

BLAIR TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES

July 15, 2020

A. CALL TO ORDER

The Blair Township Planning Commission meeting of July 15, 2020 was called to order by Chairman Heim at 6:00 pm.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

C. ROLL CALL

Present at roll call: Wagner, Heim, Fitzpatrick, Boeve, Lombard and Nickerson. Commissioner Clous was absent and excused.

Also present: Zoning Administrator Lisa Guererri, Recorder Susan Kase, Township Supervisor Nicole Blonshine. There were 10 attendees from the public.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Fitzpatrick, seconded by Boeve to approve the agenda. All Yeas. Motion carried.

F. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There was no conflict of interest stated.

G. MINUTES

Chairman Heim noted that the Zoom attendees at the June meeting were not included in the minutes. The sentence was edited to read, **“There were 2 attendees from the public and 2 attendees via Zoom.” Motion by Lombard, seconded by Wagner to approve the minutes of June 17, 2020. All Yeas. Motion carried.**

H. CORRESPONDENCE

Zoning Administrator, Lisa Guererri stated no correspondence was received.

I. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing Special Use/Site Plan Review # SU/SPR 20-07-01: Applicant is Edward Rose & Sons, who wish to establish a multi-family development with 10 buildings having a total of 300 units with an additional 6,536 SF Community Building and a 1,836 SF Maintenance Building on vacant property located at Rennie School Road, Traverse City Michigan 49685, west of US 31/37; Parcel # 28-02-005-002-30.

Chairman Heim opened the Public Hearing at 6:05 p.m.

Chairman Heim stated that the Special Use application will be reviewed against Section 22.04 Standards for Approval and included in these minutes. The applicant was represented by Kirsten Rimes, Site Plan Designer, Edward Rose & Sons, 6101 Newport Road, Kalamazoo MI 49003, 269/323-9484. As the Land Acquisition Manager for Edward Rose & Sons, Ms. Rimes provided some background about the family owned company, and their offices in Bloomfield Hills, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Flint, MI; and Kalamazoo, MI. They have focused development on multi-family housing since the 1960's. They conduct all phases of the development including land acquisition, construction, and the maintenance of the development when completed. They do not sell the properties to investors. Currently, they have 60,000 units in 15 states in the United States. This proposed development will be the first in the Traverse City area.

Commissioner Lombard inquired as to the total acreage of the proposed development. It is roughly 28.49 acres. He also asked about the number of garages per unit, and the number of parking spaces. The present plan shows 1.75 spaces per unit, which is based upon past experience with similar developments Ms. Rimes explained. At present, projected rents are \$900/month for a one-bedroom unit and \$1,200/month for a two-bedroom unit. These rates could change based on the market conditions at the time of completion. Projected finish date is approximately three years. Edward Rose & Sons will act as the General Contractor and hire local construction teams to sub out the construction work.

Chairman Heim reviewed the Standards for Approval, Multi Family developments, Section 10.04, included here. Site Development Standards, Section 18.32 Multi Family Residential Developments, Section 16.03 Exterior Lighting, Section 16.05 Greenbelt Buffers, Screening, Landscaping also included here were reviewed as well. Site Plan Review Procedures, Section 21.03, Standards for Approval were included in the discussion as follows.

The site plan shows one tree per 25 feet for the buffer, which meets the requirement. Ms. Rimes commented that the exterior lighting plans include three to four LED lighting fixtures per each parking lot. For the greenbelt buffers, screening and landscaping, there are 55 trees and 36 trees respectively, which meet the requirements. There are two ponds shown on the site plan. There was some discussion as to the number of trees required if the ponds' acreage is factored into the site plan would be excessive. Commissioner Nickerson commented that the number of trees as planned is adequate.

The screening of the trash dumpsters, including the concrete pads they rest on, meets the requirements. Commissioner Wagner asked about snow removal plans. Ms. Rimes stated that there will be areas to which the snow can be pushed on the property. She emphasized that they have experience with heavy winter snowfalls at other properties and are prepared for the same here.

Chairman Heim opened the hearing to public comment. First to speak was Chris Forsyth, Deputy Administrator, Grand Traverse County, 400 Boardman Ave, Suite 305, Traverse City MI 49684.

Mr. Forsyth stated that the land in question is currently owned by the Grand Traverse County Land Bank Authority and a purchase agreement is pending this Special Use/Site Plan Review approval. Mr. Forsyth expressed his support for the project. He is also involved in the expansion of Rennie School Road to ensure the development will have the infrastructure needed to support projected traffic increases.

James Alpers, 1860 N. West Silver Lake Road, Traverse City, MI 49685, addressed the Commissioners in representing his grandmother, who owns the 80 acres adjacent to this parcel in the application. Mr. Alpers questioned the existence of two ponds, as there is no natural source of water at this location besides storm runoff. Mr. Alpers inquired as to the specific varieties of trees to be planted. He also stated that the parking lots will not be able to handle the snow removal and still leave parking available to tenants during heavy snowfalls. He asked about the septic system being adequate to support 300 units. Zoning Administrator, Lisa Guerreri answered that an additional 500,000 gallons is available in accordance with DEQ standards at the south end of Blair Township where this development is sited. Mr. Alpers asked about construction waste spilling over and blowing out of dumpsters during the construction phase. Blair Township Supervisor, Nicole Blonshine responded that a phone call to the Blair Township offices will result in an immediate visit by the Zoning Ordinance Officer to rectify the problem.

Kyle Kinsey, 254 S East Silver Lake Road, Traverse City, MI 49685, asked if there was a left turn lane to be proposed on Rennie School Road. Mr. Kinsey commented that the traffic on Rennie School Road has increased in the past year. He is concerned about the traffic and the lack of lighting in the winter on the road. Mr. Forsyth was able to respond that the Grand Traverse County Road Commission is going to widen and expand Rennie School Road to accommodate the traffic. Mr. Forsyth was able to share with the meeting attendees that Stadium Drive will be improved and expanded as H&M Development has contracted with Molon Construction. They are simply awaiting financial support from others in the form of a reimbursement agreement. The Grand Traverse County Road Commission is ready to move forward once this step is complete.

Nicole Blonshine, speaking as a resident of Blair Township, expressed her enthusiasm for the project and the residential opportunities it will provide for new housing, as there is a shortage in Blair Township.

Chairman Heim closed the Public Hearing at 6:51 p.m.

Chairman Heim asked for commentary from the Commissioners. Commissioner Boeve stated that he was not in agreement that the number of trees required for this application should be reduced.

Chairman Heim read the Standards for Approval, 22.04, as listed below. In conclusion, the standards were met, although in question were the number of trees, the number of parking spaces, and the validity of the ponds as portrayed. No further comments were made about these issues, and Chairman Heim asked for a motion.

Motion by Fitzgerald, seconded by Lombard to recommend to the Blair Township Board of Trustees to **approve** Case # SU/SPR 20-07-01 as presented as it has met the Standards for Approval as required in Section 22.04, A-G of the Blair Township Zoning Ordinance. **Yes:** Heim, Lombard, Fitzpatrick, Boeve, Nickerson, Wagner. **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

Site Plan Review 20-07-01, Edward Rose & Sons, submitted the Site Plan Review application for the Multi Family development on Rennie School Road, Parcel # 28-02-005-002-30.

The Standards for Approval, 21.03, were reviewed in conjunction with the discussion of the checklist of required data. There was no discussion, as the Site Plan met the Standards for Approval, listed below.

Motion by Fitzgerald, seconded by Nickerson to approve Case #20-07-01 **as presented** because it has met the Standards for Approval as required in Section 21.03, 1 through 11 and is a use permitted in the Commercial Zoning District of the Blair Township Zoning Ordinance. **Yes:** Nickerson, Fitzgerald, Lombard, Heim, Wagner, Boeve. **No:** None. **Motion carried.**

K. Unfinished Business

1. Ordinance Amendments – Matt Jerome, Zoning Enforcement Officer for Blair Township, presented changes in wording to several ordinances to clarify the intent of the original ordinance as he is working to enforce compliance. Mr. Jerome presented each change with a detailed explanation. Chairman Heim asked that Commissioner Clous be present for any discussion and amendments, as he was a member of the committee that reviewed the amendments. The commissioners agreed to leave out the general site landscaping changes and send the rest of the amendments to Public Hearing. The Zoning Ordinances with proposed amendments are Section 16.04 Fences, 16.05 Greenbelt Buffers, Screening, Landscaping and 16.08 Recreational Vehicle Storage.

Motion by Boeve, seconded by Wagner to hold a Public Hearing for ordinance amendments as proposed except for general site landscaping. **All Yeas. Motion carried.**

L. Reports

- 1) Zoning Administrator - Lisa Guerreri stated that she has been busy.
- 2) Town Board Representative – Dennis Fitzpatrick stated that the Odom Building was approved, the variance requested by the Ukrainian Church was denied.
- 3) Zoning Board or Appeals – no meeting
- 4) Trails – nothing to report

M. Any Other Business

Election of Officers will be held at the August meeting

N. Public Input

David Dann, 158 South East Silver Lake Road, Traverse City MI 49684, wanted his feedback to be heard by the Commissioners about his experience with the Zoning Enforcement Officer. Mr. Dann expressed his disappointment as a new property owner in Blair Township that his original fence on his property was deemed nonconforming to code, and he was required to reduce the height of the fence. He purchased the property with the fence at a desirable height and wishes to have the fence in its original height as soon as possible for the continued enjoyment of his property. Matt Jerome, Zoning Enforcement Officer, was in agreement with Mr. Dann's plans, having observed the original fence and the replacement. The Commissioners stated that if he can wait for two Public Hearings in the next sixty days for the ordinance amendments to be accepted, and then a 30-day waiting period (90 days total), he should be able to return his fence to its original height. Mr. Dann agreed to wait.

O. Adjournment

Motion by Nickerson, seconded by Wagner to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. All Yeas.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kase, Recorder

Standards for Approval of Special Use Case 20-07-01; applicant has met these.

Section 22.04 Standards for Approval

1. The Planning Commission shall review the particular circumstances and facts related to each proposed special use application in terms of the following standards and requirements and shall make a determination as to whether the use proposed to be developed on the subject parcel meets the following standards and requirements:
 - a. Will be harmonious with and in accordance with the general objectives of the Master Plan.
 - b. Will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in harmony with the existing and intended character of the general vicinity and the natural environment so that the use will not change the essential character of that area.
 - c. Will not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future neighboring uses.
 - d. Will represent a substantial improvement to property in the immediate vicinity and to the community as a whole.
 - e. Will be served adequately by essential public services and facilities, such as highways, roads, drainage structures, police and fire protection, and refuse disposal; or, the persons or agencies responsible for the establishment of the proposed special use shall be able to provide adequately for such services.
 - f. Will not create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.
 - g. Will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any persons, property, or the general welfare by reason of excessive smoke, fumes, glare, noise, vibration or odors.

Standards for Approval for Site Plan Review Case 20-07-01; applicant has met these Standards.

21.03 Standards for Approval

A site plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission upon finding that the following conditions are met:

1. That the proposed use will not be detrimental to the adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood, including properties located in adjacent municipalities.
2. That there is a proper relationship between existing roads and highways and proposed deceleration lanes, service drives, ingress and egress drives, and parking areas to assure the safety and convenience of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
3. That buildings, structures, parking areas, utility areas, walls, and fences are so designed and located to minimize the adverse effects of such development on users of such development and occupants of adjacent properties.
4. That any adverse effects of the proposed development and activities which will impact adjoining occupants or owners shall be minimized by appropriate landscaping, fencing, or other screening.
5. That as many natural landscape features as possible are retained, particularly where they provide a barrier or buffer between the development and adjoining properties used for dissimilar purposes, and where they assist in preserving the general appearance of the neighborhood or help control soil erosion or the discharge of storm water.
6. The proposed development provides for the proper development of public utilities and infrastructure.
7. All buildings or groups of buildings are arranged to permit emergency vehicle access.
8. That the plan for soil erosion control, storm water discharge, wells, and on-site septic systems have been approved. Site plan approval may be conditioned upon providing evidence that the necessary permits have been applied for. A land use permit shall not be issued until the Zoning Administrator receives a copy of the required permit(s).
9. The Planning Commission may further require landscaping, fences, and walls in pursuit of these objectives and same shall be provided and maintained as a condition of the establishment and the continued maintenance of any use to which they are appurtenant.
10. For a narrow frontage which will require a single outlet, the Planning Commission may recommend that escrow money be placed with the Township so as to provide for a marginal service drive equal in length to the frontage of the property involved. Zoning compliance permits shall not be issued until the improvement is physically provided or monies having been deposited with the Township Clerk

- 11 Where the Township has adopted a specific area or neighborhood improvement or redevelopment plans and recommendations involving, but not limited to, public rights-of-way, utilities and storm drainage, parking facilities, building placement, access drives, floor space density allocations, building facade and architectural treatment, no site plan shall be approved unless there is general compliance with such Township plan.