

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

May 19, 2003

The Saugatuck Township Planning Commission met on May 19, 2003, at the township hall on Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck, Michigan 49453.

Present: Darpel, Milauckas, Olendorf, Rausch, Shanahan, and Smith

Absent: Phelps

Also present: Z. A. Ellingsen, JoAnn DeJonge and Doug Gritter for the Saugatuck Christian Reformed Church, Greg Raad and Peter Colvin for Log Home Villages, and members of the general public.

Chairman Milauckas called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M. Olendorf made a motion to approve the minutes of April 28, Smith supported, and the motion carried. Olendorf also made a motion to approve the May 12 minutes, Rausch seconded, and the motion carried.

There being no public comment, Milauckas opened the site plan review for the Saugatuck Christian Reformed Church under Chapter 8A. The rezoning to R-1 of that part of the site facing Blue Star Highway has been approved by the County. DeJonge presented a site plan with notes on trees currently standing and those proposed, as well as surrounding properties. Commissioner Smith recused herself because she is a member of the church. Olendorf asked if there had been any dialogue with the neighbors, and DeJonge replied that there has been, especially with the neighbor right next door where the church intends to create a buffer by planting five trees wherever she wants. Rausch asked on which side of Blue Star the bike path will be, and Milauckas said he thought it would be on the church's side. DeJonge pointed out how low and damp the area next to the highway is. Gritter said if a bike path is planned for the area next to the detention pond, the proposed trees should not be planted there. Milauckas suggested that a possible future bike path should be pictured on the site plan. A 10' bridge was mentioned as a solution to the problem.

According to Sisson's memo, dated May 19, the difference in scale of the two drawings was one item that needed to be remedied, and DeJonge said the site plan could be adjusted to 1-40. As far as parking areas go, DeJonge showed which part exists now and explained that some dimensions of the proposed additional parking were not accurate. Discussion of the narrower driveway, which is generally used as only one way, could be labeled as one-way ingress. There have always been two driveways. The road commission has approved both driveways. The lighting plan was reviewed: Gritter said the proposed lights are 28 ft. high and candle-power is shown, varying to dim at the edge of the parking lot. Milauckas asked that the lights be labeled existing or proposed on the site plan. The three lights on the new building will be for security purposes, but the parking lot lights will be on timers. Milauckas asked also for approval letters from the engineers and the drain commissioner for the detention pond. The potential danger of the pond was discussed, and DeJonge asked that they be allowed to spread the mounds of sand and fill so they could see what happens around the pond before they put up any fences. The slope of 4'-22' seemed very gradual, and the outflow is at 12". Dimensions from the lot line to the nearest home should be included in the site plan. Milauckas asked that the buffer trees for that home be on the plan also. Signs were discussed, lighted signs being prohibited in residential areas. Gritter said they hoped to retain the existing lighted sign and remodel the one on the highway, which is not lighted. Milauckas said a third one on the plan is lighted also, and that one would require SAU from the P. C. and a variance from the ZBA. The church group can decide whether they really want the third sign.

DeJonge asked if the site proposed for the new church building could be approved so they could remove the topsoil and fill with sand to solve drainage problems, and seed the entire area. Gritter called it a landscaping

project, rather than a building project, at this point, to make the site more attractive. Ellingsen said they would have to do it at their own risk.

Rausch made a motion to table the church's site plan review until specific changes can be made: (1) letter from the Allegan County Road Commission locating driveways, the west drive entrance only; (2) letters from the Drain Commissioner and engineers on the detention pond; (3) definition of lights, current and new, and direction and description; (4) location of home next door in reference to lot lines and proposed plantings for buffer; (5) delete new sign until decision by applicant; and (6) coordinate the scale of plans and include dimensions of driveways, etc. Shanahan seconded and the motion carried. Milauckas said the P. C. probably did not have the authority to allow them to do earth changes yet.

After a brief recess, the meeting reconvened at 9:15 to consider the preliminary plan for Log Home Villages' proposed PUD on Riverside Drive. It was evident from the letters exchanged between the township attorney and planner and John Lewis, attorney for the applicant, that there was a controversy over whether the calculation for possible home sites should be done on gross or net acreage and whether the 1/2-acre lot of record could be included in the PUD to make a total of 11 home sites, or whether it must stand alone as a separate lot. At the previous hearing, the Natural River Overlay District and the Flood Plain District were brought up, but Ellingsen's letter of May 12 says these issues do not impact the home sites as they are proposed on this plan. Bultje's letter of May 19 made it clear that the P. C. does have the discretion to grant, or not grant, the maximum density allowed in the zoning district, in light of the standards set forth in the PUD ordinance. Milauckas asked if the 1/2-acre site could be legally included in the PUD, and Lewis said "Yes" through contractual arrangement, and an easement could be allowed for it to be connected by a drive to the PUD.

Ellingsen said there are about 5 1/2 acres of buildable area in the 15.5 acres, and because of that it was agreed only 4 or 5 homes could be built without a PUD. Darpel was concerned that the basements of the four homes nearest the water would be flooded if the water came back up. Raad stated that those homes would either have crawl spaces or be built up so they did not go below the 5' above floodplain. Darpel mentioned that because the homes will be all alike, they take on the appearance of a condominium, and he wondered if another developer across the street wanted to put up a series of condos all alike, would the P. C. have to approve. Colvin stated that this was done in order to have control over how they fit into the environment, and these homes are clustered on 4 1/2 acres total. They have an 800 s.f. footprint, they are 2-story, and will be practically invisible from the road. Milauckas said he remembered the neighbors thought 11 sites might be too dense for the area. Colvin suggested cutting the 1/2-acre lot of record out of the equation altogether for the decision tonight, promising they would oversee the construction on that lot to make it conform.

The commissioners went through the four standards in Sec. 8.16, and questions were posed about the project's harmony with the neighborhood, the possibility of changing the character of the neighborhood, and whether there would be adequate water for the project.

Shanahan made a motion to approve the 10 units, excluding the excepted parcel, on the 15.5 acres as shown on the plan. Rausch seconded. The commissioners reviewed the 13 items on the list in Sec. 8.02C for the preliminary plan approval. Olendorf objected to the idea of a community septic system as a precedent. When Milauckas called for a vote on the motion, the roll call vote found four commissioners, Milauckas, Rausch, Smith and Shanahan, voting yes and two, Darpel and Olendorf, voting no. The motion carried. Milauckas told the applicants they should work with the Zoning Administrator to produce the final site plan.

Meeting adjourned at 11:07 P.M. The next special meeting is June 16 at 7:00 P.M. The joint meeting with the township board could be June 18 at 4:00 P.M. The next regular meeting is June 23 at 7:00 P.M.

Betty A. White, Recording Secretary

Lissa Smith, Secretary

MOTIONS

1. Motion by Olendorf/Smith to approve minutes of April 28.
2. Motion by Olendorf/Rausch to approve minutes of May 12.
3. Motion by Rausch/Shanahan to table site plan of Saugatuck Christian Reformed Church until specific changes are made and certain additional information and letters of approval are made available.
4. Motion by Shanahan/Rausch to approve the preliminary plan for the Saugatuck Log Home Villages PUD for the 10 units on 15.5 acres, excluding the excepted lot of record.