

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
PLANNING COMMISSION
September 14, 2022
MINUTES**

Chairperson Kelley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Jahr, Cullin, Barr, Grant, Budd and Kelley.

Excused: Atchinson.

Staff: Director Power and Secretary Harman.

Planning Representatives: None.

Applicant(s) in Attendance: None.

Audience: One (1) and One (1) remote viewer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion Jahr, Cullin second to approve the agenda of September 14, 2022 as presented. **Motion Carried.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion Budd, Jahr second to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 24, 2022 as presented. **Motion Carried.**

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM #1: ZONING ORDINANCE DISCUSSION: SIDE ENTRY GARAGE AND BUILDING SEPARATION REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

TITLE: THE PLANNING COMMISSION IS REQUESTED TO DISCUSS ZONING REQUIREMENTS FOR MINIMUM PERCENTAGE OF SIDE ENTRY GARAGES AND BUILDING SEPARATION IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

Director Power gave the presentation. The Planning Commission at their last two (2) meetings had a lot of discussion on building separation standards and side entry garages. Director Power felt it was a good idea to go back and revisit the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance discussion. Director Power displayed a PowerPoint presentation that presented the drivers of the discussion and study including the following: development and demographic trends, the 2020 Master Plan, specific development projects, specific ordinance considerations, specific ordinance changes, decision points and the next steps.

Commissioners had the following questions and comments:

- Commissioner inquired if the modifications to Section 6.207 Design are for PRD's only and the developer would need to submit a full plan? Director Power confirmed, yes any existing PRD or any plot of land that could be a PRD in the future and a full plan would need to be submitted.
- The idea is to give the Planning Commission the most amount of leeway possible to allow them to present a plan and to decide whether or not it would fit that area in context and the developer would need to show the standards? Director Power informed that to make

an exception to the rule, they would need to meet the criteria. Commissioner likes the idea of giving developers more options, but has trouble with lower than 20 feet of separation. Concerned with trying to fit it in, in multiple locations. Director Power informed that with respect to existing PRD's that are not fully built out yet, there is no case where an existing approved PRD is adding lots. This ordinance if there was ever a change in the models allows the applicant flexibility on size of the units, but there is no request for additional units. The discussion is to remove the 20 feet as a standard to allow for flexibility.

- The intent is that the density won't change but open space may increase? Director Power confirmed, yes there are no proposed changes to the gross density or requirements of the PRD, with units being more clustered, it may add more open space elsewhere.
- In Section 6.203 modification is it possible to add the setback modification as something that can be applied for? Director Power informed there is a specific clause in 6.207 (b)(3) in the existing ordinance that says, notwithstanding other grounds for flexibility, it essentially rules out that you can consider flexibility for the building separation.
- The goals for doing this are attainable housing, senior housing and smaller sizing options. Commissioner is not convinced that the 10 foot separation is something that we want and inquired if we are aware of any development opportunities that we've missed because of this? Director Power informed no we have not, but we may miss in the future and we do have one application in review. Commissioner inquired if we know the size of the houses? Director Power informed that the houses are 38-40 foot homes which are not exceptionally large or small, he can reach out to the developer to see if some conceptual plans can be shared for this discussion. On that project specifically the plans called for attached multifamily commercial, unique to that project site.
- If we have a density situation requirement, by decreasing the lot, what advantage does this give the developer when they're going to use the same amount of land to put into a park or community type application in the PRD? Director Power informed that is the density bonus that you get by having a smaller lot or reduced setback, it triggers other requirements for open space, perimeter buffer and other aspects within the PRD. Commissioner inquired what advantage it gives the developer. Director Power informed that is a good question for individual developers.
- If reducing the separation space between, we are almost creating a city type situation. People want the rural feel that requires spacing between the homes.
- Seniors don't want 2-story homes, Pulte builds 2-story, 2,000 square foot homes and that's not what the older population is looking for.
- Commissioner has no problem giving developers leniency. Drove through Cherry Hill Village, homes looked packed together, they all look the same other than the color.
- Commissioner would like to see consistency after the board shifts (every 4 years). Likes the tools and options. The separation really causes problems with trying to maintain the overall feel of what we are trying to do. Would like it if there was a way to create a little bit of flexibility, but not on everything.
- Commissioner inquired where do we go from here with the 20 foot separation, what is the next step? Director Power informed that the Planning Commission can have staff do more research and/or wait until the full Commission is available to move forward.

- Commissioner inquired if we do anything what happens to Victoria Estates? Director Power informed that the project already has a consent judgment allowing 5 feet to the lot line and 10 foot separation between buildings.
- Commissioner inquired if we are able to get a sketch from the developer that is coming in and also advised that Commissioner Atchinson would like to have discussion on this item as well. There are not a lot of areas where these are going in, this would give us a quick look at what it might look like.
- What is the minimum acreage for a PRD? Director Power informed the minimum acreage for a PRD is forty (40) acres.
- Have to worry about the health, welfare and safety, there is a wisdom to the 20 foot separation, concerned about leaving it. The general gist of the Planning Commission it seems, is that the 10 foot separation is too low and a lot of justification is needed to see that distance as acceptable. Undecided on the separation, can see both sides.
- Would be nice to have the flexibility to make the decision on separation. Leave it at 20 feet, but provide for special circumstances, create exceptions. Proximity, maybe one side, not both. Might make sense to reduce for some developments.
- Director Power inquired if there were specific exclusions, limits provided so there is not a row of homes 10 feet apart, is that maybe something the Planning Commission is open to? Commissioners are open to further discussion and working with developers.
- In the garage section, there is a substantially different requirement. Maybe a clause or waiver to allow a few of the units to have less separation.
- Commissioner is concerned that if you have a developer wanting only 5 feet of separation, they are not building ranch homes. The purpose of developing these changes is to provide affordable housing, housing to the aging population and keeping the rural character.
- Director Power informed that more specific recommendations may lead to more discussion. Specific circumstances could be added and he could bring a developer to a meeting for an example. Commissioners agreed they don't need a developer to come to a meeting, however they would like to see the design images of what developers are looking at requesting.
- Commissioner inquired about the rear facing garage door with alley access, possibly for a series of homes. Director Power informed that the ordinance does say 30% to the side or rear, it is harder to develop to the rear. The flexibility would let you break from the side or the rear.
- Commissioner asked to see the pictures of the homes with the garages. The side entry garage door when stacked, you will see just the garage door when driving down the road. Look at making sure they are not all the way down the street. Fellow Commissioner informed that the current language on the 30% side entry garage, with this change, only counts if it is contrasting with neighboring properties. Commissioners like this change, it allows the developers options to make it less cookie cutter.
- Commissioners agreed that they would like to keep both items together and bring them back for further discussion. Specifically working on the building separation requirements.

Member of the audience inquired if the Commission is working on this ordinance because the project Scott Jones presented needs tighter density? Director Power informed, no this discussion does not directly affect that project. Commissioner inquired if that property was zoned RM,

Director Power informed that is was not. That rezoning application hasn't come forward for the project.

No comments from remote viewers.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Director Power acknowledged and congratulated Vidya Krishnan's son and family who were awarded the Ted Lindsay Courage Award. It's an award for families that exhibit exceptional courage in the face of autism.

Director Power informed the next Planning Commission meeting will be held on September 28th.

Director Power reminded Commissioners there are two upcoming training courses. Commissioners are to send Director Power an email of which courses they are interested in.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion Barr, Cullin second to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Harman
Recording Secretary