

Springfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes December 15, 2015

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the December 15, 2015 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Dean Baker
Ruth Ann Hines
Dave Hopper
George Mansour
Jason Pliska
Kevin Sclesky

Commissioners Absent

Linda Whiting

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Planner, Carlisle Wortman, Associates
Randy Ford, Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.

Staff Present

Collin W. Walls, Supervisor

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Sclesky moved to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the November 17, 2015 Planning Commission meeting

Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2015 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Sclesky. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing:

None

Old Business:

**1. Crystal's Banquet Hall – Conceptual Site Plan
Parcel #07-10-279-008, 10063 Dixie Highway**

David McDade, Architect, stated that there was concern last time they presented in front of the Commission in March 2015 regarding soils. They hired a company called SME to do a full site analysis of the property and copies of their report was provided to the Commissioners. He has had various discussions with SME regarding options for this site because it is a very difficult site. They have reached some good solutions to move it forward.

Mr. Doug Lewan provided a summary of his report dated November 24, 2015. The comments are similar to his previous comments of the submittal in March 2015. There are setback issues on the site because the property is fronted by three different roads which cause problems with setbacks in parking and maneuvering lanes. There is a need for some variances for parking and maneuvering lanes in the greenbelts on Dixie Highway and Graham Drive. He asked for additional information on the Stabiligrd. The Planning Commission will have to waive the hard surface paving requirements. At Final Site Plan, applicant should provide documentation from Road Commission regarding the closing of Graham Drive. He stated that they would like further clarification regarding circulation on the site and how vehicles, including fire vehicles will be able to maneuver. He deferred to the Engineer regarding utilities and indicated that the applicant would need a separate sign permit for the sign. He stated that the proposed sign is keeping with the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines.

Mr. Randy Ford provided a summary of his report dated November 17, 2015. He has seen the use of geotextiles for silt stabilization and road stabilization but it comes down to what the intended use is and whether or not it is going to serve its intended purpose. The most troubling thing is that there is no positive drainage on the site. The applicant contracted the services of SME which is a reputable geotechnical firm to get the soil borings. Unfortunately, SME did not come back with a glowing endorsement of the plan based on soil conditions. The applicant did provide a section in the parking lot that was going to be undercut and putting in 36 inches of crushed aggregate subsurface material. The challenge being that there is no drainage outlet and the water is just going to sit there. There is a statement in the SME report that says the water will stay there for the duration. There are also some ordinance issues. For permanent detention basins, there still has to be demonstration of underlying permeability. The SME doesn't indicate that the existing conditions would satisfy that requirement. SME did suggest some type of dry well situation if they could get down to permeable soils, but nothing concrete was explained. SME has suggested that they can be on site during construction and design and Mr. Ford agrees with that. According to Section 8 of the Design Standards, if the detention basin is below ground closed basin, it is not allowed unless a variance is obtained from the

Township Board. Open detention basins are recommended in the Design Standards. The applicant has not demonstrated the overflow spillway and this must be shown. The ditch along Dixie Highway is too high for the drainage pattern. The southwest corner on Graham Drive is the lowest spot. He stated that the drainage is the main concern. They also looked at the need for approaches for turns on the site and according to their calculations, it is borderline whether or not a taper lane is required and the applicant should discuss this with the Road Commission. He suggested that the taper be located at the north driveway so that they are capturing right hand turns into the site and turns into Graham Drive also. These details can be worked out at Final Site Plan. Drainage is first and foremost of their concerns.

Commissioner Mansour asked what the capacity of the water that can be retained in this system as opposed to a retention basin that we would require.

Mr. Ford replied that calculations show that they could satisfy the ordinance requirements. But, this assumes that eventually the water will perk away. But if it doesn't perk and the water is going to be permanently maintained and you get a next great storm event, the water has no place to go. The concern is the underlying clay soils.

Commissioner Pliska asked if the water freezes just below the aggregate and then there is another melt event, could it affect the permeability of the system such that because of ice you would run into a drainage issue.

Mr. Ford answered that he didn't comment as much about the climactic conditions in this report but he thinks this is an element. The theory is that the water will get in the void space and will freeze and expand because there is room. He stated that this application is more for an area where you do not have the freeze and thaw cycles that they have in Michigan.

Mr. McDade stated that based on the two inch rainfall, they would be required to have 5,270 cubic feet of storage below the parking lot for detention and based on the depth and type of stone that they have, they are providing 21,649 cubic feet. They are 411% over what is required. It is a consideration and he has had several conversations with SME regarding concerns with this site. He discussed the detention basin in relation to its ability to detain the water for an endless amount of time with SME. SME mentioned to him that there were places where they found some sand pockets. SME suggested that they dig out additional volume to hit the sand pockets which would act as a dry well to leach the water away. He stated that with the combination of this and the amount of volume that they are providing could be a pretty good solution to this problem. The only other option that they have on this site would be a tank and pump system and this would create its own problems. He stated that he knows there are concerns about what will happen when the ground freezes. Up toward Dixie Highway, he did manipulate the topography so that the owner could plow towards this north corner in the winter time. This would get them flow into this swale system at the road so it would not permeate the site. He will confer with the Road Commission to see if they can plow the snow and deposit it in their right of way. He stated that he would submit the written permission to close the drive to Graham

Drive and to put the sign in the Road Commission right of way. He stated that he had spoken to Road Commission regarding the need for a taper and they concluded that the site did not need a taper.

Mr. Ford stated that Mr. McDade would need to provide documentation.

Mr. McDade stated that he spoke with the Fire Chief and he verified the largest emergency vehicle. He provided a new drawing on S-5 that showed that circulation based on that vehicle and according to this layout there should not be any issues. He also indicated the position of some one-way, do-not-enter signs. He spoke to the owner of Stabiligrd and he verified how the striping is done for the parking spaces. He stated that Stabiligrd is located in Washington and the owner insisted that this system works in northern climates. The owner will fly out and oversee the installation of the system.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any commercial properties in the area that utilized this system.

Mr. McDade replied that he did not know but he will verify with the company. He stated that it was determined that they do not need a loading and unloading zone or a dumpster because the owner is going to take the refuse away after the events. There is a small space in back for a van delivery.

Mr. Lewan asked him to indicate the lack of need for loading and unloading zone on the plan.

Mr. McDade concurred. He reiterated that there is no dumpster on site.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if the owner of Stabiligrd is aware of the concerns about drain off on this site.

Mr. McDade replied yes. He has sent the site plans to the owner.

Commissioner Pliska stated that he did some research online regarding the Stabiligrd system and he asked what the rationale was for having a living matter and not a gravel or aggregate fill the void space. His preference would be to use gravel since the living matter, for example grass, would be difficult to maintain and would react from the salt use in the winter time. He also added that the gravel would be more aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. McDade replied that personally he would not see any issue with using gravel.

Mr. Richard Kowal, property owner, indicated that he doesn't have any problem with it being gravel.

Commissioner Hopper asked about the squares shown around the four islands shown on S-5.

Mr. McDade stated that this was something that he forgot to take off the plan. This was originally the curbing but the curbing was removed.

Chairperson Baker asked about page 4-2 in the SME report. It says that they recommend sub-pits be dug once elevation is achieved. He asked if soil borings could help them know that before the applicant has achieved final grade. He stated that it seems like it should be defined before they get approval; it is a core element as to whether or not the drainage plan will work.

Mr. Ford agreed with Chairperson Baker. The drainage is a key element and looking for permeable soils is a key element to the success of this system. They could over-excavate these pits and put in dry wells. This is done often and is common in road applications. This will help with the flat parking lot and ideally they want to have enough of these permeable pits so it does some good. The worst area was on the north side as determined by the soil borings that were taken.

Chairperson Baker stated that he is in favor of the plan but is concerned about the runoff. It won't go in the ditch and there is no ability to put it in an open detention facility so now they are considering other options. It is difficult to consider other things about the plan when they don't know if the sub-soil will support this project. He is looking for some additional assurance that they have definitely proven that the dry well features exist on this site. They have evidence that this concept might exist. He suggested they have to physically investigate using pits at this point.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that since the bore samples were very small, they would want to use an excavator to open them up before they incur any more expense. They need to get down and figure out how much good material is there that they can use for the maximum percolation or soil absorption of water on the site. It would be the less expensive route to get an excavator out there and dig up the areas that are most promising so they could see what is there.

Mr. Ford explained an option with an open bottomed structure with lines extended out from that structure to add to the absorption ability and to receive all of the water. He has seen a number of leeching basins using that premise.

Chairperson Baker asked if this is the work that SME could do; bring a certain amount of maturity to this evaluation.

Mr. Ford answered yes. He has some comfort level if he knows they are going to be involved in the evaluation of the soils. There is still an element of the unknown.

Chairperson Baker stated that if this was his project, this is something that he would want to reach clarity on before he went further on with the project. There is potential with the dry well concept but more needs to be done to achieve clarity.

Commissioner Hines asked about the need to go to the Township Board for a variance.

Mr. Ford replied that based on the fact that the detention facilities were intended to be underground, under the parking lot, they would need a variance.

Commissioner Hines asked at what point they should pursue the variance.

Chairperson Baker indicated that he thinks they would have more success at the Township Board if they could demonstrate that they not only want it, but they could demonstrate that the proposal would work.

Supervisor Walls concurred.

Chairperson Baker stated that it is all a maybe at this point, but the applicant needs verification from SME in the application to the Township Board that the system was planned and appropriate.

Commissioner Hines asked if the applicant would go to the Township Board prior to coming back to the Planning Commission for Final Site Plan approval.

Chairperson Baker stated that he sees the applicant coming back to the Planning Commission and demonstrating to the Township Engineer with SME's partnership that they have a plan that works. The drainage item is solved and then deal with any other items that they have discussed thus far.

Mr. Ford indicated that they do have a geotechnical engineer on staff at HRC who could provide some expertise.

Mr. McDade asked if the variances have to be approved before they have Final Site Plan approval.

Chairperson Baker stated that the Zoning Board provides finding on some variances but not the underground detention facilities. The Zoning Board would like to have had the Planning Commission vet the project to some level of degree before they approve it. If all the Zoning Board has is a Concept, it is not enough and they want it developed a little bit more but not necessarily Final Site Plan approval. He stated that they have to clear up the drainage issues to a higher level of certainty before the applicant tries to go before the Township Board for their variance request.

Mr. McDade stated that they want to solve the drainage issues first and then they would probably come back to the Planning Commission at that point. Once that is established, they would go to the Township Board and Zoning Board for variance requests. Commissioner Sclesky stated that he is a fan of this project but if he were the owner he would want to make sure the drainage is clarified before he spent any more money on the project.

Commissioner Mansour concurred. There is a good plan to deal with the existing rainfall. The applicant needs to provide details on what is under that.

Mr. McDade asked if they are looking for three or four different areas that they can leech off of this or they had also mentioned a leeching basin. He asked what they are looking for or are they strictly looking for the recommendation of SME.

Mr. Ford replied that SME is working for them and the objective is to demonstrate how they are going to get the parking lot to drain. He is not going to tell them how to achieve that but he will work with SME to facilitate a solution. They need to dig more test sites and determine how the drainage is going to be captured effectively.

Commissioner Hopper stated that economically it would be a better idea to get a backhoe on the site.

Commissioner Mansour stated that he doesn't know if SME can get the same result with an excavator as they would with borings.

Commissioner Hopper answered that they can cover a larger area and they are aware of the soil conditions.

Mr. Ford stated that they will run sift tests which will determine how porous the soils are. The test pits are expanded borings to determine how big of an area that they have. This would be appropriate. Even if catch basins are added, a complete drainage pattern has to be demonstrated.

Commissioner Hopper suggested that the back sidewalk on the northwest corner is expanded to 8 foot wide so it could be used to back up a van onto it to load and unload items. He feels that this proposed use is close enough to a restaurant to be and approved use in this zoning.

Mr. McDade agreed with the suggestion to expand the sidewalk.

Commissioner Mansour asked about markings on sheet 9, 10 and 11 by the gazebo.

Mr. McDade replied that those are topo lines meant to indicate a swale. He stated that he will probably end up filling those in anyway so they will probably come off the plan.

Commissioner Mansour asked about the rectangle shown behind the building on Graham Drive shown on sheets 9 and 11.

Mr. McDade replied that this is another topo line.

Commissioner Mansour asked about the allowable height of 55 feet shown on the first page. He asked if the applicant meant 25 feet.

Mr. McDade replied that this amount was based on the Michigan Building Code.

Commissioners identified another topo line shown in the parking area.

Mr. McDade agreed that those were topo lines.

Commissioner Mansour stated that the well was shown in different places on different sheets.

Mr. McDade replied that this was transferred over from an original survey that they had and the well is located in the front of the building.

Commissioner Mansour asked how they deal with the edges of the grid. He asked how far the grade goes past the grid itself.

Mr. McDade replied that the Stabiligrd conforms right into the topography so there is not an edge. He thinks that the Stabiligrd will end up lying directly over the base. There should be shop drawings provided by Stabiligrd and he is sure it is addressed.

Commissioner Mansour asked if the gazebo is a separate item.

Mr. McDade answered that he does not want the owner to think this is exact type of gazebo. There will be a gazebo and water feature located here but it may vary from this version that is represented.

Chairperson Baker stated that this is Concept so a motion and vote is not required. He strongly recommend that the applicant works with SME and Randy Ford to develop a clear drainage plan. The Commission feels positive towards the project as a whole but it needs to get over this major drainage hurdle.

Supervisor Walls asked if the applicant received a copy of the Design and Construction Standards.

Mr. McDade replied that he did not recall.

Mr. Ford provided this Section to the applicant.

Supervisor Walls suggested that the applicant gets the variances before he spends any more money. The applicant however will need all of the soil and drainage data before going to the Township Board on the variance request.

New Business:

1. 2016 Meeting Dates & Appointments of Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary

Commissioner Hopper moved to accept the proposed meeting dates for 2016 as presented which will be the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Sclesky moved to recommend Commission Baker for the role of Chairperson for 2016. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Baker moved to recommend Commissioner Hines for Vice-Chairperson for 2016. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Hines moved to recommend Commissioner Hopper for Secretary for 2016. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Other Business:

1. Priority Task List

Commissioners reviewed and made updates and revisions to the current Priority Task. They agreed to add Noise Amendments, Vibration amendments and Home Occupation amendments to the Priority List. Supervisor Walls indicated that he is hoping to have amendments ready for January 2016 meeting. The Commission will hopefully look at new Mining and Extractive Master Plan amendments soon. The first opportunity they will get to hold a Public Hearing on the Master Plan will be April 2016.

Commissioner Mansour suggested that the Commission look at the requirements to setting up an asphalt replacement reserve when developments are approved to pay for private road maintenance.

Supervisor Walls suggested that the Township may not have the ability to require or insure funds are used as intended. They should also look at the legal ramifications. Mr. Lewan stated that the private road part of the ordinance requires a maintenance agreement and it would not be that difficult to add language to the maintenance agreement or this area of the ordinance. Commissioners discussed monitoring this type of account. Chairperson Baker suggested that they look at this item for future discussion.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Sclesky moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Whiting. Motion Carried.

Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary