

HARTLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 23, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Fox called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:**
3. **Roll Call and Recognition of Visitors:**
Present – Commissioners Fox, McMullen, Mitchell, Murphy
Absent – Commissioners Grissim, LaRose, Voight
5. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**
 - a. **Planning Commission Minutes of June 24, 2021**
A Motion to approve the June 24, 2021 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes was made by Commissioner Mitchell and seconded by Commissioner Murphy. Motion carried unanimously.
6. **Call to Public:**
None
7. **Old and New Business:**
 - a. **Site Plan #21-012 Hartland Crossing Planned Development (PD) Concept Plan** – Request for Concept Review of a mixed use planned development with commercial and residential uses, known as Hartland Crossing.

Director Langer described the location of the project and stated the following:
 - Proposed Planned Development Concept Review.
 - Ten acres to the north could be commercial with multi-family residential use in the southern 20 acres.
 - Possibility of another lesser commercial use in the southern portion.
 - Reviewed at the August 12, 2021 Planning Commission meeting where the density was discussed; original submittal did not include the number of units being requested.
 - Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation allows up to four units per acre with a bonus density of 40% or 168 units.
 - The Applicants indicated they are looking at 15 units per acre to support this project on the southern 20-acre portion only; approximately 300 units.
 - Planning Commission desired to see examples of other developments the Applicant has constructed with this density and asked for that information to be provided.
 - The Applicant has provided the density information and some additional details about amenities.

The Applicants introduced themselves: Chris Kojaian and Tony Antone of Kojaian Management Corporation; and Mark Szerlag of Thomas Duke Company. The Applicant confirmed the Planning Director's summary of the plan and added some of the examples of the density they are proposing, 15 dwelling units per acre, are not projects they were involved in but do show a visual representation of what they are proposing or companies that have constructed similar developments. He continued many developers are looking for a site this size; it is the sweet spot for this type of development. Also stated they are open to another lesser

commercial use to the south which could be an amenity such as a day care or some other destination business that would not need the M-59 frontage.

Director Langer presented some of the illustrated examples of this level of density reminding the Planning Commission these are not the exact layouts being requested; the actual project may look different.

The Planning Commission had the following comments:

- Same as what was proposed in August with the addition of some possible amenities.
- Higher density than any other project in Hartland to date.
- Housing study recommended higher density developments near existing utilities and access, which fits this site. A project like this belongs in this location if it belongs anywhere in the Township.
- Bonus density is 40%; this proposal is approximately 150% over the existing density allowed. Concerned about setting a precedent allowing this density here.
- Density proposed is not unreasonable, it is just different for Hartland.
- One recognizable benefit is a second access to the Charyl Stockwell Academy which is something that is needed but cannot see other recognizable benefits.
- Unsure how to move forward to allow the requested density; amend the Ordinance or something else.
- Can find nothing wrong with the photo examples of the density request; that type of density is not offensive, it is just not something Hartland is used to.
- Density should be where infrastructure is. There is no more infrastructure possible in Hartland today than this location.
- The Township needs a variety of housing which will support the commercial uses like restaurants and stores residents say they want.
- Good planning is to have more intense development and uses near this very location; it is inevitable.
- Consultants say the market has changed; this development is providing a product that Hartland currently does not offer and the market demands.
- Must think of the whole Township. Residents state they want more amenities, then more residents are needed, and this is the location for such a development.
- This development will look better in 20 years than a less intense product.
- Development of this kind will also draw new business to the area.

The Applicant stated they appreciate the comments; these are things they have thought about as well. With regard to setting a precedent; there is already an option for 40% bonus density, there could be an option for a “super bonus” if desired. There are clearly benefits that can be identified for this location that would not be present in other proposals at another location; this is a unique, higher-end project. A community could not support more than one or two developments of this kind. Believes this will be one of those really special corners that the Township will be proud of for years to come.

Chair Fox stated he believes there is a way forward, whether it is the “super bonus”, or a specific area designated around the M-59/US 23 interchange for more intense development. He believes it is the number, the 15 units per acre, that is tripping us up; should think about it for what it is and what it could do for the existing and future business community.

Commissioner Murphy stated the following:

- Rooftops help drive commercial development.
- Still dealing with the pandemic.

- If it belongs anywhere, it belongs here.
- Traffic is a consideration.
- Not an easy position to be in; trying to consider all aspects.
- This is a walkable development opportunity.
- Could be a springboard project for Hartland Township; something we need to go forward that will bring the desired development.
- It is new but maybe it is what we need here.

Chair Fox stated he supports this concept if the Applicant comes back with the right project, if they decide to come back. The density is not an issue.

The Applicant stated the following:

- Understand this is the Conceptual phase and there are many more steps at two different governing bodies.
- Township Board may not support it at all, but if they do, then they will be back with more detailed plans.
- The density is the gating issue; they are interested in bringing this high-end product to Hartland.
- If all are on the same page, much more will be presented at the Preliminary stage.

Commissioner Mitchell stated the following:

- Most people look at rooftops and not architecture, but we want excellent design. To get 15 units per acre, the design must look exceptional to gain his approval.
- He is still apprehensive.

Director Langer shared that Commissioner Grissim sent an email which stated she too has concerns about the density.

b. Initiate Ordinance Amendment to Section 4.6 (Ponds)

Director Langer stated the following:

- Township received a complaint regarding the construction of a pond without the proper permits.
- The current process involves a costly Site Plan Review application and a requirement to appear before the Planning Commission.
- Admin committee suggested applications for a pond could be reviewed and approved by staff rather than the Planning Commission which requires a Zoning Amendment.
- Zoning Amendments must be initiated by either the Planning Commission or the Township Board.

Chair Fox stated in all of his years on the Planning Commission he can remember one pond, possibly two, that has been approved by the Planning Commission. He suggested surrounding communities pond requirements be examined. He thinks staff could easily handle this.

Commissioner Mitchell concurred.

Chair Fox suggested maybe we could have the Township Engineer, HRC, review the standards as this issue has not been reviewed for many years.

Commissioner Murphy also agreed; staff is capable of reviewing and approving these applications.

Chair Fox stated they should have a Land Use Permit to ensure the slope is safe and the other site elements are taken into consideration such as wetlands, drainage, and septic systems.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the difference in approval times between being heard at the Planning Commission or a staff approval.

Commissioner McMullen agreed stating she thinks it would be appropriate on properties that are larger than two acres.

Director Langer stated if one is adding a pond in a wetland area, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) would be involved. It can get tricky as the pond could potentially become part of a regulated wetland network at some point and the property owners might not be able to fill it in or change it without getting a permit from EGLE formerly known as the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

**Commissioner Mitchell offered the following Motion:
Move to initiate an Ordinance Amendment to Section 4.6 of Zoning Ordinance.
Seconded by Commissioner McMullen. Motion carried unanimously.**

9. Planner's Report:

Director Langer stated the Shops at Waldenwoods has an opportunity for another tenant and has requested to modify the development entry sign. The sign was approved as part of the Planned Development (PD). Director Langer stated as long as they maintain the same dimensions, he will allow them to modify or change the inside portion which is the part of the monument sign they want to modify. He wanted to share with the Planning Commission that he is working with the applicant rather than requiring they modify the PD Agreement, which is much longer and more costly process.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the recent history of the sign and the PD modification.

Director Langer stated they will be required to provide a before and after representation of the sign showing no change in the dimensions of the overall sign.

10. Committee Reports:

None

11. Adjournment:

A Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner McMullen. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:03 p.m.

Submitted by,



**Keith Voight,
Planning Commission Secretary**