

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, June 17, 2004**

**04-23 CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, June 17, 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 Cassady-Gall, Kay Chase, Jason Clauser, and Dick Sedlecky. Absent was Steve Gray. 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.

After comments, **Chase moved, with support from Rosenzweig, to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2004 regular Planning Commission meeting with one correction (page 4, paragraph 6 "plods" to "plows").**

**Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.**

No public comment was offered.

**04-24 PUBLIC HEARING: Rezoning from Ag to RA in compliance with the 1998 Alpine Township Master Plan.**

**Address: 2040 Woodley Creek Ct., NW; Applicant: Johan Betten**

Betten introduced his request by identifying the location of his lot, at the southwest corner of Baumhoff and Woodley Creek Ct. He has owned the land for 16 years, lived there for 14 years, but feels his home is now too large for him and he wants to build a smaller one in the same area. A rezoning would allow him to do so, and possibly sell another lot if further divided.

Wash stated that Woodley Creek is a public street off Baumhoff and Mr. Betten's lot is currently zoned Agricultural (AG), while master planned for Rural Agricultural (RA) and the requested rezoning is therefore in compliance with the 1998 Master Plan. The surrounding area is a mix of both AG and RA land. He reminded commission members that in the RA zone, each lot must have 165 feet of frontage at the setback, with a minimum of 1 ½ acres exclusive of road rights of way.

Sedlecky asked if the lot as currently zoned could be split into two lots and Wash said it could not.

Wiersum pointed out that several similar requests for rezoning have been approved in compliance with the Master Plan in recent years.

Brechting said that the lot as currently zoned is not conducive to farming due to the number of trees onsite.

Chase added that several surrounding lots are also RA, so it would be a compatible designation in that area.

**Rosenzweig, with support from Chase, moved to open the public hearing.**

**Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.**

Without public comment offered, **Chase moved, with Alberts' support, to close the public hearing.**

**Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.**

**Sedlecky said that the RA designation would be consistent with adjacent land use, and moved, with support from Rosenzweig, to recommend approval to the Township Board of the requested rezoning from A-Agricultural to RA Rural Agricultural, for property located at 2040 Woodley Creek Court NW, (PP# 41-09-34 300-048) 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 RA 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 RA zoning district are equally or better suited to the area than those permitted in the AG zoning district.**

**Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.**

Wiersum reminded the applicant that the Planning Commission only recommends the rezoning request to the Township Board, but final approval occurs at the Board level.

Wash confirmed for Betten that the process will take approximately 2 months, since two readings of the rezoning are required. Betten should contact the Township Clerk for any specific requirements for his presence.

#### **04-25 DISCUSSION ITEM: Ted Doorenbos Senior Living Center Concept**

Ted Doorenbos thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to appear on its agenda to discuss the possibility of establishing a Senior Living Center in the Township. The concept being presented in this meeting uses approximately 12-14 acres of land behind Holy Trinity Church and School, at Cordes and Alpine Church Street. He then introduced the person who is spearheading efforts for the multi-level facility.

Kathy Hillary said she has been an RN in the surrounding community for over 35 years, and during that time has felt privileged to help care for friends and family members requiring extended or end of life care. Different facilities were used for them and she felt they were not adequate to meet the needs of her loved ones lacking spiritual care especially.

In recent years another family member required ongoing care, and once again she found that placement choices had not changed. After speaking to a physician, she learned there is a lack of health care facilities for the elderly in the north end, particularly for Catholics. It was then she decided to pursue garnering support from both the Alpine Township community and others to establish a facility in Alpine Township.

The establishment she envisions will provide multi-level and transitional housing and care to seniors beginning at the point when they first may leave their homes, but might still require some assistance.

This first transitional stage will be an "assisted living" building, where each resident will have their own apartment, with some shared areas provided to encourage interaction with others.

"Stage Two" care would offer extended care to those no longer able to live on their own, who may be bedridden or wheelchair bound, but still able to feed themselves and communicate well. This will duplicate the intent of a "nursing home" by providing ongoing medical care to those who need it.

"Stage Three" is that medical care known as "palliative care", formerly known as Hospice care, but will be broadened to include those who may suffer from long term illnesses, such as MS, ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) Cancer and others requiring physical therapy and/or medication and 24-hour medical observation and care.

Placing the center near Holy Trinity will allow the church, its members and the residents of the home to work together on activities, provide spiritual care to those who desire it, and incorporate activities of the children attending the school if appropriate.

Tom Nimitz, from Cornerstone Architecture then displayed two conceptual plans, one illustrating a possible site plan, with shared parking, landscaping, and trees used as a buffer near potential future residential uses. The footprints of the three structures were also shown on the approximate 11 to 14 acre site.

Possible elevations of the buildings were then shown, showing the variations in architectural style, while maintaining its residential scale. The long term care building would be the largest, planned as a two-story structure with approximately 21,000 square feet per floor. Parapets would be used to house mechanicals on top of the structure, and it would be no taller than thirty four feet, making the structure more residential than hospital in character. Expected occupancy at the outset would be 187 residents.

The assisted living building would be single level, with slight modifications in rooflines and facades to illustrate the individual nature of the apartments. Twenty-four residents could reside in the approximately 8,800 square foot building.

Palliative care would be provided to residents in the third structure, which is expected to be a second single story, 8,800 square foot building having a capacity of 16 to 32 residents. This one would also have a residential rather than hospital appearance.

Wiersum asked if the plan could be expanded, or if it would be limited to what was presented at this meeting. Nimitz said that Assisted Living and Palliative Care could each be expanded easily if necessary.

Chase asked if the assisted living quarters would be limited to the occupancy numbers stated. Hillary said that it was decided to present the minimum plan to find out if the Township was supportive before designing a larger facility, but again said the plan was flexible enough to accommodate change.

In response to another question from Wiersum, an owner/manager for the development had not been selected. Hillary added that there are many government regulations covering nursing homes

and would have to be explored and met before a manager would be selected. She felt that an existing medical services group, such as St. Mary's Health Services, would likely be an overseer.

In response to questions from commissioners, Wash said that because this type of use is not currently covered in our Zoning Ordinance, commissioners should first decide if they think it should be. Is the use a valid one? Is there a need for it in the community?

If commissioners do want it allowed in Alpine Township, they would then need to amend the ordinance and could accomplish this by:

- Working on changes to ordinance language at the committee level. They would decide if the use should be in a residential district, or if an OSN-PUD might be more appropriate; or
- Including discussion of the idea in the Master Plan review process already begun.

He added that the location cited is immediately south of Holy Trinity Church and School on an AG zoned piece of property which is planned for residential use. The area is already in the sewer district.

Rosenzweig asked how other townships have addressed this kind of development and which zoning they have used. Wash said he would contact other municipalities to answer that question if the Commission decides it should be pursued.

Wiersum polled the members for their interest in the proposal:

All agreed the need definitely existed and they wanted to investigate it further. Some additional concerns were raised:

- The residence would hopefully not be limited to Catholics only—Hillary said it would not be.
- The size of the site might not be large enough to accommodate any growth.
- Traffic at the intersection of Alpine Church and Cordes is already difficult and would only increase if the project were built. Road changes and elevations would have to be addressed.

When asked how members wanted the issue addressed, a majority supported making this discussion a part of the Master Plan review process, using focus groups to delve into it more deeply. Several commissioners added that the zoning ordinance should also be reviewed concurrently.

Alberts added that while he would like to see it "fast tracked", the Master Plan process was a good starting point.

One commissioner asked whether it made sense to build at the site if it could not handle growth later on. Another replied that even it were filled to capacity, a great need would be met.

#### **04-26 PUBLIC COMMENT/COMMISSIONER COMMENT/COMMITTEE UPDATES/STAFF UPDATE/ADJOURNMENT**

Don Baker, of 3475 Indian Creek Ridge, was asked by Father Dan De Pew of Holy Trinity to attend the meeting. Fr. De Pew said that while Holy Trinity was not actually endorsing the plan at this time,

they are interested in seeking further details. Holy Trinity sees this project as one which could provide mutual benefits to both the parish family and the senior complex.

Sedlecky said that he and Brechting had attended an advanced Citizen Planner class in Lansing, which he found both interesting and helpful.

Wash updated commissioners on several projects:

- Rhino Drive has been completed and is now a public street.
- The Sam's Club gas station has been completed with the exception of the storm water system, for which a bond is still being held. The service drives have been relocated as planned and new lanes are striped on Henze Dr. Sam's is on a future special assessment district for future road modifications.
- Yorktown Center (Steve Benner) revised plans may be reviewed at the July meeting. Several access issues raised at a prior meeting have been resolved.

**Rosenzweig moved with Alberts' support to set a public hearing for Fritz Wahlfield's request for a temporary sand mining permit at 6484 Alpine Avenue, NW for the July 15, 2004 regular Planning Commission meeting.**

**Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.**

The interview process for a planner/consultant for review of Alpine Township's Master Plan review continues on June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:30 am. Beckett and Raeder will go over the proposal at that time and answer questions. Wash said that he has stressed they be both innovative and creative in their approach and he has referred them to several planning books illustrating that. If favorable, they may be involved in the process as early as July.

**Rosenzweig moved, with support from Alberts, to adjourn at 8:50 pm.**

**Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Motion carried.**

**Marta Brechting, Secretary**

**Patricia Kolkman, Recording Secretary**