

Courtland Township Planning Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

The regular meeting of the Courtland Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Rock Wood at 7:00 PM at the Courtland Township Hall. Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Roll Call:** Members Rock Wood, Katy Nelson, Mary Ann Andersen, Al Rau, and Andy Moore were all present.
2. **Also attending:** Colleen Brown, Zoning Administrator, and Jim Scales, Township Attorney, and about 15 residents.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Rau, supported by Nelson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried via voice vote with all members voting yes.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Andersen, supported by Nelson, to approve the minutes from the September 17, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion carried via voice vote with all members voting yes.
5. **Public Comments for items not on the agenda:** None
6. **New Business**

- A. **Public Hearing Coffman Development Site Plan/Special Land Use:** Application was for a special land use and site plan approval for self-storage units located at 6785 10 Mile Road. Nate Coffman was present, representing Coffman Development. They have owned the property for 14 years and feel it is a good time to develop. They wanted something that did not require sewer services, as it is too costly to extend. Three buildings are proposed containing a total of 71 units. They would not generate much traffic. Indoor storage is proposed; no outdoor storage or RV storage would be permitted.

Chairman Wood opened the public hearing.

Scott Kenyon, 8430 Pleasant Meadows (Unit 2 of Rockridge East): Questioned the hours of operation. He was also very concerned about flooding and stormwater runoff. The area has standing water in it during the wet seasons and does not want this development to make the problem worse. He provided pictures of the standing water issue.

Sam Southwick, 8745 Pleasant Meadows, Rockridge East Condo Association Treasurer: He is also concerned about drainage. They've had to spend a \$2,500 on culverts over the last few years to handle flooding and stormwater issues on the development. Their common area is mostly wetland. They are not opposed to the development but don't want to exacerbate the water problems.

Adam Feenstra from Feenstra Associates (applicant's engineer). Adam explained that the project has a detention pond on site designed to handle a 25-year event. It is designed to Kent County Drain Commissioner standards and will accommodate stormwater from the site and have a "net zero" effect on the overall area.

Chris Van Norwick, 8780 Pleasant Meadows. Felt that the applicant would be diverting water to the adjacent properties in Rockridge East and could cause additional problems. Very concerned about drainage and if the applicant can complete the improvements without encroaching on to neighboring properties, as the site plan shows earthwork right up to the property line. He is also concerned about the lot size, as it is only 1.4 acres in area, and felt that it was too small for this type of use.

Roger Grant, 8535 Myers Lake. Concerned that the development would harm the value of everything around it. He does not think there is enough room and this is not an appropriate place for it.

Steve Vree, 8450 Pleasant Meadows Dr. Also concerned about drainage. Thinks that a wetland study should be done. He indicated that there are Green Ash trees on the property which are indicative of wetland areas. He is concerned with the traffic flow for that corner that is already busy now. Feenstra noted that a wetland delineation has not been completed for this site. Vree also questioned the status of monitoring wells at the gas station and if those were still in place.

Nate Coffman responded to concerns: The approach off 10 Mile will meet KCRC standards. He is proposing this as a 24/7 self-serve storage development. Lighting would be motion activated. He is proposing residential-style building with vinyl building with asphalt shingles so it's compatible with surrounding homes.

Feenstra stated that there would be some evergreens along the north side of the building, and the west side, to provide a buffer along the length of the buildings. The detention basin would be about 4' deep on the north side of the site. Ground around the basin would be raised, land would not be dug down into the ground. It is designed to empty every 24 hours.

Wood closed the public hearing. Wood asked Coffman if they would be willing to build a fence on the west side of the property. They have proposed chain link but are open to a white vinyl fence. Commissioners debated on what's appropriate. Andersen and Nelson don't like the look of white vinyl, felt something more natural would be appropriate.

Andersen wanted to know what the buildings would look like and asked about door locations. Coffman stated that for building 1, doors would be on the north side only. Building 2 they'd be on all sides, building 3 it would be on the south side only. Trees on the north side would be 5-6 feet tall.

Moore wasn't yet convinced that it was a good idea, given the nature of the site and the size of the property. He didn't feel like it was the applicant's responsibility to deal with the stormwater that comes off the street but recognized the concerns from neighbors. The

stormwater is a problem for neighbors now, and will be a problem for them later too, regardless of this development.

Nelson asked about lighting and fire access. The fire chief hasn't looked at it yet but should.

Attorney Scales reviewed his report. The specific special land use standards for outdoor storage require 2 acres, so this development does not meet that standard. The ordinance would need to be amended if this is to be approved, and the zoning amendment could be a condition of approval of the special land use. Scales noted that it seems to meet the other special land use requirements. This property has been zoned commercial for over 40 years or so.

Wood reviewed the options. He shared concerns about the stormwater issues. He felt that more study was necessary and wants the condo association, applicant, and road commission to get together and figure out a way to deal with it.

Andersen agreed, and felt that there are a lot of less desirable things that could go on the property compared to storage units.

Moore is somewhat divided, he doesn't want to change the special land use standard in the zoning ordinance for just one property, but thinks that storage units are not particularly objectionable considering that it is a commercial property and a lot of uses could go there that would be more intrusive than storage.

Nelson generally agreed but felt that more information was needed.

Wood stated that there were three options: table and ask for more information, deny because it doesn't meet the minimum parcel size, or approve with a change to the ordinance made to accommodate it. Wood stated that the Commission needs to decide on the lot area issue first.

Motion by Moore to recommend denial of the site plan and special land use to the Township Board because it does not meet the 2-acre minimum lot area requirement of the zoning ordinance. The motion was supported by Rau. After lengthy deliberation on the motion, the motion failed 3-2 via roll call vote, with Rau and Moore voting yes, and Wood, Andersen, and Nelson voting no.

After further discussion, there was a general consensus that this project should not move forward until more information is provided and further study is provided if the two acre minimum lot size for this type of special land use is necessary in comparison with other governmental entities in the area. They do not want to set a precedent for one parcel. Members noted the applicant has not created the flooding issue that exists now. If they could all work together to make progress for everyone concerned would be the goal.

Motion by Nelson to table with the application until January to allow for (1) review from fire chief, (2) additional information from the township engineer regarding drainage on the site and in the vicinity generally. The Township Engineer is to work with the applicant, and Condo Association together to attempt to find some type of solution for the flooding

issue to benefit all concerned (3) more information from the applicant regarding building renderings, landscaping, lighting, and the gas station monitoring wells (4) and because it does not meet the two acre minimum lot size. The motion was supported by Andersen and carried via voice vote with all members voting yes.

Moore suggested that Scales research self-storage and come back with suggestions as to what is an appropriate area for self-storage facilities. Commissioners agreed that this was a good idea. Scales will report back at the January meeting.

7. **Old Business: Master Plan Discussion.** Brown provided an update. The Board approved the Williams & Works sewer study. One of our Township Board members is a civil engineer and wanted to be involved in the sewer study, too, and the Board is agreeable to that. The Board is dealing with it now and the Planning Commission is awaiting more information.
8. **Zoning Administrator Report.** Planning Commissioners will have a full agenda for January, including the storage units, wedding barns, swimming pool fences.
9. **Township Attorney Report.** Nothing to report.
10. **Township Board Representative Report.** Andersen provided a brief update. There is new playground equipment. The Township is considering paving the Township Park's trail, but it's expensive.
11. **ZBA Report.** Nothing to report.
12. **Motion to adjourn by Andersen, supported by Rau, at 8:32 PM.** Motion was approved via voice vote with all members voting yes.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Moore, Secretary