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Supervisor Pat Hohl Clerk Mike Dolan Treasurer Jason Negri Trustees Bill Hahn, Patricia Hughes, Chuck Menzies, Cindy Michniewicz

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 7:00 PM  
Hamburg Township Hall Board Room

### MINUTES

#### CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Muck called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

#### PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

#### ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD:

1) **PRESENT:**

John Hamlin  
Patricia Hughes  
Victor Leabu Jr  
Ron Muir  
Jeff Muck, Chair  
Joyce Priebe

2) **ABSENT:**

Deborah Mariani

#### APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA for tonight.

**Approval Motion** made by Commissioner Leabu, seconded by Commissioner Priebe, to approve the agenda as presented.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

#### APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

**Approval Motion** made by Commissioner Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Priebe, to approve April 17, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes with recommendation from Commissioner Hughes for staff to review the verbiage regarding age and income level from the recording.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC-** No public response.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1) Preliminary Site Plan Review (PPAM24-001): The Crossing at Lakelands Trail**

Chair Muck opened the public hearing to the public.

- 1) Brenda Vibbart- 10564 Hall Rd is requesting a fence to separate her property from the development that wouldn't kill her trees. She would like it to be put up before the development begins. Requesting that the pool is indoor to buffer the residential noise from development. Traffic will also be a concern to the neighborhood.
- 2) Sarah Bennett- 10582 Livingston St is pleased with the emergency only gate at the Washington St. entrance and the lift station has been moved from the existing residents. Her current concerns is the density request over by 26% of the master plan. Providing a 26-foot road would be possible with less buildings. A bigger setback could be provided if more landscaping were required between this development and the existing residential homes. The engineer said that the pool can't drain into the sanitary sewer so she is concerned that they will drain it to the nearby detention basin. The house at 7452 Washington St. which is in line with the proposed detention pond is on a well. Will this pond impact the water quality of their well water? The elevation drawings presented to the boards will not resemble the largest buildings onsite, the club house and the apartment building with a 16-unit design. These buildings are going to be very huge, about 150 feet in length. This architecture will not blend in with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 3) McKenzie Johnson- 10603 Livingston St is appreciative that the applicant is willing to utilizing the feedback of surrounding residents. She stated that a GPUD shouldn't be used to increase the density or intensity of the development in the ordinance, in section 36-442 (6). She is worried that this will change the character of Hamburg Township in this neighborhood.
- 4) Dustin Hitchings-10530 Hall Rd is concerned with the 34% increase of the number of units that will be built on this site. He also referenced Section 36-442 (6) in Hamburg Township's ordinance. He said they are under the required amount of open space requirement by a quarter acre. Many Hamburg residential properties are about a quarter of an acre. They have proposed 407 parking spaces compared to the 312 required. This additional parking will consist of 5.85 acres of paved asphalt in the field. The GPUD should not allow any development that add public service & utility loads beyond those contemplated in the master plan. The village core consists of 7 acres in the master plan, but this development is twice this amount. The required lighting for 5.85 acres of pavement will impact adjacent residents from enjoying the ability to see the stars at night. We will have many new additional people who will be starting up their cars at odd hours of the day and will impact on residents' enjoyment of their land.
- 5) Erin Gottbreht- 7930 Forest Creek Ct moved her 20 years ago from Grand Rapids to raise their children in a country feel township. This proposal for 208 apartments is concerning since we need to grow, but this doesn't seem to be the best way to go about it. This density proposal seems overwhelming to our community here.

- 6) Loretta Brighton- 7869 Howard St moved from Grass Lake to Hamburg. She has lived in this community for many years to raise her five children. She is concerned with the possibility of increasing crime in the community by having these apartments.
- 7) Lisa Johnson - 6683 Alta Dr has moved to the township because of the open space community that exists here. She is concerned about what the future will look like if we allow this dense development in the community, for her children. She is hoping that the committee will consider any possible increase in crime, and over demand of roads and infrastructure.

No one else commented so Chair Muck closed the public meeting. He invited the applicant to the podium to speak to the commissioners. **Bob Langet** showed the overview site plan, stating that they eliminated the 3 story buildings proposed at an earlier meeting, replacing them with 2 story buildings. They eliminated the sport court due to noise. They moved the pump station to a remote location on the side. Washington St entrance will only be utilized for emergency access. The plan that was approved 7 years ago was utilized in this development. Open space has been added to the center of the development. They added a dog park, EV charging stations and bike racks. Located parking in close approximation to the front doors of units without parallel and angled parking. The exterior of the buildings has been modernized, utilizing stone and siding in the architecture. This development will attract individuals who want to live in Livingston County off the highway. We believe these individuals will be young medical professionals who have younger children who don't wish to own their own place but want to live in Hamburg Township. Being in close approximation to the Lakeland Trail is important to this development.

Chair Muck opened the meeting to David Rohr for his staff report. He briefly went over the report and asked if the Commissioners had any questions. Chair Muck then opened the meeting to the commissioners for their questions and comments.

Commissioner Hughes said she did not have any questions at this time. Commissioner Muir asked for clarification of the safety concerns for Hall Rd from the applicant. The applicant stated that the development will increase traffic flow onto Hall Rd and M-36. There is an old traffic study. Bob asked Cliff to speak about this concern. He said that there was a center left turn lane will be provided off Hall Road for residents turning left off Hall Rd into the community. Commissioner Muir asked about the fence being along only one boundary. The applicant had the landscape plan pulled out to discuss with the commissioners. Commissioner Muir mentioned there was no buffering between the gravel road and the local residential neighbors. Bob said he believed that the fence was only required along that one location, and there is landscape buffering along the remainder of the site. Bob explained that the gravel will only be used as a maintenance pathway for retention pond overflow only. Muir repeated that there is no buffering landscape between the gravel road along the boundary line and the local community. The applicant said that the gravel is adjacent to vacant land and is not a road. Commissioner Muir explained that the PC usually requires landscape buffering around the whole GPUD community to buffer it from the rest of the community. The applicant said he will be sure to add such landscape to this area if the PC agrees that this is required.

Commissioner Hamlin stated that this GPUD is in the Village Center District zone, where apartments are a permitted use. One review standard in our ordinance is that a GPUD shall not be created where the same land objectives can be accomplished with conventional zoning provisions. The only reason for the GPUD on this project is to get 54 more apartments added, which is a 35% density increase over the allowable 154 apartments. He said that this development is not eligible to be submitted as a GPUD. It is not a village, mixed use, or exemplary. This should be submitted as an apartment complex with an apartment density of 154 units. Commissioner Hamlin stated his concern that if this project is approved as a GPUD, what precedence will they be setting up for the future development of more apartment and multifamily unit projects in Hamburg to the east and north. Hamlin discussed a few things that he would like to see added as a condition to this project, if approved. The fencing needs to be discussed. Our ordinance requires a 20-foot buffer in which a 6-foot masonry wall is required. We can allow a wooden fence. He said we don't want a vinyl fence. There are numerous single-family homes that are

adjacent to this development that require a fencing buffer. A second request, he wants to see the Washington St. entrance only be used as an emergency access point with a locked gate and a Knox box for the police and fire to have access to, as a condition for approval or in the GPUD agreement. The final request, Commissioner Hamlin requested that the access path to the Lakeland Trail should have safety bollards to keep the trail to bike and pedestrian traffic.

Commissioner Leabu stated that he was on the PC when this was approved the first time, and he wished he had been built so there were more housing available to people to rent. McKenna had stated ten years ago that we were 300 apartment units short of a normal mixed community. He stated he has two daughters who are aged 26 and 32 years old. Today homes are selling for over \$400,000. Having these apartments built could provide them with a safe place to live. Leabu said he felt that this newer design is much better than the old plan.

Commissioner Priebe was in support of Leabu's comments. She was on the PC when it was approved over seven years ago. She appreciates the newer design and that they eliminated the 3 story unit buildings. She stated that no one likes to change, and she moved here over 50 years ago when it was a lot more rural. She has seen many changes over the years. When people own property they have a vested interest in developing that parcel. She said that she supports this project.

Commissioner Hughes asked for clarification regarding the apartment buildings, asking if there will be indoor stairwells to get the renters from level to level or will each apartment unit exist on the whole level. Bob stated that a three-bedroom apartment will exist at one level. If the unit is upstairs, then that renter will access their apartment on that second story level, and each apartment unit will have their own private entrance. Their building company works hard to soundproof each unit, floors and walls, from each other. They do wall separation and light creek floors to deaden the sound between units. Hughes stated that she grew up in a rural community on 10 acres and it seems that living in Hamburg Township requires us to work with our connection with M-36 whether for the good or the bad.

Chair Muck stated that he moved to Livingston County over 25 years ago as a single man. He took a job in Brighton while he tried to find an apartment on that income level was very difficult 25 years ago. Fast forward to today, I have a co-worker who grew up in Pinckney Township, her parents still live in Hamburg Township, and she is a single mom. She can't afford to live out here. She is very hopeful at what these new townhouses and apartments could bring to the community, allowing her to move here near her parents. Currently she must make the trip every day from Livonia to go to work and see her parents. I think of her when I vote yes on this project. We will want to ensure that we create some stipulations regarding the fencing, screening, and green buffering around the development. There will not be any expansion of this development. What you see is what is being reviewed.

Commissioner Hamlin stated that the fencing should be a 20-foot buffer and a masonry wooden fence should be required everywhere there is a single-family home. Then an emergency gate and a Knox box will be required at Washington Street (west entrance) and used only for emergencies. Hamlin had mentioned connecting a pedestrian path to Lakeland Trail. Chair Muck stated that he had brought this up at the last meeting. Muck asked Bob if he had talked with the neighbors to the north and south to see if they showed any interest in connecting the pedestrian path to the Lakeland Trail. Bob said yes, they are willing to assist in this effort. Bob was in support of making this a condition as well. Hamlin and Muck stated they wanted it as a condition, so it is controlled.

**Approval motion** made by Commissioner Priebe, seconded by Commissioner Muir, to recommend approval of the **Preliminary GPUD Site Plan (PPAM24-001)** as shown on the project plans, in Exhibit A, to the Hamburg Township Board because the project as conditioned is consistent with requirements of the

GPUD regulations and will be able to meet site plan review standards of the zoning ordinance as discussed at the meeting tonight and presented in the staff report with the following conditions for approval:

Condition 1: A lighting plan that meets all the regulations for the village center area shall be submitted as a part of the final site plan review. This plan should include pedestrian scale lighting in the park to allow safe pedestrian access.

Condition 2: A detailed sign plan should be submitted for final site plan review.

Condition 3: Prior to the review of the final site plan or the issuance of a land use permit as needed all appropriate approvals from local, county, state and federal agencies, including, but not limited to, Hamburg Township Fire, Assessor, and Public Works Departments, the Livingston County Road Commission, Drain Commissioner, and Health Department; and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and the Michigan Dept. of Transportation shall be received.

Condition 4: Fencing and buffering will be required along all residential properties as required by the ordinance.

Condition 5: Emergency gate and Knox box will be required at the Washington Street Emergency Exit.

Condition 6: A dedicated access to the Lakeland Trail shall be established.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes (5); Hughes, Muir, Muck, Leabu, Priebe      Nays (1); Hamlin.**  
**Absent (1) Commissioner Mariani**

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**2) Elderly Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) Discussion. Consider changes to the ECHO Zoning Ordinance Amendment.**

Chair Muck opened the meeting to David Rohr. He said that he met with Commissioners Leabu and Hamlin three weeks ago. They spoke about how, why, and when we should amend our current ECHO regulations to allow for smaller residents on Chilson Road in Hamburg. There is a red lined version of these regulations. They agreed that amending the ECHO regulations was the most straightforward and timely way of changing this ordinance. They agreed that the name should change from ECHO to just CHO Planned Unit Development. They added in Section 36-432 the Neighborhood Service (NS) as a permitted district for potential housing types for the CHO. We wanted to bring it to the PC for their comments, concerns, and changes. The Planning Commission discussed many aspects of this CHO amendment to allow attainable housing in our community. David Rohr took notes on this discussion so he will share his final version with the PC before it is sent to the Hamburg Township Board for approval.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Approval motion** made by Commissioner Muir, seconded by Hughes for adjournment at 8:40pm.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

**Lisa Perschke**

*Planning/Zoning Coordinator & Recording Secretary*

**David Rohr**

*Planning & Zoning Director*

The minutes were approved as presented/corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

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Commissioner Jeff Muck, Chairperson