

**WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
JANUARY 7, 2020**

Present: Joseph Stepich, Colleen Curtis, Deanna Heminger, Linda Rizzo, Kevin Schuhknecht, Scott McKee

Also Present: Brad Burkett, Joe Arnt, Dan Fulton

Chairman Schuhknecht called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call was taken.

The minutes of the December 3, 2019 meeting were read. C. Curtis made a motion to approve the minutes as read. K. Schuhknecht seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

J. Stepich stated that he would like an amendment to the agenda by adding Airport Park and new planning member for discussion. K. Schuhknecht agreed to the amendment.

**8277 Arnt Blvd. Request for Rezoning of Property.**

At 2:05 p.m., C. Curtis made a motion to close out of the regular session and open the scheduled public hearing. D. Heminger seconded and motion passed unanimously. The public hearing was opened at 2:05 p.m.

J. Arnt, addressing the Commission, stated that he was asking for a rezoning from R1-B Residential to C - Commercial of a 6.7' by 141.3' piece of land north of and contiguous to the property, known as the strip mall, so as a proposed Michigan Medical Marihuana Provisioning facility may be located in two of the strip mall units. This, he explained, was necessary to comply with the Township's Medical Marihuana Facilities Ordinance that required a minimum of a 100' setback from residentially used or zoned property. Arnt added that he had spoken to many of the neighbors in the area around the property and reported that none of them voiced any concern or opposition to the request and further stated that proof of purchase of the property and its combination with Berrien County have been submitted.

It was asked, by the Commission, if there were any future plans to expand the building. Arnt stated that the units would not be expanded. D. Fulton told the commission that he has been a part of the property acquisition process from the beginning and noted that there has been an increase in business interest in the strip mall units in anticipation of the increased traffic the medical marihuana facility should generate. He added that, in fact, a lease has been signed to open a coffee shop in one of the units.

With no further comment from the audience, J. Stepich made a motion to close out of the

public hearing and re-enter regular session. C. Curtis seconded and the motion carried. The public hearing was closed at 2:11 p.m.

Back in regular session, J. Stepich asked if there was any further discussion from the Commissioners. With there being none, D. Heminger made a motion to recommend approval of the rezoning of 141.3 feet by 6.7 feet of the southerly part of parcel: 11-21-0450-0026-00-9 from R1-B Residential to C - Commercial. C. Curtis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Proposed Truck Stop at 3558 M-140.**

The matter of the proposed truck stop development at 3558 M-140 was mentioned with Zoning Administrator R. Lohr stating that review of the project would have to wait until the February meeting as requested information from the architectural firm designing the project has not been forth coming yet and, as such, he has not been able to submit a comprehensive report.

### **Airport Park Development**

J. Stepich informed the Commission that he and Township Treasurer Thomas Scheid had met with the Superintendent of the Watervliet School System to discuss the proposed Airport Park Development. Stepich said that the superintendent stated that the school needed a soccer field to practice and play on. He was further told that the soccer team is currently using the football field for soccer practice but a football field does not meet the dimensional requirements of a soccer field. That, coupled with the fact that the football coach is against the use of the football field by anyone other than the football players, is causing the soccer team to try and find other venues for practice and play. Stepich noted, that despite the demonstrated need for such a park, the Township was denied any grant money from the State of Michigan. As such, Stepich added, the Planning Commission has time to study the situation and make a recommendation to the Township Board to either reapply for the grant, take on development of the field themselves or do both. If the self development option were chosen, the commissioners discussed what facet of the project they should pursue first; the field or the building. Stepich stated that before any options were presented to the Township Board he would first prefer to have development costs in hand and present those to the Planning Commissioners by the February meeting.

### **Filling of Planning Commission Vacancies.**

J. Stepich noted that at the December meeting it was asked that the Planning Commissioners ask people in the community if they had any interest in serving on the commission. Several members reported that they had approached several individuals about filling the vacancies but none expressed any interest. Stepich noted that there are more slots that need to be filled than just the Planning Commission adding that there are seats that need to be filled in the Board of Appeals, Board of Review as well as numerous

alternate positions. He continued by stating that he believes the matter should be given to the Township Board, stating; "We need to do a campaign," and go community wide to attract interested individuals. He said that there are several recruitment options at their disposal such as using the media, the Township's website and even the electronic billboard on the Township sign and noted he would approach the Board with the suggestion.

With there being no further business to come before the Commission, C. Curtis made a motion to adjourn. K. Schuhknecht seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Lohr", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert Lohr  
Zoning Administrator