

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 16, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Seward called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Roll was called:

Present:

T. Joseph Seward, Chairperson
Steve Anderson
Debby Dehart
Pete Meagher
Matt Slicker
Merrie Carlock, Vice Chairperson
Mona Sevic
Robert Seeley

Absent:

Scott Ruggles, Township Board Liaison

Others:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Justin Quagliata, Staff Planner
Hannah Kennedy-Galley, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Commissioner Seeley, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 2, 2024

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, seconded by Commissioner Seeley to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. 9101 Highland - Rezoning Request

Location: Property described as 9101 Highland Road, identified as parcel number 12-23-227-003, located south of Highland Road, west of Sunnybeach Boulevard, consisting of approximately 5.02 acres.

Request: Applicant requests to rezone the parcel from R1-C (Single Family Residential) to RB (Restricted Business) or any other appropriate zoning district.

Applicant: Affinity 10 Investments, LLC

Staff Planner Quagliata briefly went the applicant's request.

Commissioner Sevic asked staff if there was an issue with ingress into the site. Staff Planner Quagliata said the updated traffic study met the standards of the Township. The applicant provided a Traffic Impact Study, which was above and beyond what was needed for a rezoning request. If the applicant were to move forward and a site plan was reviewed, the Township Traffic Engineer would also review the study.

Commissioner Carlock asked staff if the Restrictive Business was the most restrictive commercial zoning. Staff Planner Quagliata said no, Local Business was.

Chairperson Seward asked staff if the request was compliant with the new Master Plan. Staff Planner Quagliata confirmed.

Commissioner Carlock clarified that the old and new Master Plan called for the area to be commercially zoned. Staff Planner Quagliata said holding the property to a residential zoning was inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Reid Cooksey, Stonfield Engineering, was present. He said the new application was brought to the Planning Commission after taking the concerns of the community into account. He said he was looking to bring a development to a property that the Master Plan called to be zoned commercially. He was looking to bring a high-end commercial development to the Township.

Commissioner Meagher asked Mr. Cooksey what the feedback was from the residents. Mr. Cooksey said the two biggest issues were additional green space between the development and abutting properties, and more screening. The church was sold, and the developer owned the property now.

Commissioner Anderson asked staff if there was compliance regarding frontage on the site. Staff Planner Quagliata confirmed, the lot size standards for both area and width were met.

Chairperson Seward opened the public hearing at 6:53 P.M.

Tom Miller, Vice Present of Twin Lakes HOA, 9136 Sandy Ridge, said Twin Lakes had over 370 homes and there was only one way in and out of the subdivision. He felt the rezoning would cram too much into one location.

Aaron Greenblatt, 9055 Huron Bluffs Drive, spoke in regards to negative impact of the rezoning to the surrounding property values. He also voiced his concerns regarding additional traffic to the site causing traffic delays.

David Gian, President of the Twin Lakes Improvement Association, 9315 Steep Hollow, spoke regarding

the existing road conditions of Sunny Beach Boulevard. He believed the Township should eliminate some of the ingress/egress along M-59 in favor of cross access easements.

Theresa Johns, 9051 Steep Hollow Drive, asked how the neighbors reacted to the meeting with the development team. She stated the neighbors were not pleased and did react. She felt there was no concern for property values or traffic.

Rachel Cook, 9122 Sandy Ridge, had questions regarding the access management in the traffic study.

Susan Deihl, 9170 Twin Lakes, said she understood the reason for commercial zoning, but was concerned about the water quality with a new commercial development to the area. The neighborhood had significant water changes after the new car wash was developed.

Lisa Reaser, 515 Berry Patch, spoke regarding her concerns about the left hand turn onto M-59. She was greatly disappointed and opposed to creating a greater traffic hazard.

John Bem, 298 Shotwell, said the church and daycare center made for a great buffer to the neighborhood. He wanted to zoning of the property to remain residential.

Deb Skonieczny, 373 Shotwell, said the property values of the surrounding homes would drop. She said the Township was becoming a commercial strip of nothing but buildings.

Beverly Clancy Johnson, 8790 Twin Lakes Drive, spoke regarding the lack of traffic safety.

Maureen Kinsella, 605 Sunny Beach Drive, asked the Planning Commission to consider what the community benefits would be to this rezoning.

Chris Scholz, 987 Sunnybeach, was concerned about the traffic impact and lighting.

Sheldon Greenblatt, 9055 Huron Bluffs Drive, said the Planning Commission had heard many different perspectives. He said the rezoning should not be a single decision process.

Aaron Heiner, 987 Sunnybeach, recommended an 8' cinderblock wall. He did not want to see light pollution or hear noise pollution.

Gary Seifman, 8990 Huron Bluff Drive, said he was scared as to what could take place on the site.

Megan Scholz, 987 Sunnybeach, complained of the commercial traffic that surrounded her home and did not want more commercial development closer.

Dan Gottschall, 891 Sunnybeach, said he wanted to see the request tabled for another time. He was 77 years old, and said the Planning Commission was charged with effecting the Township for the present and the future.

Chairperson Seward closed the public hearing at 7:32 P.M.

Commissioner Carlock asked staff what the difference between Local and Restrictive Business would be. Staff Planner Quagliata said Local Business didn't allow drive thru windows or restaurants with drive thru windows.

Commissioner Meagher said the traffic light issue was a MDOT issue, and what would it take to get a traffic light. Director O'Neil said MDOT had standards that needed to be met, and a factor that was taken into account was accidents. Many years ago, the Taco Bell had given the Township a contribution towards a traffic light at the Sunnybeach intersection. Traffic mitigation was a site plan issue that would be reviewed during the site plan process.

Commissioner Dehart asked staff if the neighborhood was on community water or wells. Director O'Neil said it was wells. She added she was a proponent of cross access easements, and was there a way to utilize the adjacent driveway's driveway. Staff Planner Quagliata said the abutting property did not have an existing cross access. The developer could work with the daycare to create a cross access easement.

Commissioner DeHart said she did not like seeing the vacant Tim Horton's/Wendy's property, but had understood the owner was uncommunicative. Staff Planner Quagliata said it was the business owner's choice to have a dark building, the owner did not have the building for sale.

Commissioner Sevic asked staff if there was another appropriate zoning for the property. Staff Quagliata said yes, but in staff's opinion, Restrictive Business was the most appropriate district.

Mr. Cooksey addressed some of the resident questions. He said he wanted to work with the Township and community through a very long process. Traffic concerns and entrance would be addressed at site plan. The goal was if the daycare was ever redeveloped, there would be cross access. He added that there was positive feedback, but there was hesitance from the neighbors. The request was in line with the Master Plan. He said the development would not impact the community well water.

Director O'Neil said if the project were to go through the planning process, there would be standards the developer would adhere to and the Planning Commission could enforce, such as the landscaping and buffering. Nothing could be legally tied to tonight's request.

It was MOVED by Commissioner Seeley, seconded by Commissioner Meagher to recommend the Township Board approve the rezoning 9101 Highland Road, identified as parcel number 12-23-227-003 from R1-C Residential to RB Restricted Business. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (5 yes votes)

(Seeley/yes, Meagher/yes, Slicker/yes, Sevic/yes, Anderson/no, Seward/yes, Carlock/no, Dehart/no).

CONTINUING BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

LIAISON'S REPORT

The Triangle Trail was moving along, and near completion. Restoration of irrigation was being handled. Stanley Park construction would be underway soon. Rockin' the Farm would be held on July 20.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Master Plan was approved. Gateway Crossing's preliminary site plan was approved. Construction on Elizabeth Lake Road would begin next week through October. The Civic Center page turns for the bid package was yesterday. Culver's would be going to the Township Board next week. Gateway Crossing would be going to the ZBA next week. The Zoning Ordinance amendments would be going to the Board for first reading.

Director O'Neil presented Mary Earley with a bound version of the Master Plan, along with a copy of the executive summary.

Staff Planner Quagliata's last day was today. He was moving on to become the Community Development Director at the city of Northville. He also passed the AICP exam yesterday. Congratulations, Justin!

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE: June 6, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Dehart, to adjourn at 8:23 P.M. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).