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**SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
MAY 20, 2020 – REGULAR MEETING**

PRESENT: Harry Dyck, Jack Ketchum, Greg Latsch, Crystal Morgan, Jerry Rabideau,  
David Rumpel, Russ Tiles  
ABSENT: None  
PARTICIPANTS: Lukas Hill, Township Community Development Director  
Ron Bultje, Township Attorney

*Pursuant to Executive Order No. 2020 – 15, the Township of Spring Lake Planning Commission conducted its business via conference call to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Members of the public were encouraged to dial in to this meeting. Members of the public were not required to register or otherwise provide information to attend.*

**A. Call to Order**

Rumpel called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

Ketchum made a motion, support by Latsch, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Approval of Minutes**

Latsch made a motion, support by Ketchum, to adopt the Planning Commission February 19, 2020 regular meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Public Comments**

A time for public comment was provided. No comments were offered.

**E. Wildwood Springs PUD Amendment – Preliminary Discussion**

David Bos presented the request for input from the Planning Commission regarding an amendment to the existing Wildwood Springs PUD. A preliminary drawing illustrating the change from commercial to residential was presented. The request involves two Wildwood Springs parcels and one additional parcel totaling about 4.1 acres. The parcels in Wildwood Springs are designated for commercial purposes in the existing PUD. There has been no interest from commercial entities since

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the original PUD was developed. Bos stated he had a meeting with the Wildwood Springs Property Owners Association and they preferred the site be used for residential rather than commercial. He also had a discussion with the Township.

The proposed residential area will be free-standing single family site condominiums. This will be a small pocket neighborhood of 1400 to 1700 square foot single story homes, with walkout or view out basements depending on the grade. All homes will have 2-stall garages and 4-season porches.

As part of the development, Bos will purchase part of parcel 09-100-051. The current owner will retain the rest of the parcel and use it to construct a single-family home. Bos will provide sewer to this home, and can provide sewer to the parcels to the east (09-100-038, 09-100-039) when additional adult foster care buildings are constructed.

Access to the homes will be provided using existing curb cuts on Wildwood Springs Parkway. To keep the homes on the south parcel as far from the Parkway as possible there will be a one-way road in front of the homes, and a landscape berm will be installed along the parkway.

Bos stated that he was looking for feedback from the Planning Commission before moving forward with detailed design. The report from the wetland consultant indicated there are no wetlands involved in this development.

Hill stated that because of the nature of the PUD amendment, the amendment must go through the entire PUD process. This meeting is an informal discussion. There will be formal reviews with both the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees.

Rabideau asked if there were sewer extension issues. Bos stated that it would be a gravity system, and that the capacity was more than sufficient. There is enough capacity to service the adult foster care buildings to the east so that 174<sup>th</sup> Ave does not need to be dug up for lateral installation.

Ketchum asked if this would be a new neighborhood under the Wildwood Springs Property Owners Association. Bos stated that it would be a new neighborhood.

Latsch stated that he believed that the best use for the property is residential, and that it is not a viable commercial node. In principle he approves of this direction for the property.

Rumpel asked if this would be a site condominium. Bos stated that it would either be a site condominium or a true condominium, but most likely a site condominium. It will not be a platted neighborhood of single family residences.

Marc Morin stated he is a resident of Wildwood Springs, and is president of the Wildwood Springs Property Owners Association. He thanked David Bos for sharing the plans. The consensus of all the Wildwood Springs Association boards is that they prefer not to have commercial development as originally planned. Morin asked Bos what the market is for this type of residence. Bos stated that they receive calls every seven to ten days asking for this sort of housing, and the calls haven't slowed due to the COVID shutdown.

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Ketchum asked if there would be any issues with the chiming clock at the entrance to Wildwood Springs. Bos stated he believes that the clock will draw people, and that it will fit nicely with the planned style for the houses.

Ketchum stated that Unit 9 would need a deed restriction for no deck or patio due to the wetland setback for the pond. He also asked about auxiliary parking, snow removal, universal design, landscaping plans and home elevations.

Bos stated that auxiliary parking can be added at the stubs at the ends of the streets, which should be convenient for all units. No roadside fences are planned, so snow removal should not be a problem. There will be landscape berms near units 10, 17 and 9, which are not illustrated on the preliminary plan. Bos stated that the site appears level, but it already has grade changes, so the houses do not need to be raised for the basements.

Ketchum asked about existing Wildwood Springs amenities and how the addition of 17 additional units will affect the amenities, and whether Bos had considered adding fishing docks or other amenities in the new neighborhood. Bos stated he does not want a lot of activity on the edges of the ponds, but will look to add additional amenities like benches in the new neighborhood. Bos stated that the existing amenities were designed for all of Wildwood Springs, and that this neighborhood completes the development.

Karen Young, Wildwood Springs resident, asked if the view-out basements would have level ground around the entire house. Bos stated that the grade will probably be a bit lower in the rear to allow for egress windows.

John North stated that he lives in the Cottages at Wildwood Springs and will look across the pond at the development. He stated that the development appeared quite dense and out of character for Wildwood Springs Parkway.

Larry Austin stated he was president of the Parsons Walk Association. He asked if the new neighborhood will share in the maintenance of the pond, and what the price point for the units will be. Bos stated that he believed that the new neighborhood would be added to the drain districts for both ponds. The price point is preliminary due to lumber price fluctuations, but he anticipates the units will run between \$300,000 and \$450,000.

Morgan stated that she is interested in seeing detailed information on connectivity between this neighborhood and the rest of Wildwood Springs.

Bos stated that he would like the public hearing on the PUD amendment at the June Planning Commission meeting. Hill stated that hearings are not typically scheduled this soon, and the timeline is short for internal reviews.

Bultje stated that this is an amendment, and that it should not be evaluated as a stand-alone development. The whole development will need to be considered as related to the PUD criteria.

Commissioners stated that they would like to see detailed plans before scheduling the public hearing.

**F. Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendment discussion for part of 14680 Apple Drive**

Gary Smith presented the request. The parcel at 14680 Apple Drive is being split, and he would like to use the part of the property that is being split off for multi-family housing rather than commercial uses. The parcel will be about 4 acres. The plan is to make townhome-style residences. Smith would like to know if Commissioners believe this plan is an appropriate fit for the area.

Hill reviewed the current master plan for the area. This plan would need a master plan amendment and a zoning map amendment to make it high density residential. Hill stated that high density residential is a good buffer for different uses. The site is currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial.

Consensus of the Commissioners is that this is an appropriate use for the area, and that Smith can move forward with his plans.

Hill stated that it takes time to amend the master plan, and he will discuss the best way to proceed with Smith.

**G. Minimum Lot Size Requirement in R-1 Zoning – Discussion**

Aleksander Kihnke and Denny Dryer presented their request to change the minimum lot size requirement for houses in R-1 on septic systems. They stated that in 2010 the Zoning Ordinance was changed from 12000 square feet to one acre when a house in R-1 is on a septic system rather than on the sewer system. They are looking at 18841 North Fruitport Road and would like to develop five single-family site condominium units on a 3-acre parcel.

Dryer stated that many other communities in northwest Ottawa County, including Fruitport, Ferrysburg and Grand Haven Township, only require 15000 square foot lots for houses on septic systems, and he would like Spring Lake Township to change their requirements. He stated that there are many areas in the Township where sewer isn't available, and there can be three times as many units on the smaller lots, which would help the tax base.

Hill stated that this would require an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance text. In 2010 the county was supportive of the 1-acre lot size, and Hill received an email from Matthew Allen, Environmental Health Supervisor for the Ottawa County Health Department supporting the current lot size restrictions.

Hill stated that the Township requires dense development to be connected to the sewer system. This requested change would affect all areas zoned R-1, which includes most of the property around Spring Lake. The ordinance is working the way it was intended to work. If Commissioners are interested in making this change there is a need to develop good information.

Dryer stated that it's impossible to develop affordable housing if one acre is required. He stated that 15000 square feet are sufficient for both a main septic system and for a backup location, because the area has a lot of sand.

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Bultje stated that the letter received from Kihnke references Legacy Point. Bultje stated that there is a dry sewer line in that development, and they have already agreed to be part of a sewer special assessment district. The one-acre requirement was based on a specific study, and any change would have to be very carefully thought out. The 2010 decision was made to protect groundwater and Spring Lake, and changing the minimum lot size would require a change in Township policy.

Kihnke stated he would like access to any information used to make the 2010 decision. He stated that an acre is a lot of land, and the lots across the street from his lot are smaller than an acre and have septic systems.

Rabideau stated that the lot in question is very close to Spring Lake. If there is a sewer run in the area it should be considered. Kihnke stated that his engineer calculated it would cost \$1.1 million to extend the sewer from Greenwood Court to Legacy Point. The lot in question can be developed with septic systems if they only have three lots. However, they prefer more density with five lots.

Dryer stated that he sent copies of the water and sewer maps for the Township for Commissioners to consider.

Kim Hammond, representing the Legacy Point Association and eight additional neighbors, stated she sent an email to Hill. Hill stated he forwarded the email to Commissioners. Hammond stated that she would like to address some of the comments made. The neighbors do not want dense development in R-1, which was designated for less-dense development. She stated that when the Legacy Point PUD was developed, the plan was that any development beyond Greenwood Court would be on an extended sewer to protect Spring Lake. The neighborhood does not want more traffic, and all development after 2010 followed the 1-acre restriction.

Hill stated that this change has not been discussed with the Board of Trustees. The intent of the ordinance would be to get the sewer connected from Greenwood Court. Also, any zoning ordinance changes since 2010 have been more restrictive on which developments require sewer connections.

Hammond asked about access to the properties. Kihnke stated that the Legacy Point private road is built over his right of way, so he does have access to the lot.

Rabideau stated that he will bring this issue up at the next Board of Trustees meeting and see what direction they want the Planning Commission to take.

#### **H. Master Plan – Five Year Review Discussion**

Hill stated that the Township is engaged in the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Community process, to look at properties that are redevelopment ready. There are not many parcels in the Township that fit, but there are some opportunities and funding that the Township wants to pursue. MEDC would like the Township to review the entire Master Plan, and has made some suggestions for changes. The Board of Trustees is likely to engage a consultant to help with the process. The entire process will take six to eight months, and may start in August.

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**I. Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

1. Self-Storage Facility

Hill stated that Commissioners have a draft ordinance for review. The major changes are related to outdoor storage with screening and aisle width. A public hearing on the ordinance will need to be scheduled when commissioners are satisfied with the draft.

Morgan asked about subsection H, and whether common area includes outdoor storage area. Bultje stated there is no definition for common area, and he would interpret it as including the outdoor storage area. However, he will reword subsection H to read “common areas including outdoor storage” to make it clearer.

Motion by Ketchum, support by Morgan, to schedule the public hearing at the next available Planning Commission meeting, with the change in the ordinance as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

**H. Commissioner Comments**

1. Township Board: The Board is dealing with a lot of water issues, including no-wake zones.
2. ZBA: There was an accessory building authorization and variance request for a lot on Hardwood Dr. The authorization was approved, but the variance for an accessory building larger than that allowed by the authorization process was denied.
3. Community Development Director: No report.

**I. Adjournment**

Rumpel moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:16pm. Ketchum seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Ketchum, Secretary  
Planning Commission