

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes August 19, 2014

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the August 19, 2014 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  
Bill Leddy  
Kevin Sclesky  
Linda Whiting  
Neil Willson

Commissioners Absent

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Planner, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin W. Walls, Supervisor

Approval of Agenda:

**Commissioner Leddy moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Willson. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.**

Public Comment:     None

Consent Agenda:

**1.     Minutes of the June 17, 2014 Planning Commission meeting**

**Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2014 meeting as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing:     None

New Business:

**1. The Journey Church – Conceptual Site Plan and Special Land Use, Parcel ID #07-09-127-004, I-75 and Rattalee Lake Road**

Mr. Rick Swihard, Creekwood Architecture, introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that the Journey Church is proposing a two story, 5800 square foot per floor church on this 11 acre site. Tonight they are presenting Phase I. They do not have an exact time frame for the development. They are hoping to develop a softball field at the same time. The church will have 175 seats. They provided drawings of the future development and parking for the next phases.

Mr. Doug Lewan provided a description of the process of site plan review. He stated that this is under review for a Special Land Use. Tonight is the first stage of the process and if it is approved tonight, they will go to the detailed site plan stage. At this point, they are concentrated on determining if the church use is appropriate at this location.

Mr. Lewan summarized his review dated August 6, 2014. He evaluated the plan first using the Special Land Use standards in the zoning ordinance and summarized comments contained in his review dated August 6, 2014. The items to be addressed are: applicant should provide additional information regarding the timing of all phases and applicant should know that each additional phase would require them to go back through the Special Land Use and Site Plan approval process, applicant should provide additional information regarding church programming especially outdoor activities. Applicant should address potential traffic issues along Tindall Road and west bound Rattalee Lake Road. Mr. Lewan recommends making a traffic impact study a part of the final Site Plan review process. Applicant should provide a complete landscape study and tree study as a part of the final Site Plan review process including review by a professional and applicant should consider rotating the ball field to minimize impacts to neighboring properties.

Mr. Lewan explained that there are other Special Land Use standards that pertain to churches and the applicant has met those standards. He advised the applicant that there are height standards in the ordinance and although the proposed building meets those height standards, applicant should consider these with any new construction. Mr. Lewan stated that the proposal meets all setback requirements. He would like the applicant to address the quality of trees that will be preserved and this could be a final site plan issue. Mr. Lewan recommended that an emergency vehicle turn around area be placed in the dead end parking lot in the North West corner of the site to allow emergency vehicles to access the site and turn around. He stated that there is more than enough parking; Township standards require 61 parking spaces and they are showing 119 spaces for Phase I so they would like clarification on the additional parking that is proposed. He stated that they also show banked parking and he would like to know in what phase that would be constructed.

Mr. Lewan stated that the water and septic issue will be reviewed by Oakland County Health and Township Engineer at the final site plan stage. Landscape plan is not required

until final site plan and he provided the landscape requirements for the applicant's information. The areas abutting the residential areas have a substantial buffering requirement. Existing vegetation can be used but it has to be called out on the plan. There are also parking lot landscape requirements and greenbelt landscape requirements. These standards are in the zoning ordinance and have to be met; if there is a practical difficulty in meeting these standards, the applicant would have to obtain a variance. The lighting standards and signage are addressed at final site plan review. The applicant should provide more information on the detached garage and the dumpster should be relocated as his review described. He stated that a church in this location is an acceptable use, but there are some outstanding issues that they need addressed. Mr. Lewan stated that all of the items should be addressed to satisfaction of the Planning Commission prior to this going on to final site plan approval. These items are: provide additional information on phasing, provide additional information on church programming, address potential traffic issues along Tindall and westbound Rattalee Lake Road, indicate which tree stands if any will be preserved, provide additional information regarding height of gymnasium and sanctuary buildings, the quality of trees and if a tree survey has been completed, consider relocating and rotating the baseball diamond and provide additional landscaping along the east and south property lines for the purpose of screening. These are Special Land Use items that need to be addressed. There are additional site plan issues that need to be addressed for Final Site Plan review.

Mr. Swihard stated that they had provided a document that addressed a lot of the items that Mr. Lewan mentioned. He stated that the phasing plan is a 5 year plan for Phase II and 10 years for Phase III. There is no definite plan because it is according to growth.

Chairperson Baker clarified that Phase I involves construction of the main church building, the approach and the parking area. He asked what other accommodations were on the property that is going to be a part of Phase I.

Mr. Swihard concurred. The baseball field is not part of Phase I.

Mr. Mike Harris, Pastor of the Journey Church introduced himself to the Commission and stated that the baseball field would be a part of Phase II, within 5 years.

Chairperson Baker asked about the accessory building.

Mr. Harris replied probably Phase II.

Mr. Harris answered that he hadn't thought much about the accessory building; it is depicted on the plans for Phase I, so it would probably be Phase I.

Mr. Jeff Frick, 11445 Rattalee Lake Road, stated that he has not had the chance to review the plans and asked if he could review them.

Chairperson Baker answered yes; they become a part of the public record.

Mr. Swihard continued to address Mr. Lewan's comments. He stated that their response letter dated August 6, 2014 addressed the church activity schedule; Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. He stated that baseball games would be held Monday evenings at dusk and then bible study would be held Wednesday evening 7 pm to 9 pm. Sunday worship is between the hours of 11 am to 12:30 pm and youth services from 6 pm to 8 pm.

Chairperson Baker asked if there were any early morning Sunday activities.

Mr. Harris replied no.

Commissioner Hines asked how many staff members they have on site Monday through Friday.

Mr. Harris replied two to six.

Commissioner Whiting asked how many families are currently involved in the church.

Mr. Harris replied forty.

Commissioner Hines asked where they are currently meeting.

Mr. Harris replied in the Lopez Engineering building on Davisburg Road.

Commissioner Leddy stated that Mr. Swihard said there were 175 seats and the plans say 154; he asked which was correct.

Mr. Swihard answered 154 seats.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if there was a multiplier to use to determine how many cars would be anticipated at a certain number of people.

Mr. Lewan replied yes; there are tables that are used to determine the exact number of parking spaces needed.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that he calculated approximately 70 cars going there at a full service. He asked how large they are anticipating the church attendance to be after Phase 3.

Commissioners confirmed the total number of persons on the seating plan is 310.

Mr. Harris stated that more recent studies and reality is more like 1.5 persons per car and that is why they provided extra parking.

Chairperson Baker asked about conducting a traffic study on the roadway. He stated when uses are introduced like this, a traffic study gives them a better picture of the

intensity and how it will impact neighboring properties. He stated that he would like to see a traffic study done on the neighboring roads. The Planning Commissioners should all comment on this.

Commissioner Whiting stated that one of the questions would be how many people travel on Rattalee Lake Road. She asked if they should do a traffic study now.

Chairperson Baker stated that the applicant would come back with each phase for reevaluation. They can coordinate with the Planner to conduct a traffic study with whatever volumes they choose, probably Phase 1 at this point.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that the people that would normally be on those roads would be a work day and they would not be traveling those roads on a Sunday.

Commissioner Hines stated that she frequently takes Tindall out to I-75 and many times she is the only car.

Commissioner Willson concurred with Commissioner Baker about the need for the traffic study.

Commissioner Hines stated that she doesn't understand what it is going to tell them.

Chairperson Baker answered that if they don't ask, they won't know.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that it will tell them if the access point is in the right location or if they have made a mistake.

Commissioner Hopper stated that a 61 car parking lot doesn't have much impact but the larger parking lot does. He stated that if they do a traffic study based on the 61 cars now and could also have them evaluate it for the larger number; they could see if a left turn lane or a passing lane was warranted. He stated that it would make some of the commissioners feel better if they have a traffic study for this phase and they could also interpret that for the whole lot. It will have to be done sooner or later.

Chairperson Baker stated that there is an organized start time and all of the cars are arriving at a 15 to 20 minute time frame.

Commissioner Hines asked where the current congregation members were coming from.

Mr. Harris replied that some would come down Rattalee Lake Road but the majority will come from I-75 and Tindall.

Commissioner Hines asked about bible study on Wednesday night and how many show up.

Mr. Harris replied that he doesn't know, they don't do it now. He stated that they currently have about 25 teenagers that come to youth church on Sunday night.

Mr. Lewan asked if there are any other outdoor activities proposed for the site.

Mr. Harris stated that there is a pavilion that is proposed and they may have outdoor picnics. They do also have a walking path that is proposed on the property because he felt it was important to do something for the community.

Chairperson Baker asked if there was a certain methodology that was used to determine which trees were desirable.

Mr. Harris replied that they have not completed a formal tree survey. He stated that their property manager Joe has been working the property and has a better idea of the trees that are present.

Joe Barnard stated that he has been working and taking out dead ash and scrub bushes and small trees that are going to be in the way of the parking area. He has identified good trees like maples, cherry and oak trees that he is leaving until they know if they can be kept.

Mr. Harris stated that there are some old apple trees that they want to keep.

Chairperson Baker asked if they could show on the print where these trees are so they can determine which ones they want to keep.

Commissioner Hopper stated that there are some nice trees that he noticed when he walked the property. He stated that the existing trees can be used as their setback trees once they are identified and on the plan.

Mr. Lewan stated that there is a requirement of the ordinance that the trees that are going to be preserved are shown and it also has to be shown how they are going to be protected during construction. For final site plan, all of the trees have to be outlined.

Mr. Harris concurred.

Chairperson Baker asked Mr. Harris about relocating and rotating the ball field to create distance between the ball field and the neighbors.

Mr. Harris agreed.

Mr. Swihard responded that the reason they place it in its original position on the plan was because of the grade. It would take more grading but they could do that.

Mr. Harris stated that there are no plans to light the ball field.

Mr. Lewan asked if there was any plan to add any additional leagues to the ball field schedule.

Mr. Harris replied no.

Chairperson Baker stated that 61 parking spaces are needed and 119 parking spaces are shown on the paved portion. He asked the applicant about their ability to allow access for emergency vehicles as described in Mr. Lewan's review in which he suggested omitting some parking spaces to allow a turnaround at the end of this parking lot.

Commissioner Whiting stated that this is answered in #3 of the applicant's response letter.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that they would also allow the Fire Chief to review the plan and make sure that the access is adequate.

Mr. Harris replied that he would comply with Mr. Lewan's request about providing emergency vehicle access.

Commissioner Hopper asked who the engineer was.

Mr. Swihard replied Kieft Engineering.

Commissioner Hopper stated that the slope might have to be looked at in the future for Phase III because the drainage might be an issue. Kieft should evaluate this concern.

Chairperson Baker stated that the Township Engineer reviewed the plan which points out a few items that will need to be addressed at final site plan. He summarized Mr. Ford's review dated August 4, 2014.

Mr. Swihard concurred.

Commissioner Whiting asked if they had talked about the need to add trees for buffering.

Chairperson Baker stated that the applicant will have to comply with the necessary opacity requirements and buffering requirements to shield them from neighboring uses. They need to identify all trees that are being kept.

Mr. Harris stated that the site plan indicated a berm with new plantings and they will abide by the ordinance.

Supervisor Walls stated that they have to look at the opacity requirements and make sure that they meet those.

Chairperson Baker stated that the screening requirements need to be met.

Commissioner Leddy asked about a future safety path easement.

Chairperson Baker stated that Rattalee is not one of the principal roads for safety path, but they ask if the applicant would provide the Township an easement so that if funds become available, they would not have to obtain an easement then for a safety path along Rattalee Lake Road.

Mr. Harris and Mr. Swihard concurred.

Chairperson Baker asked Mr. Lewan why he wanted the proposed height of the gymnasium building.

Mr. Lewan described a particular part of the ordinance that applies to churches that says the building will not exceed 35 feet. He raised this point so that they are aware of this to note for future buildings; the phase I building complies.

Chairperson Baker summarized the points that need to be addressed by the applicant. He suggested using the services of an arborist so that they maintain quality trees.

Mr. Swihard concurred regarding the tree survey.

Mr. Harris asked if they would like to see this at the next meeting or the final.

Chairperson Baker replied that it has not been determined yet, no motion has been made and there are several options.

Commissioner Sclesky asked the applicant when they wanted to begin construction.

Mr. Harris replied that the best case scenario is Spring of 2015, but more realistic would be Spring 2016 or Fall 2015.

Commissioner Hopper stated that MDOT and Road Commission review and approval might take a long period of time. He stated that he feels there is enough for concept plan approval but there is a lot to be delivered for final and he feels that Special Land Use standards are met.

Commissioner Sclesky, Hines and Willson concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that for the motion for Special Land Use they should mention that it meets the Special Land Use standards, Section 40-145, a through g. There are also additional Special Land Use standards just for churches located at 40-275 and those should be included.

Supervisor Walls stated that if they are sending this to Township Board for Special Land Use approval, they should include those items that they anticipating will be change so the Board knows what plan they are approving.

**Commissioner Hopper moved that the Planning Commission recommends to the Township Board to grant Special Lane Use approval to the Journey Church, parcel #07-09-127-004, located at I-75 and Rattalee Lake Road and that the application is:**

- a.) in harmony and appropriate in the zoning district as proposed**
- b.) the location and intensity of the proposal and traffic will not be hazardous or inconvenient to the neighborhood**
- c.) the density as proposed is well less than what is permissible under our ordinance**
- d.) the public services are capable of accommodating any increased loads caused by this proposal**
- e.) the natural environment will be protected by this proposal**
- f.) the development will be compatible with adjacent uses with adequate screening between existing uses and this proposal.**

**Further, Section 40-275.5 is addressed for Phase I. Additional Phases will require additional Special Land Use approval. Therefore, the Planning Commission feels that this proposal can meet the requirements of 40-145 of the Springfield Township Code of Ordinances. Seconded by Commissioner Hines.**

Mr. Lewan stated that the applicant has tried to address the use questions and this needs to be added. It would help if the Planning Commission agreed with the uses and the hours of operation that were contained in the August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 letter. So, things like outdoor activities will not expand without the approval of the Planning Commission. Mr. Lewan suggested adding the condition of the traffic study to b. to make sure that it is understood that the Planning Commission thinks the traffic will not be hazardous, but this will be determined at the time of a traffic study submitted and if it is determined that traffic is not acceptable, applicant will have to come back to the Planning Commission for further consideration.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he would amend b.).

**Commissioner Hines withdrew support of the motion.**

Commissioner Hines stated that the church should not have to come back if they decide to have a ladies bible study on Wednesday nights and it was not in their original plan, they would have to come back and she does not agree with this. She stated that the church should be allowed to conduct activities that are associated with running of a church and congregation and they have not outlined everything that they could consider.

Chairperson Baker stated that the additional Special Land Use makes them clarify their intended activities and uses.

Commissioner Whiting suggested using different language.

Commissioner Leddy agreed with Commissioner Hines.

Mr. Lewan indicated what uses they would be happy with and this is all the Commission has to consider. They need to consider all activities and their impact on neighboring areas, perhaps it is too strict.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if the guidelines would change with ownership.

Mr. Lewan answered that the conditions follow the property. He suggested possibly limiting times.

Commissioner Whiting suggested church related activities during the hours of and then filling it in.

Commissioners discussed a variety of activities that the church could have.

Mr. Harris stated that they could change their wording to general church activities because he could foresee adding a recovery program or ladies bible study group.

Commissioners and Mr. Harris discussed possible language that could be used.

Commissioner Hopper amended his motion to read:

**b.) the location and intensity of the proposal and traffic will not be hazardous or inconvenient to the neighborhood. Subject to review and approval of the traffic study.**

**ADD: g.) Any outside activity is limited to daylight hours.**

**Commissioner Hines seconded the amended motion. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.**

Mr. Frick asked what he should do if the activities become too much, what should they do.

Chairperson Baker stated that the first step would be to talk to the church. If this plan would go to its conclusion and if the neighbor is bothered by the activities at the ball field, then they will look at any violations of the sound ordinance.

Commissioner Sclesky indicated that this is why they were asking for the intense screening in those areas.

Mr. Frick asked about the lighting and screening.

Chairperson Baker stated that they would look at screening and lighting at final site plan. They are only approving the Special Land Use tonight.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he wants to give the Township Board direction in regards to site plan review and items that need to be addressed. He stated that he would like to summarize the items that are on his list that need to be addressed for Final Site Plan. They are: Address Township Engineer's concerns regarding slope, grading and drainage; Review permits from MDOT for drainage, Oakland County Road Commission for approach, Oakland County Health for sanitary disposal and well; provide landscape and landscape preservation plan showing trees that will be preserved on plan; waive loading and unloading space as per Section 40-681-2; provide required screening on east and south per Section 40-721.b.3; provide photometric and signage plan to meet ordinance requirements; at final site plan review provide satisfactory traffic study; provide easement for future safety path on Rattalee Lake Road and provide emergency vehicle turn around in the west parking lot.

Chairperson Baker stated that they indicated that the landscape plan should be assisted by an arborist or professional.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he would add a tree survey to the conditions.

Chairperson Baker asked about the extra parking spaces.

Commissioner Hopper accepted the current parking spaces minus the number taken out to increase the emergency turn around.

Commissioner Sclesky asked about the applicant coming back with cleaner plans including all of the above before it goes to Township Board.

Mr. Lewan stated that one of his suggestions was an island in the parking lot with a tree and landscaping. They need to add one more tree.

Commissioner Hines disagreed with requiring an island in a parking lot; they are hard to maintain and you can't see around them. She would prefer if they add a tree somewhere else.

Chairperson Baker and Commissioner Whiting concurred with Commissioner Hines.

Commissioner Hopper indicated they would still have to adhere to the ordinance requirements for all landscaping.

Chairperson Baker stated that he would like to see an improved plan before they come back for Final Site Plan. He stated that they can also bring this all back to Final and then it may not be approved.

Mr. Swihard replied that they have no problem complying with all of the items.

Commissioner Whiting stated that she agrees with getting a cleaner plan and sending this clean plan to the Township Board.

Mr. Harris asked if the Final includes the interior build out space.

Mr. Lewan answered that the floor plan and elevations are required for Final Site Plan.

Supervisor Walls stated that Special Land Use requires concept approval.

**Commissioner Hopper stated that this proposal can meet Concept Site Plan approval however, prior to Final Site Plan applicant must meet all ordinance requirements and meet the following:**

- 1.) Address Township Engineer's concerns regarding slopes, ponds and drainage**
- 2.) Review and provide permits from MDOT for drainage, Road Commission for Oakland County for approach, Oakland County Health Department for sanitary and water**
- 3.) Provide landscape plan and landscape preservation plan showing what trees will be preserved on site and provide a tree survey**
- 4.) Waive required loading and unloading space as per Section 40-681.2**
- 5.) Provide required screening on east and south per Section 40-721.b.3**
- 6.) Provide photometric plan and signage plan that meet ordinance requirements**
- 7.) At Final Site Plan, provide satisfactory Traffic Study**
- 8.) Provide easement for future Safety Path on Rattalee Lake Road**
- 9.) Provide emergency vehicle turn around in west parking lot**

**Seconded by Commissioner Willson. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.**

Old Business:

- 1. Strategic Plan Committee Meeting Update**

Mr. Lewan stated that the Strategic Plan Committee is working on the Strategic plan and they are getting close to presenting their overall vision for the Corridor to the Commission. They have been going through a series of discussion about desirable design features and uses. The goal is to complete the Dixie Highway Corridor Plan and wrap all of this information into this document. The Committee meets before the Planning Commission meetings each month.

Other Business:

**1. Priority Task List**

Commissioners reviewed and made updates and revisions to the current Priority Task List.

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 PM. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.**

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Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary