

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 15, 2004**

04-13 CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2004, at the Alpine Township Center, 5255 Alpine Ave., NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321, with due notice. Present were Chair Dave Wiersum, Vice-Chair Jason Rosenzweig, Secretary Marta Brechting, and members Roger Alberts, Kris Cassidy-Gall, Jason Clauser, Steve Gray, and Dick Sedlecky. Excused was Kay Chase. Also in attendance were Township Planning Director Frank Wash and Recording Secretary Patricia Kolkman.

Chair Wiersum called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Alberts moved, with support from Rosenzweig, to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2004 regular meeting as presented.

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Rosenzweig moved, with support from Gray, to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2004 Site Plan Review meeting as presented.

Ayes: 3 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Wiersum offered the audience members an opportunity to comment on items of interest not included on the meeting's agenda but no public comment was made.

04-14 PUBLIC HEARING: Rezoning request from AG to R-1 in Compliance with the 1998 Master Plan- 3625 Peach Ridge Ave. NW

David Hortman, owner of the parcel involved, presented his request for the rezoning at Chair Wiersum's request.

Hortman stated that he wishes to rezone this parcel, 41-09-33-300-033, from AG to R-1 in order to put a home there. If the rezoning to R-1 is approved, it will be consistent with the Master Plan, and retain the same use as surrounding parcels. (Residential).

Wiersum then directed Wash to present his staff report. Wash stated this is a vacant parcel of approximately one and a third acres, currently zoned AG. The request is to rezone to R-1. Because plans can change, commissioners should review all permitted uses when considering whether to recommend approval for the rezoning.

All required noticing has been done.

Alberts moved, with Gray providing support, to open the public hearing on the rezoning request for 3625 Peach Ridge Ave. NW.

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Daniel Rock, 3655 Peach Ridge Ave. NW, opposes the rezoning for a number of reasons:

- He was advised that the land is "not usable", and cannot meet standards for a perk test.

- He was told there are numerous easements on the property preventing placement of a structure.
- The lot drains poorly now and adding a structure will increase storm water flow to his land, especially with proposed changes to 4 Mile Road, which he feels will increase stormwater problems for the existing residential lots in this area.
- An additional home there will reduce the value of his land.

Kathy Rock, 3655 Peach Ridge Ave., NW was also opposed to the rezoning. She further stated that she and her husband had contacted the Township several times before to identify possible uses for this lot, and were told the lot was "grandfathered and could not be changed". It has remained vacant and previous owners could not build. This is the first time in the 9 years they have lived in the area they were advised of the Master Planned zoning for the area. She also said she had heard the owner was planning on putting two homes on the lot and if so, they would have to sell and move.

Hortman responded that he is only requesting a rezoning at this time. He understands that to pursue the building permit process, he will need to obtain approved perk tests, address the drainage, and allow for any easements on the property. He added that the previous owner didn't build because he moved to New Mexico.

Rosenzweig moved, with Albert seconding, to close the public hearing.

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Wiersum reminded the audience that commission members would now deliberate regarding this request, and may ask questions of the applicant, but that no further questions or comments should be directed to the commission.

Wiersum asked Wash if any of the statements made regarding "buildability" were germane to the land under review.

Wash stated that any lot is considered buildable if a building permit can be issued. The process involves submitting a site plan identifying all easements, water bodies, septic placement, and presenting approved permits from the Kent County Health Department, Kent County Road Commission, and DEQ if any natural water bodies are impacted. Without providing all of these documents a building permit cannot be issued.

The lot is a pre-existing, non-conforming AG lot, since it is both smaller (1.34 acres vs. 2 acre minimum) and has narrower frontage (300' vs. 330') than what is now required. Setbacks for an AG lot must be met for building permit issuance, as currently zoned.

Planning Commissioners continued a discussion on the following topics:

Land division for two homes: Wash stated no land division request has been submitted for review and approval at this time. This rezoning request should not be decided based solely on what *might be* requested in the future.

Buildability: Wiersum re-stated it is the landowner's responsibility to confirm that the site is buildable, and he must obtain a building permit to proceed with a residential plan. In response to a question from Brechting, Wash said a variance for building would not be required, since the building permit process would be followed. Those requirements include meeting storm water standards, avoiding building in easements, Kent County Health Department permits for sanitary disposal requirements and meeting setback requirements for the zone. Gray asked if the applicant has had the land "perked" and Hortman replied that he has not.

Future Plans: In response to a question from Wiersum, Hortman said that he currently has one

home he hopes to move to the site, and hopes to move a second one if he can meet all the standards for both a land division and a second building permit in the future.

Drainage issues: All commissioners expressed concern about the negative impact development of this lot may have on nearby homes. In response to commissioner concerns, Wash stated that a Stormwater Permit could be made a requirement of a future building permit, although the standard bonding should not be required.

Wiersum and Alberts both expressed concern that only one home could be placed on the lot, though they realize the possibility of another would not be considered relevant to the rezoning request. Both strongly support the Master Plan, but also rely heavily on the permitting process to address the concerns for drainage identified. They also agreed that the Health Department's Septic System Permitting process will cover sanitary disposal issues raised.

Alberts moved, with support from Rosenzweig, to recommend approval to the Township Board of the requested rezoning from AG Agricultural to R-1 Low Density Residential for property located at 3625 Peach Ridge Ave. NW (PPN 41-09-33-300-033), with the following

FINDINGS OF FACT:

- **The requested rezoning is in compliance with the 1998 Alpine Township Master Plan.**
- **The requested rezoning does not constitute spot zoning.**
- **The permitted uses allowed in the R1 zoning district can be effectively designed to fit with pre-existing neighboring uses.**
- **The rezoning request is consistent with development trends in the area.**
- **The permitted land uses in the R1 zoning district are equally or better suited to the area than those permitted in the AG zoning district.**
- **The requested rezoning will resolve a pre-existing and non-conforming land use situation.**

And the following Recommendation to the Township Board:

The applicant must obtain an approved Stormwater Permit as part of the building permit process.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 1 (Brechtling) Motion carried.

04-14 PUBLIC HEARING: Special Land Use Request for Boarding Kennel - 7851 Vinton Ave. NW

Wiersum invited the applicant, Mr. Tim Wilson, to present his request.

Wilson said that he and his wife hope to establish a boarding kennel for dogs and cats, and also offer grooming. Boarding would be available either by the day or on a weekly basis.

The kennel would be entirely indoors, utilizing an existing pole barn on the site. Wilson said he estimates a maximum of 38 dogs and 10 cats on site at one time.

Wash then presented his staff report. The site for the proposed kennel is a 2.2 acre lot on Vinton Avenue, and is zoned RA Rural Agricultural. In the RA zone, a kennel business is defined as a Special Land Use, requiring Planning Commission review and approval.

He pointed out that the applicant has provided an informal site plan, with a survey of the property, showing buildings and setbacks. Wilson had also submitted an informal petition signed by a majority of his nearest neighbors, who are in support of the proposal. All required noticing has been done.

Rosenzweig moved, with support from Alberts to open the public hearing for the kennel.

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Anthony Ball, 8030 Vinton Ave. NW., is concerned about the number and health of the animals to be boarded, who will care for them, and who lives in the home at this address now. He feels the speed of traffic on Vinton, combined with its narrowness and topography, will cause problems for parking and safety. He also said he is sure that the number of animals in the structure will generate enough noise to provoke residents' pets to bark constantly.

Gary Potter, 7940 Vinton Ave., NW, was also not in favor of the proposal. He also feels the driveway used for access and exiting will present a safety issue, since traffic on Vinton can be high speed fairly regularly. He was not aware the original parcel had been divided, and does not feel the resulting 2.2 acre parcel is large enough to support a pole barn expansion to the size Wilson plans. He also said there is a creek on site which may be impacted by waste generated by the kennel. He asked who will regularly remove the waste, and also thinks there will be negative effects on the wildlife nearby.

John Najar, 2710 Lake Michigan Drive, introduced himself as working in Animal Behaviorism. His primary concern is the kennel attendants and the structure of the facility itself, as both will affect the animals housed there. He would like to know the particulars on the sizes of pens, commitment to installation of air conditioning and heating for the animals' comfort levels and the attendants who will care for the animals.

Norris Brookens, 8054 Vinton Ave., was also not in favor of the project. He pointed out that Vinton Ave is a county road, and is very narrow at this location, with no shoulder. In some spots, the edge drops off to 3-4 feet lower than the edge of the pavement. Englishville High School is in the area substantial traffic already exists due to that. A new business will only increase the traffic. He is also concerned for pedestrian safety in the neighborhood.

Alberts moved, and Gray seconded the motion, to close the public hearing.

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Commissioners discussed the proposal, covering the following issues at length:

The Special Use itself. Rosenzweig pointed out that grooming seems to be a more commercial activity than just boarding. He felt this use was better suited to the C-2 district. It was also confirmed that a special land use permit is specific to the use proposed, but does remain with the land. "Conditions of approval" are expected when a special land use request is granted. If the special use is abandoned for a period of one year, the permit is no longer valid.

The number of animals to be boarded and the number of employees caring for them should be identified.

Waste removal. Wilson said he will have a separate septic system installed and pumped regularly. Wash pointed out that a kennel must apply for and obtain a license from the County,

and waste removal is likely a standard that must be met. Commissioners agreed they need to know the standards for waste removal from the site.

Projected visits by customers. Commissioners said they needed additional information showing the estimated customer visits to the site before making a decision.

Driveway location for parking and customers. Commissioners wanted the existing driveway to be reviewed by the Kent County Road Commission to assess whether it would accommodate the increased use. A formal site plan, detailing the building expansion, parking area, and driveway cuts is necessary.

Commissioners all felt they needed additional information before they could make an informed decision regarding the proposal. They wished to table a decision until the information is made available to them.

Sedlecky moved, with Brechting's support, to table a decision regarding the request for a special land use at 7851 Vinton Avenue, NW, for a boarding kennel until the following information is provided by the applicant:

- **A formal site plan detailing the parking area with parking spaces identified, the driveway to be used by customers, and the proposed building expansion for the indoor kennel.**
- **The Kent County Health Department Permit, stating that the applicant has met all requirements for operating a commercial kennel in Kent County.**
- **Clear details on the method and schedule of waste removal from the site.**
- **A detailed list of the regulations governing the operation of a commercial kennel.**
- **Projected traffic volumes, based on the use proposed.**
- **Planned staffing for the operation, stating hours of the day and number of employees on site.**
- **A building plan for the housing of the animals, including air conditioning, insulation, and heating for the animals' comfort.**
- **A Kent County Road Commission Driveway permit, stating that the existing drive is adequate for the use proposed, or specifics on the size and placement of a new driveway.**

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

04-15 SITE PLAN REVIEW: US Storage Depot 900 Six Mile Rd. NW

Mark Schafer, of Schonschak Corporation, at 51331 West Pontiac Trail in the Detroit area, explained that his firm is handling the conversion of the West Central Storage site at 900 Six Mile Rd. NW to the US Storage Depot proposed storage facility. The project will involve both exterior (façade, parking and landscaping) and interior (elevator and subdividing the space) renovations to convert the structure to a two-level, heated and air conditioned self-storage facility.

Wash added that the site plan as presented by the applicant adheres to the standards required in the Sub-Area 3 plan added to the Master Plan in 2003. These include setbacks, landscaping requirements and access drives for the parcels to be linked as development

occurs. He pointed out that his staff report includes his summary, 2 letters from Prein & Newhof addressing engineering issues, as well as the standard letter from the Fire Chief. Wash outlined several conditions of approval he recommends be added to any site plan approval the PC might issue. He also said that the property description provided by the applicant does not agree with what is on REGIS, and this discrepancy should be resolved before development can begin.

Planning commissioners then discussed with the applicant the following information, and obtained agreements as follows:

- Proposed hours of operation: 8 AM to 8 PM, 7 days a week. The site will be staffed during open hours.
- Estimated length of time customers will rent space: Three to six months is the anticipated time US Storage expects an individual customer to remain with them.
- Type of rentals: Schafer stated the type of space could be as basic as space for outdoor parking of RVs, an office space (with telephone and mail delivery) with storage to the rear of the space, to standard "locker" storage for materials.
- Customer access to rented space: will be available during hours of operation, including the freight elevator which will be installed to allow customers to bring items to the second level.
- Security onsite: Schafer said that US Storage expects an extensive security system, as the safety of their staff and customers is paramount.
- Landscaping: With the exception of the south lot line, the applicant agrees to landscaping requirements as stated in Wash's staff report. On the south lot line, there is an easement for high power lines, and a significant change in elevation. Schafer does not want to plant trees which may interfere with the overhead lines, and which may not be easily maintained, due to topography. He proposes that his firm would be willing to establish a bond to guarantee landscaping be installed on the developer's land to the south, once the future development begins. Fencing is another potential for screening between the commercial use and any future development.
- Exterior façade material: Sedlecky suggested an exterior material designed for endurance is used. Schafer agreed that exterior materials should be highly resistant to damage, and should maintain a pleasing look with minimal maintenance.
- Cross access: The applicant agrees with the requirement to provide cross access to the Rasch home site.
- Site plan and survey discrepancies with REGIS: Schaefer feels

the survey submitted by his client is correct, and reflects the true size and description of the parcel. While he realizes it is less than the 5.45 acres recorded in REGIS, he did track all past activity on the parcel and is certain the REGIS records are not correct. Commissioners understood how the differences occurred, and accepted the explanation.

- "Gravel vs. paved" portions of outdoor parking will be detailed on the site plan. Outdoor RV storage will be gravel.
- A 24 foot service drive will be installed from the lot's SE corner to a new driveway in accordance with Kent County Road Commission requirements.
- The applicant agrees with suggestions for placement of the required sidewalk on the property, and will provide a sidewalk ingress/egress easement, dedicated to Alpine Township.

The applicant agreed with all recommendations made by Planner Wash and commissioners.

Alberts moved, with Gray's support, to approve the site plan for US Storage Depot at 900 6 Mile Rd. NW, as it does meet the standards set forth in Chapters 2, 12, 18, and 19 of the Alpine Township Zoning Ordinance, with the following

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

- The applicant agrees to all conditions noted in the Alpine Township Planning Director's letter dated 3-26-04.
- The applicant agrees to all conditions noted in the Alpine Township Engineer's letters dated 3-18-04 and 3-24-04.
- The applicant agrees to all conditions noted in the Alpine Township Fire Chief's letter dated 3-23-04.
- The applicant agrees to provide a bond in an amount necessary to install landscaping along the south lot line and on the developer's land to the south, when future development occurs.

With the following FINDINGS OF FACT:

- The site plan does correspond with the intent and purpose of the C-2 Commercial zoning district, and the 1998 Master Plan "Commercial" designation.
- The site plan as conditionally approved will meet the requirements of the C-2 Zoning District for number of parking spaces, lighting, building height and setbacks, and type of land use.
- The site plan as conditionally approved will provide adequate, safe, and reasonable vehicular and pedestrian circulation and access.

AYES: 8 NAYS: 0 MOTION CARRIED.

Harold Thome, 2137 7 Mile Rd., thanked the Planning Commission for their thoughtful consideration of the US Storage Depot project.

Gray asked for clarification on how future landscaping would be guaranteed for the US Storage Depot project. Wash responded that an irrevocable letter of credit would be required to secure that guarantee.

Brechting asked if each PC member would identify his/her job or career history aside from the Planning Commission. Wiersum said that commissioners could learn more about each other, and hoped this could be provided after committee reports and staff updates.

Wiersum stated that the Zoning Ordinance Review committee met to discuss the ordinance chapter(s) on accessory buildings. No final agreement has been reached.

Wiersum then asked if each commissioner would identify his/her work background:

- Gray said he was a carpenter, builder, remodeling contractor.
- Brechting said she retired as an engineer at Ameritech after 28 years there.
- Sedlecky stated he is a retired structural engineer, now enjoying grandparent activities.
- Alberts is a businessman (owns Sparta Oil) and he also farms.
- Cassady-Gall works in the office of the Kent County Road Commission, dealing with residents' concerns about roads.
- Clauser works for the State of Michigan, in the Child Protection Services department.
- Rosenzweig recently started his own business as a Real Estate Appraiser, after several years with Plainfield Township in the Assessing Department.
- Wiersum said he now spends his working hours in the sales department with Kent Quality Foods.

Wash commented that commissioners worked well together on the three agenda items.

He also said that the RFQ (**R**equest **F**or **Q**ualifications) for a consultant planner (for the Master Plan review process) was sent, with a submittal deadline of Friday, April 16, 2004 at 5 PM. Two have already responded and at least two more are expected, for the RFQ subcommittee's review at a later date.

Gray moved, with Rosenzweig's support, to adjourn at 10:10 PM.

Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion Carried.

Marta Brechting, Secretary

Patricia Kolkman, Recording Secretary