitioner to revise their proposed configuration in an effort to reduce the number of variances being sought. The revised plans brought before the ZBA on May 28 required only one variance, albeit a more substantial variance relative to the required minimum front setback along Watuga. At the May 28 meeting, the petitioner and their design team offered to push their proposed garage back 2.5 feet, reducing the dimension of the requested variance, and the ZBA approved the variance with that concession.
- The ZBA accepted the withdrawal of a petitioner that had been tabled in January 2019. After much effort, the petitioner reached agreements with his neighbor along Farrant to allow him to make some alterations to their property’s grade that eliminated the need for his variance.
- The ZBA accepted the withdrawal of a petitioner along Benstein, who found a way to reconfigure his proposed shed to avoid the need for a variance.

The next regular ZBA meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2020.

**Planning Commission** – The Planning Commission held two online-only (Zoom) meetings; a special meeting on May 18 to make up for the regular meeting canceled on May 4 due to the Governor’s extended shutdown order, and their regular meeting on June 1. At the May 18 meeting, the Planning Commission:

- Tabled action on a proposed expansion for the Zainabia Center of Michigan (described above)

- Recommended approval of a petition to amend the Zoning Map for the property at 1652 Union Lake Road from O (Office) to R-1D (One-Family Neighborhood Residential). The homeowner petitioned for the re-zoning so that the property's existing home could remain as a conforming land use in a single-family zoning district. The Township Board is expected to consider final action on the proposed re-zoning at their meeting on June 9, 2020.
- Considered a concept plan for 84 Lumber at 4158 Pioneer (described above).
- Regretfully accepted the resignation of Vice-Chairperson Russ Schinzing, whose obligations to his new employer precluded him from being able to dedicate the time to the Planning Commission that he felt the position deserves. The Planning Commission and staff expressed their deep appreciation to Russ for his 5 years of service to the PC.

At their June 1 meeting, the Planning Commission:

- Conditionally approved the special land use and site plan for the Zainabia Center's expansion (described above).
- Regretfully accepted the resignation of Tom Jones, who is going to take a well-deserved break after 22 years of service to the Planning Commission including many years as the Vice-Chairperson, effective July 14. Tom Jones and Russ Schinzing are both well aware that they are going to let us take them out and thank them for their years of service to Commerce Township just as soon as we're allowed to gather for such things.
- Elected Brian Parel to the role of Vice-Chairperson, filling the position vacated by Mr. Schinzing. In so doing, the Planning Commission negligently ignored the fact that Mr. Parel considers himself a proud Spartan.