

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, October 20, 2005**

**05-58 CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/APPROVAL OF
MINUTES/PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, October 20, 2005, at 7:30 PM at 5255 Alpine Avenue, NW, Comstock Park, MI, 49321, with due notice. Present were Chair Jason Rosenzweig, Vice-Chair Dick Sedlecky, Secretary Nelda Johnson, and members Jason Clauser, Max Dunneback, Greg Madura, and Jim Townsend. Excused were members Kris Cassady-Gall and Jim May. Also in attendance were John Wiess, of Design Plus, Township Planner Brendie Vega-Mkhwanazi, and Recording Secretary Patricia Kolkman.

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

Townsend moved, with support from Dunneback, to accept the minutes of the September 15, 2005 Regular Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Townsend moved, with support from Dunneback, to accept the minutes of the September 22, 2005 Special Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

No citizens offered comment.

**05-59 PRESENTATION ON SENIOR HOUSING DESIGN
John Wiess, Design Plus**

Rosenzweig asked John Wiess, architect with Design Plus, and former Cannon Township Supervisor, to present information on designing senior housing developments throughout the State of Michigan. Wiess was invited by the Planning Commission to provide more details on design.

Weiss added that he also taught a number of courses on different topics at the MTA conferences in the past, and acted as both Chair and Vice-Chair of the Kent County Road Commission in addition to his experience as Cannon Township Supervisor and his current activities with Design Plus. He displayed several site plans depicting the layout of residential units in different developments, the type of living units offered, as well as any recreational features included in the site.

Wiess said the age of residents in senior communities has lowered over the years, showing people moving in at an earlier age than in the past. Retirees in their 60's now opt for this kind of housing since they can "age in place" and not move as their health may decline. Many senior communities are advertised as offering a "continuum of care", allowing seniors to remain in one spot as age related changes occur.

Housing types provided range from:

- independent living units (whether apartments or condos),

- assisted living units (with CNA's- Certified Nurse Assistants- on the premises), to
- those with nursing onsite for more complex medical needs.

Several concepts used in designing a senior housing development are:

- People generally retire within 20 miles of their family homestead.
- Occupancy can vary, with couples and elderly sisters represented, but most (approximately 60%) of the units occupied by singles.
- Utilization of a site's natural features, which has resulted in one development incorporating onsite wetlands into a lovely pond with surrounding walking paths.
- Senior design elements include: the elimination of basements, since the stairs pose a hazard as people age; wider doorways, to accommodate wheelchairs; lowered counter heights, for handicap access; and grab bars in bathrooms, etc.
- The layout of a development includes central placement of common elements, such as the community dining area and perhaps doctor offices. Shorter hallways can then be planned to limit long walks for the residents. Often, buildings are multi-story, with elevators giving residents more freedom of movement.
- A senior housing complex does not generally follow a grid of streets (promoting vehicular traffic), but rather walkways (encouraging walking). Often the fronts of the units remain clear for conversation (front porches and walkways throughout the site add to interaction among residents) and the rear of units is used for "loading" (garages, trash pickup, any deliveries.)
- Density issues should be considered in light of the actual impact a senior housing development has on the community: local schools are not affected at all, and any traffic increase is usually minimal.
- Traffic volume generated by a senior complex is less intense than with a "typical" single family development. Whereas 10 vehicle trips per day per home are considered "normal" in a residential neighborhood, seniors drive less as they age. Average trips per day for seniors range from 4 per day initially, to 1 per day as time passes.
- Less parking is required for seniors, since seniors drive less as they age. A driveway is included in the number of spaces allocated to meeting parking requirements. Some "high end" developments often include underground parking, and an average of one space per unit is the norm.
- Mixed use senior developments have included retail uses on the perimeter, with banking, restaurants, grocery, a barber shop/beauty salon, pharmacy and a health facility. Doctor's offices are often in nearby commercial development.

In response to comments and questions from commissioners, Wiess provided the following information:

Floor Plans -- square footage per unit can range from about 700 square feet (with a 12' x 18' Living Room/Dining Room, a 9' x 10' kitchen, and an 11' x 14' bedroom) to about 1200 square feet (with 2 bedrooms, each with either a full or half bath for convenience of residents). Two bedroom units are frequently

occupied by two sisters, a couple, or a single person with an extra bedroom for an office or visitors.

Costs -- Different financial arrangements exist for these facilities—"Continuum of care" is somewhat like purchasing an insurance policy guaranteeing a resident needn't move as their health declines. There can also be a "life lease" arrangement, allocating a portion of seniors' payments to a future nursing unit at the same facility. Rentals average approximately \$1.00/ square foot, while sale prices reflect the average cost of housing in the immediate area. Townsend said he hopes future senior housing developments are made available to more than just upper middle class residents. Wiess said "bundling" of services, to include meals and transportation may also be included in monthly fee structures.

Design considerations --Wiess added that since a retiree's overall health has been linked to activity level and continued social interaction, senior housing developments generally encourage both. Features such as walkways, front porches, common dining areas and structured activities such as planned trips and tours all serve to support each goal. One senior complex is actually connected to an adjacent elementary school, allowing seniors to volunteer there.

Meeting future needs/ densities- Wiess said when residents need ongoing assistance (usually provided by CNA's) in a care facility, the developer generally provides for one resident per room, although a care unit for those with dementia is laid out differently, with RNs more centrally located. He added the PC should consider all services provided when working with a developer whether under a conditional rezoning or a PUD.

After Wiess completed his presentation, Townsend said he didn't think he knew anyone who would want to live in this kind of housing. (*Townsend later clarified, in the November 17, 2005 Regular PC Meeting, that he did not intend to imply he was opposed to senior housing as he is in favor of it, but that he didn't know of anyone who would voluntarily choose this kind of housing over remaining in his/her own home.*)

05-60 PUBLIC HEARING—Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance

- **Items related to Senior Housing**
- **Conditional Rezoning**

On direction from the Chair, Vega introduced Cliff Bloom, an attorney with Law, Weathers and Richardson, who represent Alpine Township on legal matters. Bloom helped draft a "sample" ordinance for townships to consider adopting covering the newly adopted conditional rezoning requirement for townships.

Vega then reviewed proposed zoning amendments providing for senior housing and administrative conditional rezoning guidelines. Commissioners had reservations about the definition for "Dwelling Unit, Non-farm" in addition to some language and details in amendments for Special Uses in Chapter 21. Bloom agreed, suggesting that further discussion on these definitions be tabled until further research into these areas is done.

Discussion among commissioners also centered on the addition of Senior Housing as a Special Use in Chapter 21. Concerns related to the minimum dwelling unit size and minimum acreage required, with Bloom stating the amendment may be "flawed" since it

relies on the definition of "Dwelling Unit, Non-Farm". He went on to say these are design details which may affect any project presented to the Planning Commission in the future. He suggests that the PC consider tabling the public hearing on these Zoning Ordinance Amendments until more definitive language can be drafted.

In response to questions from commissioners, Bloom said that a senior housing project could still be developed without the amendments presented at this meeting, if conditional rezoning procedures are used. He added that the Planning Commission has the right to ensure a development is "right for the community." Bloom said it would be appropriate to continue the public hearing until information on these unresolved issues is made available to the Planning Commission for its review.

Sedlecky moved, with support from Townsend, to open the public hearing.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Sharon Steffens, 6690 Walker Ave NW, said that senior housing, including units for assisted living and nursing care are badly needed in the area. She added that everyone will need this type of development at some time, whether individually, or to help care for our elderly parents.

Ted Wallace, 4296 Laura, said he thinks the Township has enough apartments already. *(Townsend said later at the 11/17/05 Regular PC Meeting that he was sure Wallace was not opposed to senior housing, but that he felt the development should not be characterized as apartments. PC members confirmed that the statement recorded was what had been said with no additional explanation.)*

Bloom confirmed for the PC that it would be appropriate to close the public hearing.

Sedlecky moved, with Madura's support, to close the public hearing.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Attorney Bloom then introduced the Conditional Rezoning option developers may use which is part of a recently enacted State Law. He said this new procedural chapter in Alpine's Zoning Ordinance will provide the Planning Commission with the maximum amount of authority and control over a development. This new procedure will limit a project to one specific use, though a municipality cannot change zoning requirements for the newly designated parcel.

Bloom said that the Township cannot remove the rights of a given district, but can add to them. Procedurally, a developer can either meet with the Planner and the Township Supervisor in advance of presenting its conditions, or alternatively meet with the full Planning Commission. He stressed that Conditional Rezoning is purely voluntary; both the Township and the Developer must agree to proceed.

After significant discussion among commissioners, Bloom stated that in his opinion it is perfectly appropriate for the Planning Commission to offer conditional rezoning during a public hearing at the PC. Suggestions can be made for conditions, but agreements for a development can be lengthy documents, drafted and agreed to through attorneys for the Township and the Developer. He went on to say that the PC can encourage certain conditions to be a part of the agreement, although they must not be coercive. As an

example, he said that the PC might ask that a certain percent of the units in the development be reserved for rental units.

Townsend moved to open the public hearing, with Clauser's support.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

No citizens offered comment.

Madura moved to close the public hearing, with Sedlecky's support.

Ayes: 7 Nays" 0 Motion carried.

After considerable discussion among commissioners and Attorney Bloom, it was agreed:

- Various sections of the ordinance presented require corrections to language used.
- A statement will be added to cover the procedural steps necessary, should a developer default on a development agreement—
 - The Planning Commission would agree to make a recommendation to the Township Board that the previous rezoning revert to its original designation.
 - The Township Board would then pass a resolution to adopt the designation change.
- The Township's escrow policy would remain in effect.

Sedlecky moved, with Townsend's support, to table further discussion on Conditional Rezoning until the November regular Planning Commission meeting.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

**05-61 Old Business: Tabled Site Plan Review
Special Land Use
K & K Manufacturing
951 9 Mile Rd. NW
Tim Kidder, Applicant**

Vega reintroduced the previously tabled Special Land Use and Site Plan Review for Kidder, referring to the Planning Commission's decision in September to table any review and decision until the owner meets the original standards imposed when the existing Special Land Use was approved in 1989. She reminded the PC that the site had received a number of site plan violations in recent years and Mr. Kidder has requested he be allowed to add another structure to house auto parts and various machinery to produce new parts.

Vega said that she and the new Township Enforcement Officer as well as the Building Official met on the applicant's site and has determined that most required site work has been completed, although some fencing to screen automobiles and some parts remains to be installed. She said the site is now "largely in compliance" with the expectations of the Planning Commission.

Commissioners discussed the site's current state, and agreed that the majority of work has been done. The PC confirmed with Vega that if it were allowed to return to its earlier condition, the Special Land Use would be revoked. Vega reminded the PC that some of the work Mr. Kidder performs is a permitted use by right, and the Special Land Use is requested to add a new building for vehicle repair and body work. The addition of

another building should resolve some of the current violations. Since the intensity of use for the business is increasing, another Planning Commission review is required.

Vega also recommended the PC should resolve the following with the applicant before coming to their decision:

1. The height of the new building must not exceed forty-five feet and must be detailed on a revised site plan.
2. The applicant must conform to the requirement that all storage of materials related to the use be completely enclosed or screened from view by a solid fence, greenbelt, or wall of at six feet in height.
3. Plans for immediate removal of any fluids captured during the remanufacturing or storage of damaged vehicles must be provided and adhered to. The Township Fire Chief noted that an old portable tank for diesel fuel and several gasoline containers were on the site and must be relocated to reduce potential hazards. All gasoline containers must be in one location and identified accordingly.
4. The site plan must be revised to include required details showing:
 - a) The height of each building
 - b) Dimensions and square footage of each building
 - c) Location of all sheds, dumpsters, trash removal areas
 - d) A scaled drawing detailing any proposed outdoor lighting fixtures, in compliance with Section 18.06 (c) of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. No building permit for the new structure will be issued until all conditions specified are met.
6. Details regarding the increased parking area must be added to the site plan.
7. Trailers now used for storage must be removed from the site, as extended parking of trailers is in violation of the Ordinance.
8. Prein and Newhof's concerns regarding improvement of the private road (Venture Dr.) should be addressed.

Mr. Kidder presented his request, stating that he began by building antique auto parts for Porsche and Mercedes and has now expanded to include Dodge and Chrysler vehicles. The new building he requests will be approximately 70% storage. Minimal customer visits occur, with most parking used for employees.

He was asked why additional parking was shown and Kidder said he hopes to reserve the area for any future expansion needs. The detention pond was increased in the past to accommodate future expansion, so he expects it will be adequate to handle increased storm water runoff. Rosenzweig confirmed with Vega that parking space requirements as outlined in the ordinance can be reduced, with the proviso that they be increased if intensity of use occurs. Kidder asked if the deadline for paving of the new parking area could be extended to allow for "settling" of the earth where large stumps and debris have been removed. He agrees to pave the lot once soil used to fill these holes has been compacted.

Kidder said he has not pursued Venture road improvements with the other businesses as they already share costs to cover road maintenance and snow removal without a formal agreement. Kent County Road Commission will not accept responsibility of the road as is, since its length exceeds standards for cul-de-sacs.

Sedlecky confirmed with Kidder that he will provide the Township a revised site plan, detailing the items required. Townsend further cautioned Kidder to maintain the site in compliance with any latest approvals for the expansion. Kidder agreed he will have his engineer revise the site plan and provide it to Vega. He said all machinery, racking, parts and piping will be brought indoors. Trailers on the site will be removed once the new building is erected.

Sedlecky moved, with support from Madura, to approve the site plan for K & K Manufacturing, as it does meet the requirements set forth in Chapters 17, 18, and 19 of the Alpine Township Zoning Ordinance, with the following

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Applicant agrees to all items noted in the Township Planning Director's Staff Report dated 9/7/05.
2. Applicant agrees to correct all items noted in the Township Fire Chief's letters of 9/2/05 and 9/27/05.
3. Applicant agrees to all items noted in the Township Engineer's letter dated 9/9/05.
4. Applicant agrees to pave parking lot on west side of site within two years, or earlier if ground settles after stump removal.
5. Applicant agrees to provide a revised site plan, detailing items required.
6. Applicant agrees that an area on the north side of the building will be reserved for a future parking lot.
7. Applicant agrees to relocate two parking spaces for handicapped parking, upon direction from the Planning Director.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

05-61 SITE PLAN REVIEW – ALPINE NORTHERN HOLDINGS

On direction from Rosenzweig, Vega introduced a request from The Midwest Realty Group, for the site adjacent to the Yorktown Center project which is now being built. Applicant has requested approval for preliminary site work in order to obtain MDEQ permits for "Alpine Northern Holdings". The site is expected to be developed as retail, the developer will return to the Planning Commission with a full Site Plan once tenants are identified. At this time they hope to enclose a portion of the stream on the site and install a retaining wall.

Vega added that both a Kent County Road Commission driveway permit and MDOT permits will also be needed, with MDOT requesting a progression study from 3 Mile Road to 7 Mile Road to assess the need for a new traffic light at the Menard's intersection, which will provide for access to multiple retail sites. Future placement and design of a new driveway will be contingent on the tenants who will occupy the development.

Midwest Realty will follow the regulations outlined in the Alpine Township Storm Water Ordinance for the storm water system, and the site is also being analyzed for its impact

on a regional detention pond. Since there will be considerable work required near the creek on the site, it is not likely that MDEQ will extend the two year permit previously granted.

Bob Goodheart, of Pathfinder Engineering, spoke on behalf of the developer, stating that the property has already presented a number of hurdles to development, including the demolition of structures, crushing of concrete debris, and the removal of some of the waste found. Erosion problems previously identified will be addressed with the site work in the provisional site plan approval being requested. The applicant asks for conditional approval for a new drive to access the three lots for the work.

Goodheart said that the developer is already working with Prein and Newhof on the details necessary to adequately design the detention basin on the northeast corner of the property, and agrees to meet all conditions Prein and Newhof has identified for approval.

Sedlecky confirmed that the developer will also meet any conditions specified for access drives to the site.

Sedlecky moved, with support from Madura, to approve the site plan for Alpine Northern Holdings, Alpine Valley development, as it does meet the requirements set forth in Chapters 12, 18, 19, and 24 of the Alpine Township Zoning Ordinance, with the following CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Applicant agrees to participate in an SAD for the improvement of traffic at the Alpine/ Alpenhorn/ Henze intersection and at Alpine Northern Holdings/ Menard's driveway.
2. Applicant agrees to all items noted in the Township Engineer's letters dated 10/3/05 and 10/14/05.
3. The final site plan is not to be signed off on by the Planning Director, Township Engineer, or Planning Commission Chair until a driveway is approved for the site.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

05-62 COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ COMMITTEE UPDATES

Townsend and Madura both said they were not pleased with the Scenario 4 presented at the Master Plan Open House and feel some additional work to modify it must be done.

Sedlecky agreed that Scenario 4 requires further work, and asked that a special sub-committee meeting be scheduled to do so.

Dunneback said that Beckett and Raeder had asked that the Planning Commission review the comments made by the public at the meeting and should meet with them one more time.

Vega said that a maximum of 4 members of the PC should meet to discuss any identified problems before the final version is presented to the full Planning Commission.

Dunneback, Rosenzweig, Sedlecky and Townsend agreed to meet for approximately two hours on November 2, 2005, at noon at the Township Center.

05-63 PUBLIC COMMENT/ ADJOURNMENT

Rosenzweig read a brief letter from Fr. Dan DePew, pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, in support of the senior housing development concept.

Vega said the next PC meeting on November 17th, will have a brief agenda, primarily to discuss the amendments requested to address senior housing issues, and the sub-committee's presentation of the Master Plan.

Sedlecky moved, with support from Townsend, to adjourn at 11:15 PM.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Nelda Johnson, Secretary

Patricia Kolkman, Recording Secretary