

**Courtland Township
Planning Commission
March 27, 2007**

The Courtland Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman McConnon

Roll Call: Moeggenberg, McConnon, and Wood

Absent: Davis and McAvoy

Also Present: Township Attorney, Jim Scales, and Zoning Administrator, Frank Buckley.

Public Comment: none

Approval of the Agenda:

McConnon reviewed order of agenda and removed the Master Plan review from the meeting and tabled it to next month's meeting. With the change, Wood made a motion to approve the agenda, Moeggenberg seconded the motion. All ayes, the motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes:

Moeggenberg made a motion to approve the minutes of February 20, 2007 regular P.C. meeting, motion seconded by Wood. All ayes, motion carried.

Public Hearing:

Courtland Park Association, LLC – 5855 14 Mile Rd.
Rezone approx 127 acres from MHP to R-1, approx. 13 acres from MHP to R-2, and leaving remainder as MHP.

Representative Carolyn Riegler, Senior Vice-President of Landon Companies presented the site plan to the board. The current plan showed the break down of the various proposed rezoning areas.

McConnon opened the Public Hearing.

Doug Uzelac (Ritchie Ave.) stated 4 years ago, Landon came in to gouge the taxes and now they have a new proposal for R-1 and R-2, it would not have happened then and it shouldn't happen now.

Bill Reminga (Ritchie Ave.) agreed with Uzelac stating the scope of the project is ridiculous. It was bad before and it's bad now. He feels the remaining portion of the development should be kept at a 2 acre minimum. He doesn't feel it's the Township's responsibility to work around what didn't work before.

Jerry Reardon (Courtland Crossings) said he lives at the park and because they have public water and sewer he doesn't see a need to have a 2 acre minimum. What would be best for him and the Township would be to consider the new plan. Later in the meeting he added that the other day, the fire department came over to fill up their trucks and Landon doesn't charge them anything to use their hydrants.

Tom Stein (15 Mile Rd.) raised several questions to the Landon Companies representatives. The questions were as follows; how many lots have been approved by the DEQ, if the rezoning was approved will they need another approval from the DEQ, is there a time frame projection for the build out and who will take care of the current people who live there if the rezoning doesn't happen.

Mike Wierstra (Ritchie Ave.) questioned if Landon had ever performed a traffic impact study because he already finds it quite a challenge to turn out onto 14 Mile Rd. He added it is important to keep the lots at a 2 acre minimum as it is too large of an area to develop with small lot sizes.

Patrick Drobot (Townsquare Street) read a memo he had prepared in advance. In his memo he related to the financial impact on the residents who currently live at Courtland Crossings. He added he was driven there by the affordability and the Township needs to take a look at the human impact for those who are living there.

Tom Schaap (Schaap Woods Drive) said he is in favor of change, but not at the expense of the Township. It is not necessary for the Board to jeopardize the future of Courtland Township. He stated the community needs to stay within the guidelines of the Township's Ordinances. Just because Landon Companies made a mistake due to their own poor planning, they should have to at least stay within the boundaries of the ordinances.

Lewis Wislocki (14 Mile Rd.) questioned if the rezoning for R-1 and R-2 were to be approved, would all the homes be stick built and he wondered if it would have an effect on the density. He asked if it would even be conceivable for the development to be filled with manufactured homes versus stick built. He said he is much more in favor of stick built homes if it would keep the density lower and if that's the case, he is in favor of the rezoning.

Bill Cole (Ritchie Ave.) said he hears all the talk of having the 691 maximum mobile homes in the park, and after 4 years, hasn't seen them yet. He is opposed to any additional homes being built at all. If the rezoning is done, they should have to meet set back requirements as well as buffer zone requirements.

Tony Owen (Kinsley) stated if the property could be rezoned and they were to build stick built homes it would be a benefit to the economy. The stick built homes are more of a permanent house and there would be a benefit of bringing in more jobs to the area even if it were just for the construction of the homes.

Henry Greeb (11 Mile Rd.) said the stick built homes would probably be considered low income housing and the difference between the 691 homes down to 551 homes wouldn't be that big of a difference on the traffic. He added a lot of homes in the area are now built on lots that are less than a 2 acre parcel. There have been a lot of variations on the Ordinances and sometimes provisions need to be made by the Township, and that is the reason we hold these meetings.

John Wood (Russell Rd.) stated the Landon has an ethical obligation to current residents who live at Courtland Crossings. He agrees he would like to see the plans for all the homes to be downsized and he said the open space doesn't look all that big. He feels the 2 acre minimum should remain, taking the density bonus into account. He also would like to see the traffic impact looked at more closely with the different class of residents living there. There will probably be more vehicles per household than with only manufactured homes. He feels a larger surface area for water run off should be made available if the homes are to be stick built. He said as for the legal and contractual agreements that are in place at this time Landon Companies should be held accountable.

McConnon read 2 memos that were submitted by residents to the Planning Commission. Both of the memos, (in file) are not in favor of the rezoning.

Representative Jason Wagner of Landon Companies stated they have presented more of a detailed plan than what is normally required at this time. He replied to all of the questions starting with regards to the water run off, traffic impact, and the DEQ claiming they will all need to be either modified or have new permits granted. That would apply to any changes that would occur if the rezoning were to be approved. As for the sale of homes on the property, he can't be sure how well they would sell. He stated they are not walking away from a mistake but they are simply trying to fix and improve it. When the MHP was first developed traffic was an issue and it is still an issue today. As for the time frame for a build out, he can't predict any time frame at this time.

McConnon closed the Public Hearing.

Wood questioned Jason Wagner and Frank Buckley if they could give the Township a number of homes in R-1, in comparison to R-R and the 100% bonus density.

Attorney Scales stated in R-1 it is not a requirement that all homes be stick built. He also said he was not sure if traffic studies were performed before, but if they were done they will have to be revisited again and the DEQ permits will need to be updated based on the types of homes to be built. Mr. Scales recommended to the Planning Commission that a main factor at this time would be for them to complete the update of the Master Plan, the Township Board is considering to hire a planner to assist them with this rezoning project and finally have Prein and Newhof take a look at the capacity and design of the current sewer system separately.

Member Wood made a motion to table tonight's rezoning of Courtland Crossing so that Landon Companies and Frank Buckley could present an equation for the differences in the number of homes between the R-R with bonuses and the R-1, and also to allow Landon time to submit whatever additional materials they wanted to submit, such as, an updated traffic study, review the DEQ requirements, give Township Engineers an opportunity to review the current sewer treatment capacities and also give both Members Davis and McAvoy time to review tonight's meeting's information. Moeggenberg seconded motion. All ayes, motion carried.

Zoning Administrator Report:

Frank Buckley reported he received a site plan review (Whittal and Young Ave.) for an Act 177 Cluster development, which would be a "Preliminary Site Plan Review" at next month's P.C. Meeting. He also received an e-mail from Cannon Township regarding a Public Hearing for approval of a Special Land Use for Mineral Excavation from a P.U.D. on the corner of Myers Lake and Belding Road. The excavation was approved by Cannon Township with hourly restrictions and removal of soil to be completed by 10/31/07. He reported to the P.C. John M. O'Roarke has accepted the position of Zoning Enforcer. He also presented a copy of a page from Algoma Township's noise ordinance and asked both Attorney Scales and the P.C. to look at item (k) and give this issue some consideration to add to our ordinance.

Township Attorney Report:

Attorney Jim Scales reported the Rockford Court of Appeals denied to Grant a request for an appeal on behalf of Dr. Ron Riebschleger.

Township Board Representative Report:

It was reported that the Township Board denied approval of the Hidden Shores ski lake.

Zoning Board of Appeals Report:

No report.

Adjournment:

Moeggenberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Wood seconded the motion. All ayes, the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kym Steffes,
Recording Secretary