

Planning Commission Meeting

Vergennes Township

March 2, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Scott Jernberg.

Roll Call – Jernberg, Mastrovito, Post, Rosema and Gillett were present. None were absent. Also present were Andy Moore of Williams and Works and Jeanne Vandersloot, Zoning Administrator.

Approval of minutes – Post motioned to approve minutes from February 2, 2015 meeting, Rosema seconded.

Approval or changes of the agenda – Post motioned to approve the agenda as presented with no additions or changes. Gillett seconded the motion. Motion passed.

1. DAS and DHS Holdings LLC – Home development site plan review

Don DeGroot of Excel Engineering spoke. David Rapp representing the developer was also present. They secured R2 rezoning from the Township Board at their January meeting. There are 106 single family platted lots planned. There are also three land division lots located on the south side of the property. All streets are public with the exception of one cul de sac which will be private. The Kent County Road Commission has reviewed the plan and is not fond of cul de sacs. Due to the grade change near one and the location of the other, they are tentatively approving it. The roads will be built to county standards. There will be public water through Lowell Township and on-site drain fields. The lots are all sized to be well over the Township minimum of 17,000 square feet. There are a few at 18,000 square feet but many are over 20,000 square feet. An open space is planned along the drain corridor and along Alden Nash Ave where the trail is. Two of the land division parcels will be accessed via a private shared driveway. The third parcel there will have direct access to Alden Nash Avenue. All requirements from the Road and Drain Commissions will be met during those agencies review.

Planning Commission discussion – Storm water runoff is not calculated yet. The retention area is subject to modification. The entire site drains to the south and the developer is confident that is where the water will flow.

Are individual drain fields common in this type of rural development? Yes, the lot sizes are generous, the soil is very good, making conditions ideal for them. Public sewer is not available due to future capacity issues with Lowell Township.

The final approval for the cul de sacs rests with the Kent County Road Commission. They have preliminary ok. If not approved, all cul de sacs will become private roads. They feel cul de sacs add value to the homes and homeowners like living on them. This is the only plan right now, no Plan B.

With regard to the two parcels on the private shared drive, is there any chance they could be divided in the future? Per DeGroot, they are nice sites and they don't foresee any splits. It would require the private driveway be upgraded. Also, there is an existing home near the south end of the development. What is being done to shield it from headlights, etc...? There is at least 80' from pavement to the house. There are also some trees in between there. They don't see it as an issue. Dave Rapp has left a voicemail for the homeowner. He has not heard back from her yet. Rosema knows her and will pass along his contact information.

What about utilities? Gas and electric lines will be buried. Communications lines are consumer driven and will be determined later. There is a 10' easement outside the ROW to allow for utility lines.

The development will be built in several phases over a 6 – 8 year period. Phase one begins near the storm water area and follows around the planned road. They are figuring around 22 houses per phase. Once Phase 3 is done, there will be close to 75 homes and the Road Commission requires a second access point.

Williams and Works Preliminary Plat review memo dated February 27, 2015. Andy Moore went over some key points in his memo. It has been many years since the Township has had a Plat application. Since there are no subdivision standards in the Ordinance and there is no Subdivision Control Ordinance, the Township must follow the requirements in the Land Division Act (Act 288 of 1967) and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Act 33 of 2008.

To highlight a few items from the memo, the *proposed* shared driveway to parcel A and parcel B cross a wetland area. Permits from MDEQ will be required. Also, sidewalks are proposed on at least one side of the street. There should be some stipulation as to when the sidewalks need to be completed. Several options are listed. Since two streets in the development create intersections with the LARA non-motorized trail, it should be required that detectable warning strips and trail stop signs at both intersections be installed.

Jeanne Vandersloot commented on plans. The shared driveway will require a maintenance agreement. Also, was there any thought to playgrounds or park areas aside from open space near drain area? Lot 8 would be ideal since it allows access to Cooper Woodlands and the Little League fields. Also, in future phases, Lot 92 was suggested.

Per DeGroot, they considered access to the south areas by using the trail and even though it is a bit farther walk, the roads and sidewalks proposed lead to the main trail on Alden Nash and they felt that was ok. Also, having a playground with equipment and such, opens up other issues. Liability is the main one. Who would oversee it? There would need to be a Homeowner's Association. There could be a planned lot and let the homeowners determine its use. Not many want to live next to it either. It doesn't look like it on the plans but there are 13 acres of open space around the drain area and along the trail.

There is some concern by Planning Commission on the retention ponds and the need to fence it depending on depth. There are no standards for fencing. Developer will wait for final calculations to determine what needs to be done.

Each phase of development must be approved by Township. Changes can be made as they go along.

Kent County looks at layout of roads in development when determining traffic patterns, etc... Alden Nash is a Class A road. Vergennes is not. Putting the high school on that corner redefined the area.

A motion was made by Gillette to hold the public hearing for this development on April 6, 2015. Post seconds. Motion carried.

## 2. Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Overlay District and Noise Ordinance

Andy Moore and Jeanne Vandersloot reviewed the proposed amendment for the Overlay district. The name of the amendment should be “LFP” Little Farms Plat Overlay District.

It is helpful to list permitted uses in the overlay to maintain consistency with the format of district standards throughout the Ordinance.

To avoid potential conflict with the Michigan Right to Farm Act, it should be clarified that livestock permitted under 201.306B, B, 4 apply to non-farm uses (for example, chickens for personal use). Also, the language should be moved to a different part of the chapter as an accessory use to single family residences.

Jeanne and Andy will work to clean up the language and have available for final planning commission review at April 6, 2015 meeting.

Noise Ordinance discussion is tabled until next meeting.

## 3. Finalize date for hosting Joint Planning Commission Meeting

Dates presented to other municipalities were September 15, 28 or 29. Any of the dates are OK with Lowell Township or Lowell City. It was decided September 28, 2015 at 7 pm at the Vergennes Township Hall. Jeanne Vandersloot will advise them of final date. There will need to be discussion of agenda items and refreshments closer to the meeting date.

There was no other business or general comment brought before the Commission.

Post motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm. Jernberg seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The next scheduled meeting is April 6, 2015.