

**FINAL  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, March 2, 2020  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chairperson Schinzing called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Russ Schinzing, Vice Chairperson  
Brian Winkler, Secretary  
Tom Jones  
Bill McKeever  
Brian Parel  
George Weber  
Absent: Larry Haber, Chairperson (excused)  
Also Present: Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director  
Jay James, Engineer/Building Official  
Jim Dundas, Township Fire Chief

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Jones, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda of March 2, 2020, as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Jones, supported by Winkler, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2020, as written.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**D. UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES**

Bill McKeever – Zoning Board of Appeals

- Nothing to report.

George Weber – Township Board of Trustees

- Just a couple of minor issues from the Township Board.
- First item, since Chief Dundas is here; the Board moved to approve supporting the Chief in his desire to hire a grant writer.
- The Board approved the change in the zoning map for Ordinance 3.043 which was the Benstein Grille.
- Most of the other items were Parks & Recreation related, and I won't go into the specifics.
- On February 18<sup>th</sup>, the Board held a special meeting specifically to review a concession agreement for Windmill Farms. The Board approved moving forward with that agreement. There are still some minor changes that have to be completed and the subcommittee has the responsibility and authority to make that happen. We expect there to be a concession agreement through the end of this year with Windmill Farms for equestrian services, and then I expect within the next 60 days, the Board will make a decision on the long-term plan for Windmill Farms.

Brian Winkler – Downtown Development Authority

- We had a very routine meeting in February.
- I think everyone received the Insite report.

Jay James – Building Department

- Things have been kind of slow.
- We've been catching up on expired permits that are still open. We had over 250 open permits, and a lot of times contractors don't call in for the final inspection.
- The Rolling Hills development you approved, the senior facility on Crumb and Haggerty; they've gotten started on their footings. You will see their buildings start to go vertical here very shortly.

#### **E. PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Kylie Kutney, 3869 Canute Rd., Commerce Township – Last time, I agreed with your decision for Benstein Grille. I know that was kind of a sensitive subject because of what it is located next to. I wanted to sincerely thank you for taking the time to let me speak and answer my questions.

#### **F. TABLED ITEMS**

None.

#### **G. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **H. SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None.

#### **I. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **ITEM 11: PSP20-02 – COMMERCE HOTELS CONDOMINIUMS**

Commerce Hospitality Investments LLC & Walled Lake Investment Properties LLC of Commerce MI are requesting approval for a proposed new condominium comprised of the existing Hampton Inn and Marriott TownePlace Suites Hotels located at 169 & 199 Loop Road. Sidwell No.: 17-36-400-031

David Campbell, Planning Director, gave a review.

The Project Attorney, Mr. Sesí, 32000 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 155, Farmington Hills MI 48334, was present on behalf of Mr. Bacall to address the request.

#### **Commission Comments:**

Vice Chairperson Schinzing – Dave, usually if you have any concerns, you state them in your report. I didn't see any concerns.

Dave Campbell – From a planning and zoning standpoint, I don't have any concerns. The Township Attorney had an opportunity to review the proposed master deed. He had some comments. He got those back and Mr. Sesí had addressed those. The exhibits to the master deed, and specifically the Exhibit B documents were reviewed by the

Township Engineer. He also had some comments that Mr. Sesi and his team were able to address. Ultimately, the condominium deed exhibits get reviewed and approved by Oakland County, but as far as the Township Attorney and Engineer are concerned, those documents are in order and their issues have been addressed. From our standpoint, with the possible exception of some questions I received before this evening's meeting, the Township's concerns have been addressed.

Winkler – No concerns.

Jones – No concerns.

Parel – None here.

Weber – I have a couple of questions. The Township Board has had several discussions with Mr. Bacall in the past. I would like to say that Mr. Bacall's enterprises are valued within the community. At the same time, the Township has done a lot of work to find creative solutions to help Mr. Bacall. The concern, historically and presently, is Mr. Bacall's advertising of the property to including Novi within the property's web presence. While that was resolved on the Marriott property, it has not been resolved on the Hampton Inn property. Dave, for Mr. Sesi's benefit, could you pull up the search on the overhead?

Mr. Sesi – I think Dave did it earlier and it indicated Novi was still in there.

Dave Campbell – If I understood Mr. Weber's questions before the meeting, if you do a simple Google search for Hampton Inn Commerce, what's generated on the right hand side, which is obviously very prominent, is the former name of the hotel, Hampton Inn Detroit- Novi. If you click on the link to the website specific to the hotel, it has the revised name, Hampton Inn Commerce- Novi.

Weber – So my request and my opinion is that Novi should be removed from the web presence. They can contact Google and I know Google will handle that. They can also work through the Hilton marketing department to remove Novi.

Mr. Sesi – We can try to do that, but when we were alerted to this a while ago, we approached Hilton about doing that. They use their market territories in marketing certain hotels. I will attempt it, but I can't promise that it will occur. We were able to get Commerce listed first. On the Google search, we will push to make sure that Commerce gets there. Maybe there is now a Hampton open in the Novi area and we can try to remove that.

Weber – What I would like to see is a written response from Hilton.

Mr. Sesi – I will do that.

Weber – I have one other question for Dave. In creating the condominium, there is an association, which is responsible for managing the driveway, trash, landscaping, et

cetera. So is it similar to a homeowner's association, and will both LLCs be funding the association? And if something is not happening, what is the responsible entity?

Dave Campbell – I will lean on Mr. Sesí to answer this one also. You are correct, it would function similar to a homeowner's association. There would be a condominium board, I assume a 50/50 split between the two hotels/LLCs, so if there were any issues with the site, they would have to be addressed through that board. For example, if the grass wasn't getting cut...

Weber – Yes, if there was a complaint...

Dave Campbell – We would presumably send notices to the two LLCs who own the respective hotels and generate a response that way.

McKeever – I have no questions.

Schinzing – Could I get a motion?

Dave Campbell – If you are inclined to do so, I did provide recommended motion language in our review letter. Based on the conversation with Mr. Weber, I don't know if you would want to add a condition regarding researching the possibility of the hotel name and marketing.

Weber – I would like to add that as a condition.

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Jones, that the Planning Commission **recommends approval, with conditions**, of Item PSP20-02, Commerce Hotels Condominiums, the request by Commerce Hospitality Investments LLC & Walled Lake Investment Properties LLC of Commerce MI for approval for a proposed new condominium comprised of the existing Hampton Inn and Marriott TownePlace Suites Hotels located at 169 & 199 Loop Road. Sidwell No.: 17-36-400-031

Move to recommend the Commerce Township Board approve the condominium site plan for the Commerce Hotels Condominium, PSP #20-02, by the request of co-applicants Basil Bacall of Walled Lake Investment Properties, LLC and Mike Bacall of Commerce Hospitality Investment LLC.

The recommendation of approval is based upon a finding by the Planning Commission that the information presented demonstrates that the proposal meets the applicable standards and requirements of the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance for a site condominium.

**The Planning Commission's recommendation of approval is conditional upon the following items:**

1. Final approval of the condominium site plan and master deed by the Commerce Township Board of Trustees;
2. The master deed and its exhibits to be revised as necessary for recording with the Oakland County Register of Deeds;
3. That the applicants determine a way to remove Novi from the web presence for the sites as discussed herein.

Discussion –

Jones – Dave, does something additional need to be added with regard to the association?

Dave Campbell – No, that is already contained within the master deed and bylaws as to how the association will be established and managed.

Jones – Okay.

**AYES: Weber, Jones, Winkler, Schinzing, Parel, McKeever**

**NAYS: None**

**ABSENT: Haber**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 12: COMMERCE TOWNSHIP FIRE STATION #3**

The Commerce Township Board is requesting input from the Planning Commission for a proposed new fire station located at 2150 Welch Road. Sidwell No.: 17-25-101-035

David Campbell, Planning Director, gave a review. He explained that the design committee for this project is comprised of Chief Dundas, Trustee Weber, Supervisor Scott, the architectural firm, and also Plante Moran, whose job it is to keep the project at or below budget. This discussion is an opportunity for the Planning Commission to offer any comments or suggestions so that the design team can incorporate them into the project before it goes to the Township Board for formal action. Dave reviewed plans on the overhead for the new station, which replaces the existing station on Welch Road.

Chief Dundas – We have a fire fund which is basically the Fire Department’s rainy day fund. Currently that fund is at \$4 million. We are going to use that money first. If there is a need to go beyond that in the budget, then we will borrow from the general fund and paying that back with the SAD over a 9-year term.

Dave Campbell – I know the design team has been working diligently to stick to the budget. Some things we had hoped for had to be scaled back or value engineering had to be applied.

Chief Dundas – Yes, value engineering.

Dave Campbell reviewed further details of the site plan on the overhead.

Dave Campbell – Chief, do you have any update on the conversations with the RCOC about the possibility of having an actuated signal along Welch Road? This would allow trucks to leave without having to wait for traffic.

Chief Dundas – That is part of the plan, to put a signal that the firefighters could operate. It would blink yellow most of the time. When they have an emergency run, they have the ability to turn that light to red to halt traffic, during rush hour times mostly. Welch Road gets busy during the morning and afternoon rush, so that light will help us a lot. We have not had those discussion yet, although they’re coming and that is part of the plan.

Discussions took place regarding circulation and traffic issues at this site.

Dave Campbell further reviewed the plans, including the dormitories, kitchen space, locker rooms, equipment and fitness rooms. He discussed elevations and four bays on the 3D renderings. He also discussed signage.

Chief Dundas discussed value engineering, updates to the plans and small cosmetic changes. He stated that this will be presented to the Township Board in the near future with some of those changes.

Chief Dundas – I want to point out, our neighbors to the south are here in the audience tonight. They have been very good neighbors to us. They knew the project was coming. The building actually moves a little further away from their house than it currently is. The Township owns the parcel just to the north, and that is primarily where the apparatus room will be. We are moving the trucks away from our neighbors. Also in the plan is to have a screened fence that runs down that border; although we'd be happy to talk with our neighbors to see if they don't necessarily want us to run it all the way down to the road. If they want a better view out of the front of their house, we're happy to work with them. We're enclosing the generator to keep the sound down.

Vice Chairperson Schinzing – The generator is only running during a power outage, correct?

Chief Dundas – Yes, it would only run during an outage or a test. This project in general is long overdue. Station #3 is by far our busiest station. It's going to continue to get busier with the downtown development. We have four fire stations in Commerce. Basically, over a third of those calls are from Station #3. This is currently the only fire station that does not have an ambulance that runs front line 24 hours a day. This is the area of Commerce that I live in. I want to put an ambulance in each area. EMS runs are over 80% of what we do. That was one of the main reasons that we pitched this to the voters to get the SAD support to build a new fire station and make sure that we put an ambulance in every quadrant of the Township.

I'm very excited about the project. We have a great team designing it. We're certainly open to any suggestions, and to answer any questions.

Vice Chairperson Schinzing – I know this is not a public hearing, but I would like to hear from the neighbors; any questions or thoughts they might have.

Jonathan & Amber Seaver, 2124 Welch Road, Commerce Township, were present to address the proposal.

Mr. Seaver – One of my concerns is, we have a great view in front and in the back yard. Right now when I sit on my back deck, I see a nice forest and tree lines. We're very concerned about that disappearing. A screened fence is not something that I want to look at.

Weber – Do you want any kind of screening fence? Right now, there's a chain link there.

Mr. Seaver – There's a chain link fence in there, but if you're trying to block the view of the fire station, that takes my whole view out of my back yard. I know it's required by ordinance, but you have to consider what I bought. I bought that because of the yard and the way it's laid out.

Weber – What is the ordinance with regard to screening?

Dave Campbell – If the fire station were a new commercial building for example, there are standards for screening a non-residential use from a residential use. Obviously we've got their home adjacent to the fire station. There are requirements that it be screened, whether it be via landscaping, a fence, a berm or a combination of all of the above. You as a Planning Commission can, and sometimes do, waiver from a strict application of those standards. An example would be a light industrial building that we approved a couple meetings ago next door to the gun club, where to put up a screen between the two would not serve much purpose.

Weber – We don't want to change your view or make it worse. I'm wondering, even if it was just something that was more central to your home that is not blocking your diagonal views from the front or the back. I have had this discussion with Dave Scott as well regarding walking the property to see what's best for you, because you are the neighbors.

Mr. Seaver – We like all the guys. We literally talk to them at the fence.

Chief Dundas – These folks wave hi to me every morning.

Mrs. Seaver – We have a preference for a green screening versus a wall; something as natural as you can go. I did have a question regarding the dumpster area, will that be walled in?

Mr. Seaver – And can that be moved? Sometimes you can smell that dumpster.

Chief Dundas – The dumpster is going to be bricked in and enclosed there. The tough part of laying out the site is not only allowing the trucks to turn around, but also with snow removal. The designers and architects thought this was the best location for us.

Weber – There are a couple members of the subcommittee here. Let us come back to you with alternatives on that.

Mr. Seaver – We're super open and we're not upset or anything.

Weber – No, it's a great discussion.

Mr. Seaver – We want us to all be able to enjoy it.

Dave Campbell – I think the screening fence was proposed to your benefit, to screen the neighbors from the activity, lights and some of the noise, but if there's something you prefer alternatively...

Mr. Seaver – I don't even notice the trucks coming or leaving unless I hear it backing up. It's not awful at all.

Mrs. Seaver – I have a question about the zoning of the property. It's currently residential, R-1 I believe it is.

Dave Campbell – Yes.

Mrs. Seaver – You guys are tearing it down and doing new construction. Is that really considered residential what you're doing, or will it be rezoned.

Dave Campbell – It doesn't need to be rezoned. Residential zoning does allow for government facilities.

Mrs. Seaver – Storing hazardous materials?

Chief Dundas – Besides soap, we don't store any type hazardous materials.

Weber – Other than the fuel in the trucks.

Mrs. Seaver – They have fire retardant materials that they spray or use.

Chief Dundas – We recently got rid of all of our foam so we don't have any hazmat in the stations.

Mrs. Seaver – What about the gas cylinders?

Chief Dundas – Any cylinders we have just have air in them.

Mrs. Seaver – And oxygen? Well, you're going to be bringing in an ambulance, right?

Chief Dundas – The ambulance has a small oxygen bottle.

Mrs. Seaver – My concerns are definitely related to the zoning of the property and retaining it as residential, specifically the required setbacks and other requirements for residential. I'm just raising the concerns for you to take them into consideration as you review the plan. Thank you.

Dave Campbell – Speaking to the residential component, one of the things we talked about in our design meetings was recognizing that the fire station is in a residential district and trying to maintain a certain residential character. I think some of the design elements, the pitched roof, et cetera, were meant to be consistent with a residential setting as opposed to commercial or industrial.

Chief Dundas – The roof itself, there are some pitched areas, but the majority of the station, in the middle of it, is a flat roof. That will allow us to hide those HVAC units.

Mr. Seaver – You guys did a nice job designing that part of it. It looks pretty sharp.

**Commission Comments:**

Vice Chairperson Schinzing – Bill, do you have any thoughts?

McKeever – I do not.

Weber – On Dave's comments, some of the bullet points he had; the only one that jumped out to me has to do with the roof materials. A lot of this will depend upon cost, but right now the original design is a metal roof. I'm curious as to what the thought is with that bullet point?

Dave Campbell – Asphalt shingles are obviously the predominant roofing materials throughout Southeast Michigan. There are metal residential roofs but I would say they're rare. I don't know that having a metal roof on the fire station is necessarily objectionable. I did want to at least address it with the Planning Commission to see if anyone had an opinion. I know in one of our design meetings, we talked about whether that color is open for conversation. In the renderings, it looks like almost a teal color, but I think it will actually be more like an aged copper which gets kind of a green tone. Are there any thoughts on this, if it's going to be a metal roof, would a different color be more desirable? Now would be the time to mention any opinions on that. I know the architect has to weigh the benefits of insulating it, and what's underneath it makes a difference whether it's shingled or a metal roof.

Jones – Some years ago, I had my roof redone. I talked to a builder about what he has on his roof. He said Timberland, 40-year life, and that's what I went with. If this is a 50-year facility, you ought to have minimum 40-year life on the asphalt if that's what you're going to do.

Dave Campbell – If I understand it right, the metal roof does not take up so much space in the upper pitches of the roof for insulation, so that gives them more opportunity for storage area.

Jones – If they do that, fine.

Jay James – One thing to remember, metal roofs are loud, not only in the building itself, but can be louder outside too.

Weber – Like during a hailstorm.

Chief Dundas – We had 30-year shingles on Fire Station #4 on Glengary Road. The roof got so bad last year we had to replace it, and it was only about 17 years we got out of those shingles. The benefit of the metal roof is there's not a lot of upkeep and maintenance. In my opinion, shingles usually don't last as long as they should.

The architects were concerned about how they would insulate that. When I asked if there was a cost savings to have a shingled roof, they said it's pretty close once you consider everything, and certainly the long-term upkeep of the station would be easier with a metal roof and no worries about re-shingling.

They asked me the same question about what color the roof should be. I told them that my wife picks out all the colors at my house, so I have no idea, but the drawing looks good. I very much want it to be a modern and functional fire station that meets all of our needs. I would also like it to look like a fire station from the outside. I'm a traditional guy, I like the red doors on it. But as far as the roof color, I'm open to suggestions on that.

Parel – I think it's a great looking building. On the printout I have, the metal roof appears to be more of a tan color or off-white. I think that blends in a little better. The green sticks out in my opinion, but I have no issues and I think it looks good.

Jones – The only thing with regard to the fence is to make sure that the line of sight is acceptable to everyone.

Are there going to be accel and decel lanes?

Chief Dundas – There will not be. There's not enough room to put that in there with the setback requirements and the tight road.

Dave Campbell – I think that's how we came back to the conversation of hanging a signal along Welch Road.

Winkler – I will refrain from any comments as my company is involved in the design.

Vice Chairperson Schinzing – I have no comments either.

Chief Dundas – I would also add that this will now be a drive-through station, so the neighbors shouldn't hear trucks backing up as often. Our largest trucks won't have to stop and back up on Welch Road.

Parel – How is the trash handled currently?

Chief Dundas – There is a dumpster with no enclosure.

Parel – So this should be a better scenario.

Jones – So all the trucks will be in Walled Lake during construction?

Chief Dundas – Yes, that is correct. Schedule wise, we're looking at breaking ground with the demolition sometime this summer. Then it would be about a year before the grand opening of the new station. We have an excellent relationship with our neighbors in Walled Lake. They come to our fires and we go to theirs. They're providing us with a small dorm room and room in their station for two of our trucks. It's a little further away response time wise, but it's by far a better option in terms of the project itself. It saves

money and time because we don't have to build the station in phases while trying to keep it operational.

Discussions continued regarding providing emergency services during the transition.

**ITEM I3: Discussion on Digital/Electronic Signs**

Dave Campbell – I do want to address this because it has come up in meetings. Before we turn it into a research project that my staff and I, and likely the Township Attorney would get involved in, I want to make sure we have a general consensus on the direction we're going.

As I always say when signs come up, they're something of a minefield because you're getting into First Amendment protections and free speech. We have to be careful with how we regulate signage because that is considered constitutionally protected free speech.

What I think I've heard from Planning Commission members at past meetings is concerns about digital signs and also changeable message signs. Those two things are oftentimes the same thing, as digital signs by nature change their messages, but then there's also the traditional changeable signs where people change the letters by hand. We currently do allow digital signs in three of our commercial zoning districts; Business, TLM and in our Industrial zoning districts. We also had a digital billboard on M-5 which went away while the non-motorized bridge was under construction. That sign will be reinstated in the coming months, but that's its own animal and was approved as part of a consent judgment. That was amended so the sign can be reinstated now that the bridge is complete.

In terms of conversation for this evening and digital signs in front of commercial entities, currently we allow them. They can only be so big, they can only be so tall, the message can only change every so often, the brightness of the sign is regulated. I believe what I've heard primarily from Mr. Weber is that he feels the message should be essentially static. It should identify the business, but it shouldn't be used to promote the business or any sort of specials. If that's the agreement of the Planning Commission that electronic signs should be essentially static in their message, then I think we'd be on safe grounds creating an ordinance that says as much, but I'd like to hear that this is the direction we're looking to go.

Weber – I have two items. I'm not sure what my opinion is. One, do we want a situation 10 years from now where Union Lake Road looks like Las Vegas, with tons of LED signs? Or Commerce Village, or Haggerty Road? Then a related topic is the concern or potential for distracted driving if signs move from marketing a business to the public, to generating commercials for the business.

I learned some things from your report; one change per 30 seconds as part of the standard, but also that the sign shall not vary light illumination and/or intensity, or have features with blinking, bursting, dissolving, distorting, fading, flashing, oscillating, rotating, scrolling, sequencing ... or simulated movement.

Dave Campbell – All of those words are different ways of saying that the sign is not meant to move, to flash, to dance, to scroll, to have fireworks on it, all these different things that we see on these types of signs. But yes, the way the ordinance is currently

written, the message can change every 30 seconds. It's just supposed to be an instantaneous change. It's not supposed to fade out or scroll across or anything like that.

It also gets into a question of enforcement, because to ensure that they're complying, Jay or someone on his staff would have to stand there with a stopwatch and time the message. As far as illumination goes, they'd have to have a light meter to ensure that the sign's not too bright. Those are the standards we have in place currently for digital signs that we have.

My thought is, if we put standards on electronic signs that says the message can't change, or it can only change so often, then it's almost not worthwhile to have it. That potentially could regulate the need for having the electronic signs at all. If you can't change the message, it's probably not worth the investment.

Jay James – I can tell you that we have gone out and stood with a stopwatch on some signs to time them, as well as going out with photometers to check the illumination. Some signs, given the weather conditions, foggy or hazy, they appear to give off more light because they're reflecting off the fog or haze. To my knowledge, we had one sign in particular that was an issue. We addressed it and haven't gotten any other complaints on any other signs.

Parel – It's my opinion that if it appears we can do it, I think we should prohibit electronic signs and, as you describe them Dave, copy signs where they have the ability to change the words. I don't think that impedes anyone's First Amendment rights. It is an advertisement, but they just can't advertise a commercial.

Dave Campbell – So whether it's a digital sign, electronic sign that changes the message every 30 seconds, or whether it's somebody going out and changing the vinyl letters by hand, your preference is that we don't allow any of these types of signs that are changeable in nature.

Parel – Changeable in nature, and I'd also go further to say that I'd like to prohibit electronic signs of any kind. I understand there are some potential exceptions such as gas stations.

And I know you'd mentioned in your report, if you drive through the Village, you see the dentist there, that area is not the same type of use or feel as driving down Union Lake Road.

Dave Campbell – With that specific example, I believe the dentist office is within the Commerce Village Overlay. If we wanted to say no electronic signs within that particular overlay district, that would be an option too, if we wanted to maintain a historic feel in certain commercial areas. That would be a compromise.

Parel – That would be a compromise; however, my position would still be to prohibit.

Winkler – David, refresh my memory. When was Item 4 of Article 30 originally put into the ordinance?

Dave Campbell – This was in the Zoning Ordinance when I came aboard which was 2015. I'm going to guess that it has been in there at least since we adopted the entirely new Zoning Ordinance back in 2010. Jay, any insight on that?

Jay James – I only recall Kathleen was the Planner at the time and I do recall they did a lot of studies, looking into the requirements to establish the limitations.

Winkler – Not to put a burden on the Planning Department, but how does this compare to surrounding communities? Is this pretty consistent?

Dave Campbell – I would say yes, it's pretty consistent. Most communities allow electronic signs and put regulations on them the same as us, in terms of illumination levels, how often the message can change, and restricting movement which can potentially cause distractions for drivers.

I know the City of Novi where I worked around 2011, they had an outright prohibition. They did not allow electronic signs, except for the one in front of City Hall. They have apparently changed that in the years since. They do allow some electronic signs, as of 2017, specifically in their Towne Center zoning district. That is the area along Novi Road near the expressway, at the mall and shopping areas.

Brian, I would say most communities allow them but with limits.

Winkler – I think prohibiting these types of signs in the Commerce Village would be a good idea, only because of the nature of that district.

Jones – I agree with the two Brian's and mostly Brian Winkler.

McKeever – I would defer to the attorneys.

Vice Chairperson Schinzing – In my opinion, I don't have a problem with the manual signs. Most churches have them and I think they're cute and funny sometimes. I'd like to see no electronic signs personally, no new ones. I don't think it fits who we are and what we're trying to accomplish. I don't know if this helps you Dave.

Dave Campbell – It helps. I'm taking a tally. The existing electronic signs would be considered lawful, nonconforming. We could put some sort of a sunset on those, but that tends to be challenging at times.

Weber – I agree with Russ's view as well. I don't think I have an issue with the manual change signs either, such as Golden Woods saying Open Enrollment, or a church, but get away from the electronic signs.

Dave Campbell – If we took the route of prohibiting electronic signs, would that apply to gas station price signs? Not the manually changed ones, but the digital?

Weber – I would think not. That is a unique situation.

Dave Campbell – I think I have enough here to start putting something together. We would have to have this thoroughly vetted by the Township Attorney because I can't tell you enough that we are getting into free speech First Amendment type issues. Hopefully I can come back in the coming months with something on this, in the form of a Zoning Ordinance amendment for you to take a look at. There's a couple other outstanding issues with signs that we've been talking about for a while; having a sliding scale for sizeable wall signs based on how far your building is from the road, and the Township Board has had discussions about banner signs. We might compile this with a couple other loose ends we have in our sign regulations and try to tidy things up in one package.

Weber – Obviously if we have an amendment, there will need to be a public hearing. If there is a way, can we over-advertise that, just to make sure the business community knows and we have the opportunity to hear from them just so that there's no surprises?

Dave Campbell – Sure.

Parel – Does the Township Board have an opinion on this?

Weber – Not to my knowledge.

**J: OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION:**

Conversation took place regarding recent discussions at the Township Board with regard to addressing topics under Other Matters and that it is potentially too liberal. Some items should require an agenda item so that the public is aware it will be discussed, and nothing that requires a vote should be addressed under Other Matters.

**K: PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- **NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2020 @ 7PM**

Dave Campbell – I know I emailed everyone regarding potential for having a special meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>. That will not happen. Mr. Aikens was trying to pull things together to get in front of you for the Five & Main project, but he continues to have discussions and negotiations regarding partnering with a residential developer for the residential component within his development. He has not selected a partner yet and until he knows more, he will wait to bring it back in front of you.

Weber – Is there a deadline for that decision? I know that everything moving forward apparently is contingent upon that.

Dave Campbell – I don't know that we ever established a deadline. I know that we established a timeline for what I would need from him for the next meeting. I know he is shooting now for the April 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting. That is a little later in the month as we wanted to avoid Spring Break week. I would hope he would have something for us by then.

Because that project is a PUD, and he is amending the PUD, we have to have a public hearing per the Zoning Ordinance, so we need advance notice to get the publication in the newspaper.

Dave Campbell also reviewed the following updates with the Commissioners:

- Apparently there is some activity on the Beaumont site. Randy Thomas, the broker who represents Beaumont and is trying to sell the property, has been into the Township and asking a lot of questions. That's at Maple Road and M-5.
- There is still a residential developer looking at the Bay Pointe Golf Course, which has been a candidate for redevelopment for many years.
- The property we call the Fetter property, just north of 14 Mile on the west side of Haggerty; the broker wanted to talk to us about different possibilities for that site. They're getting interest for residential development.
- Another big piece of the puzzle is the Sleeth Road gravel pits. Jay and I, and the Township Supervisor had meetings with the Oakland County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, and the Michigan State Land Bank Authority, on the potential for redeveloping one of the three gravel pit properties through a Brownfield. This allows a developer to capture some of the incremental tax value of the development they build to essentially pay themselves back. County and State cooperation would be necessary.

Jones discussed ground conditions at Bay Pointe and cautioned staff about what might be built there. Dave Campbell stated that the developer has his engineer doing soil borings and evaluating the areas that are potentially suitable for construction. He added that the prior developer wanted 200+ homes to have access on Middle Straits Lake. The current developer is not looking to access the lake beyond maybe 7 or 8 lakefront houses, and possibly a community beach.

Weber inquired about the status of Pulte's proposed townhomes on the old driving range property across from the Township Hall. Dave Campbell had nothing new to report since Pulte's meeting with Pinewood Industrial Association regarding emergency access.

**L: ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Jones, supported by Parel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Brian Winkler, Secretary