

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

Monday, February 29, 2016
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairperson Jones, called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Tom Jones, Vice Chairperson
Brian Winkler, Secretary
Bill McKeever
Jay Czarnecki
John Hindo
Russ Schinzing
Absent: Larry Haber, Chairperson (excused)
Also Present: Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director

UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

Bill McKeever – Zoning Board of Appeals

- Nothing new to report.

John Hindo – Township Board of Trustees

- The Township Clerk, Vanessa Magner, announced that she will not be running for re-election as she has taken another position in the private sector.
- There will be a special meeting tomorrow night to consider appointing someone to serve on an interim basis pending the election.

Brian Winkler – Downtown Development Authority

- I did not attend the February meeting as I was on vacation.
- I would defer to Dave Campbell if he has anything to add.

Dave Campbell - Merrill Park was the vast majority of their conversation at that meeting and I will include that as part of my update under the Planning Director's report agenda item.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

ITEM 1: 8177 GOLDIE - C.A. HULL CO – CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

C.A. Hull Company of Commerce MI is requesting a conceptual review of a proposed addition at 8177 Goldie. Sidwell No.: 17-13-400-009

Dave Campbell, Planning Director, gave a review.

Dave Campbell - I met with the applicants informally two weeks ago. We had a lot of discussion regarding their plans to put an addition on the front of their existing building. We addressed what needs to be done to bring this into reasonable compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. They wanted to have a conversation with the Planning Commission regarding what would be considered reasonable and due to scheduling issues, they decided to arrange for the special meeting this evening.

The existing facility is on the south side of Goldie, midway between Martin Parkway and Haggerty Road. They've been there since the 70's. Their business is highway bridge construction and reconstruction. With that business model, they have a lot of heavy equipment and a lot of materials that are stored onsite. This is one of the properties that was rezoned recently from OR to TLM. That zoning district has some fairly strict limits as to what is permitted as far as outdoor storage, and what they have onsite and have had historically exceeds those limits. As part of their procedurally coming to the Planning Commission for site plan approval for a building addition, per Section 35 of the Zoning Ordinance, this Planning Commission would have an opportunity to make a determination of what else could be done to the site to bring it into reasonable compliance with today's standards. Reasonable is meant to be in proportion to the scale of the proposed project.

They're proposing a fairly sizable building addition on the north side, about 8,000 square feet, 2 stories in height and what I think is a very attractive building addition. They're also proposing improvements to their parking lot along the east side. There are nonconformities with the site, including a lot of outdoor storage. I wanted to address efforts to bring the outdoor storage into reasonable compliance and we have discussed extensive landscaping as a possible solution. We wanted to bring this in front of the Commissioners to get feedback so they can make a decision as to where they want to go with this proposal; whether to proceed, or whether the requirements for compliance would go beyond what they could accomplish.

Vice Chairperson Jones inquired with the applicants as to what they might propose to clean up the site.

David Mielock, Mielock Architects, 114 Rayson Street, Northville, MI, was present along with owner, Mike Malloure, C.A. Hull company, 8177 Goldie Road, Walled Lake, MI.

David Mielock - I think the easy fix is to just rezone the property back to industrial, but I don't think that's going to happen. I'd like to take you through some steps to orient you.

Mr. Mielock delivered a presentation on the overhead, showing the boundaries of the parcel, west of Haggerty, on the south side of Goldie, and a conceptual plan overlay. He reviewed the surrounding zoning and adjacent properties. He presented aerial views displaying the proposed addition along with photographs of the site and he described the usage for office space, warehousing and parking areas. He believes that Goldie is a private road. He discussed fencing, landscaping improvements, curb cuts, et cetera on the preliminary architectural proposal. He elaborated on the renovations and improvements to the façade along the street frontage. He addressed outdoor storage of heavy equipment necessary to the business, showed comparison photos reflecting cleanup of the site over the past couple of years and discussed efforts to improve the site from a visual standpoint such as moving equipment toward the back of the site.

Mike Malloure discussed the nature of his business. There are 250 employees and the office holds about 40 people, therefore many are working from the basement. The

expansion will allow for office space to get those employees out of the basement work space. He addressed the seasonal work which begins in March or April and wraps up in November or December each year. Equipment is stored onsite during the winter. Again, the site has been cleaned up quite a bit over the past couple of years as he has made efforts to change business practices since he took over from his relatives. Mike also discussed issues in the past with BB's, which came from the adjacent gun club, breaking the windows on the equipment and therefore the machines were parked away from that area of the property.

David Mielock further reviewed the floor plan, including the stairwell, L-shaped plan, square footage, connections and renovations. He noted there would be no manufacturing in the new space; only offices. He also addressed existing landscaping and stated that trees would be preserved during the improvements. He reviewed the exterior, elevation, entrances and changes to circulation and access for the loading zone, emergency vehicles, et cetera. He noted that this is only a conceptual idea and they will certainly meet the requirements of the ordinance for masonry and glass, along with extensive landscaping along the front, when coming in for final site plan approval.

Commission Comments:

Winkler reviewed the conceptual plan overlay with the applicants and discussed the curb cuts, landscaping, circulation and parking, including employee parking.

David Mielock noted that they will meet the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Winkler -

- I agree with Dave Campbell's comment that this is definitely an improvement to the front of the building.
- The nature of the business is what it is, and this company has been in Commerce Township since '76, so I don't know how many additions or improvements have been made to the building.
- This is our chance to suggest to the petitioner what other improvements could be done to the site.
- Dave Campbell has made some good suggestions about enhancing the screening. Along with what's being done on the east, along Goldie, maybe I would suggest something along the remainder of the north property line to the east, as well as to the west to enhance the screening further. Although they won't fully screen the equipment, whether it be a low wall with landscaping or a screening fence, the improvements made will complement the building addition.
- I wouldn't go as far as saying you can only put certain things in certain places as that may be too restrictive, but physical enhancements along the north property line would also be helpful with screening.

Jones - Are you talking about maybe a taller fence? I know there's a fence over there now with the plastic slats. Are you thinking about maybe an 8' fence to screen?

Winkler - Maybe like a low masonry wall along the property line topped by a fence or something additional that provides additional partial screening, within reason. The building itself is gorgeous, even if it is conceptual.

Czarnecki - I don't think a wall or a fence will help. The crane is 200' tall?

Mike Malloure - We have the old blue crane that's going to an auction soon. What we have left are hydraulic cranes which are collapsible boom hydraulics and the maximum height is 35' when they are down.

Czarnecki - I think, as Brian said, the landscaping along the north property line is a reasonable request as opposed to a masonry wall. With something 20' high, even a 6 or 8' wall to block it, you're still going to see it. The building is very nice in concept. Maybe the landscaping should be spread along the north property line so that as it grows, it will form a natural screen. I wouldn't be opposed to that and it will help to block the entire site.

Schinzing - Has anyone ever complained? I've never even been down Goldie before for any reason. What do the neighbors think?

Mike Malloure - No, to my knowledge we've never received any complaints. Our neighbors are landscapers who have an outdoor bin for mulch in the summertime and salt in the winter. There's also a marijuana facility across the street. AT&T is adjacent to the east and they store their trucks there overnight. I've never heard a peep from them. The road is private and is maintained by the businesses on Goldie.

Schinzing - What are the requirements under the current zoning? Does this lend itself to more requirements? Is it a specific requirement, because just saying reasonable, I don't know what that means.

Dave Campbell - Nor do I, and that's what is up to you gentlemen collectively. If this were a new site plan in the TLM zoning district, there are some requirements such as with outdoor storage that it has to be limited to a certain area. It could only be in the rear yard and has to have an 8' masonry fence and a lot of other things we don't have here today. I don't know that requiring those things as a condition of site plan approval would be reasonable. I don't know that they could achieve those things given the nature of their business and the orientation of their site.

Schinzing - You can see the blue crane from Martin Parkway. There's nothing that will screen that, but you're selling that. I like the idea of trees and landscaping. It is what it is and I don't ever go down that road. I don't think a lot of people travel that road. Your building concept is beautiful and if the final comes out looking anything like that, you're only improving the area.

Hindo - Nothing to add.

McKeever initiated discussions regarding the dotted line on the map, the setback line and any changes in requirements with the recent zoning change. Open discussions ensued regarding the setback, right of way, vegetation screening, equipment parked near the roadside and barricades, and the fence line location. Mike Malloure noted that there is a shoulder on the road up to the fence line and equipment is parked in that area. McKeever requested that this be moved to clean up the view along that fence line, and Mike agreed that everything would be brought back.

Jones asked if the fence was in the setback area. Dave Campbell was unsure, but details such as this would be sorted out in the final site plan review. He would encourage all storage be on the opposite side of the fence, beyond the barriers. Jones noted that they are not allowed to build within the setback, but asked if they could put landscaping in that area. Dave Campbell replied that the landscaping should be on their side of the property line and not in the private road easement. David Mielock stated that the setback line is the dashed line which is at a 30' front yard setback. It was his understanding that they were allowed to landscape within that area and the fence is at the property line. Mike Malloure asked if the fence is in violation of the ordinance, where it exists now and has been for decades, would it be required to be moved back to the setback line? Dave Campbell stated that from the Zoning Ordinance perspective, a new fence or the existing fence would be okay up to the property line. If it is found to be at 3' over for example, then that would become an issue. Winkler agreed that any equipment on the roadside along the fence should be brought back into the site. He agreed that a berm and landscaping would offer sufficient screening.

Jones - These people have been there for 40 years. It's a private road. I would be hard pressed to try to force them to bring everything back further to the setback line when they've been using that for 40 years just to allow them to develop the new building site. The proposal for the addition would be a real improvement to the appearance. The setback is normally 20', isn't it?

Dave Campbell - I think it's 30'. I don't know that I'm necessarily advocating that they pull everything back inside that 30' line. I am advocating that they pull it back off Goldie Road and keep it on their side of the property line.

Jones - Absolutely. They can't be beyond their lot line.

Mike Malloure - We will commit to that. Whether this goes forward or not, I'll commit to stop putting stuff up between the fence line and the road.

Jones polled the Commissioners asking if anyone disagreed with the proposal moving forward. There were no objections.

David Mielock - We appreciate gaining your input tonight as we will come before you again. All of the emphasis has been about improving the frontage along Goldie and we agree to that. We feel we're doing that just by putting the building addition on in the location it's planned for. This already eliminates some of that unsightliness that currently exists along Goldie, so we ask you to consider that.

Also, if there might be some middle ground here, one of the options might be that maybe they take some of that equipment along the fence line that's taller and move it to the back of the site to reduce the impact along Goldie. The back of the site is heavily treed along the south side between C.A. Hull and the gun club.

Jones- I'd like to hear the owner say that he's willing to go along with that.

Mike Malloure - I don't think that would be an issue at all. We can put the larger stuff at the back and only park pickup trucks and smaller things in the front area. I would offer to the Commission that we can improve the fence in the current location with some sort of opaque option, such as the chain link with slats.

Jones - Chain link fence with slats can look ratty. It needs maintenance to ensure it always looks good.

McKeever - The ordinance does not even allow chain link with slats.

Dave Campbell - The ordinance would not allow it if it were a new fence under a new site plan today, but again it is at your discretion as to what is reasonable. A lot of what they have there now, at least on the west end of the site, includes a cyclone fence with green slats.

Mike Malloure - On the east side of the property, there is a chain link with the green plastic stripping that goes through the links to screen.

Dave Campbell - Would you be replacing that?

Mike Malloure - No, I'm suggesting on the west side of the property, we would duplicate that. On the west side there's an open chain link fence that's in bad shape. It needs to be updated and improved. As part of that improvement we can add screening to that fence and we can also research other fence options.

McKeever - Who occupies the building to the west?

Mike Malloure - To the west of us? We do, under a separate agreement.

McKeever - Personally, I'd rather see you screen your yard from your neighbors, and along the Goldie frontage is where I'd like to see screening and vegetation. I'm not as concerned with the west side because the impression I got when I drove through was that C.A. Hull goes to the end of the street.

Mike Malloure - Yes, C.A. Hull does occupy that piece.

Dave Campbell - When I was referencing the west side, I still mean the fence along Goldie, just the western half of that fence.

David Mielock - I believe the fence that's existing on the west end of the site along Goldie is 8' high. On the east, I believe that fence is about 6' and that's where he's parking the trucks. It does a good job of screening the trucks over there. Mr. McKeever, we were not referencing that fence line between the sites. We were talking about west of the building.

Mike Malloure - Where we're doing the landscaping improvements, that area between the property lines and setback at the front of the building, I don't see how we can extend that any further west. The fence line sits behind the property line, but not at the setback line. I'm not sure how much landscaping we can get in between the shoulder of the road and the fence.

Dave Campbell - You're willing to explore options for improving and/or replacing the existing fence along Goldie with something more opaque?

Mike Malloure - Yes, we're proposing some sort of chain link fence. A masonry wall is cost prohibitive to us. The building addition is a fairly substantial amount of money for us. If we need to improve Goldie road to a large extent, I'm not sure I can support that, but a chain link fence with opaque screening that we will maintain sounds reasonable. Then we're willing to shift the operation of our facilities to store bigger stuff in the south of the site and away from Goldie Road as much as possible.

Open discussions ensued regarding security of the site, thefts and issues in the past, the gates, fencing and items that are stored on the site.

Jones -

- The other chain link fence could have maintenance done to improve it, slats replaced, repairs, et cetera, at the same time the other fence is done.
- On the last page, a rendering of the building is shown. I see there is a portion of the building in the back that is sticking out there. I'm wondering if that could be colored or painted to complement the masonry on the addition.

Mike Malloure - My grandfather, my dad and my two uncles who've all been with the business in the past were all U of M alums so the building was painted blue and yellow. I am not a U of M alum and absolutely intend to change the color of the building to coordinate with the colors you see on the conceptual design.

David Mielock - We have talked about improving the whole building and not just the addition. We are looking at this in totality and we do want to make the improvements including the landscaping along the 120' frontage on Goldie. We are making a commitment and an investment to improve it.

Mike Malloure - We will change the color, but I will still fly the flag out front.

Jones - Have we provided enough direction, and with that, can we leave them to work with Dave Campbell regarding the vegetation and landscaping within the areas that it is possible to implement, along with screening and fencing options?

McKeever - The chain link fence is there.

Jones - They can replace those slats and maintain it regularly.

McKeever - Yes, I'm fine with that. I'm just looking for something that will take the emphasis off the items stored in the yard and kind of dress up the overall appearance.

Winkler - What they're doing as far as the parking lot and the building is great and they just need to get it a little bit more in line with what was discussed here tonight.

Jones - I assume that the fuel tank can stay right where it's at?

David Mielock nodded affirmatively.

Dave Campbell - We've talked a lot about the fence, preserving and improving the fence. A portion of it is topped with barbed wire, correct?

Mike Malloure - Correct.

Dave Campbell - Is that something you would want to retain as a security measure?

Mike Malloure - I certainly would. It's in disrepair now and I won't argue with that. It needs to be improved.

Dave Campbell - It's not the whole length though, is it?

Mike Malloure - I believe it's the whole length facing Goldie.

Jones - Is it? Even where the fence is now with the striping or slats?

Mike Malloure - Yes.

David Mielock - I don't recall it being on there.

Mike Malloure - We would have to check and confirm that.

Discussion continued regarding the need for barbed wire for security purposes and this would be further reviewed to determine where it currently exists. Mike Malloure also discussed upgrades to the gate as the photos on the overhead presentation were studied again.

Jones - Dave, are you bringing that up because you don't like the barbed wire?

Dave Campbell - I know that oftentimes, Zoning Ordinances prohibit it or restrict it for aesthetic reasons and I thought it was at least worth discussing.

Jones - Consider whether or not you really need it.

Mike Malloure - Yes, we will review that.

David Mielock - Dave Campbell and I had talked about the use compliance of this particular site, being TLM zoning. With the office addition, this is an addition on a nonconforming site/building. I believe the Township Attorney reviewed this. I just wanted to make sure that everybody knew that had been done and that you're in agreement with his opinion.

Based upon what you've heard tonight, would there be any need for a Special Land Use or any requirement on this site for a public hearing or a special meeting to achieve a special use?

Dave Campbell - No, because it's an office addition, which is a permitted use in our new TLM zoning district, this would be considered site plan that could be reviewed and ultimately approved by the Planning Commission without any public hearing or review by the Township Board.

David Mielock - So it's just a straight site plan review then?

Dave Campbell - Correct.

David Mielock - Thank you. You've been very helpful and we appreciate your time.

OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION:

- **NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: MARCH 7, 2016**

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dave Campbell gave a review of the report and discussed the following items with the Commissioners:

- A joint meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 7:00pm, with the Township Board, DDA and Planning Commission. The intent is to discuss the vision for the Township, particularly within the DDA. Obviously there are concerns with traffic, and also the standards for the Town Center overlay will be addressed.
- Williams International inquired about the 8' pathway they were required to put in along the Maple Road frontage from Welch to M5. They asked if the Township might consider allowing them to figure the cost, then put the money into an improvement fund for a pathway to be built in another location.

The Commission discussed the request by Williams and decided that the pathway should be installed along Maple as originally approved as the intention was to create a connection in that location.

Dave Campbell continued his review:

- On March 7th, the Commissioners will review several Zoning Ordinance amendments including the possibility for backyard chickens. Fence standards and other housekeeping items will also be reviewed.
- Merrill Park will come before you on March 7th to amend their site plan and Special Land Use. They have reduced their units from 71 to 69 after surveying. This will allow for tree preservation along the north property line and it will increase the buffer between the homes and the driving range.
- ACE will return for their annual flower sale. I would recommend in the future that this temporary outdoor sale be approved administratively if there are no changes.
- On The Dunes is doing some work inside the building. The west side was the empty portion which was shown as a future expansion. They are now moving forward with that and the changes include batting cages, pitching mounds and a cross-fit area. There will be some nice improvements. Parking and use have been reviewed.
- **The April meeting has been moved from the 4th to the 11th per Chairperson Haber's request.**

Open discussions ensued regarding improvements to building façades and updates on tabled items.

Jones noted that there is a wooden fence collapsing at the auto repair shop on the corner of Oakley Park and Haggerty Road. Dave Campbell would notify Jay James to look into this.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Czarnecki, supported by Hindo, to adjourn the meeting at 6:11pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Brian Winkler, Secretary