

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 8, 2021
6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

This meeting was conducted via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Grajek called the meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Chris Grajek, Marianne McCreary, Eric Rauch, Jim Mortensen, Jeff Dhaenens, Glynis McBain, and Jill Rickard. Also present were Kelly VanMarter, Community Development Director/Assistant Township Manager; Joseph Seward, Township Attorney; Gary Markstrom of Tetra Tech; and Brian Borden of Safebuilt Studio.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge of allegiance was recited.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS: All members introduced themselves.

ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS:

Moved by Commissioner Dhaenens, seconded by Commissioner Mortensen, to elect Chris Grajek as Chairman, Eric Rauch as Vice-Chairman, and Marianne McCreary as Secretary. **The motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote.**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Dhaenens, seconded by Commissioner Rickard, to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

No Commissioners declared a conflict of interest.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: The call to the public was made at 6:35 pm with no response.

- A. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING # 1...Review of a special use application, environmental impact assessment and site plan for a proposed 6,090 sq. ft. church with accessory outdoor uses including Grotto and Stations of the Cross. The property in question is located at 3280 Chilson Road on the west side of Chilson Road, south of Crooked Lake Road. The request is petitioned by Catholic Healthcare International. A. Recommendation of Special Use Application B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment (1-20-21) C. Recommendation of Site Plan (1-20-21)

Mr. Scott Tousignant of Boss Engineering, Mr. Jere Palazzolo, Father Tim, and Mary Swanson, the project architect, were present.

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Mr. Tousignant provided a review of the project, including the size of the property and its topography. They are proposing to create a site for pilgrimage to use for quiet prayer. They would like to build a chapel, a grotto, a station of the cross, a driveway with a loop road and two parking lots. They will be working with the existing topography of the site with the least amount of impact on the trees, drainage, the surrounding, neighbors, etc. He showed the site plan and colored photographs of a proposed statue and other complimentary uses.

He noted that the bell will only ding twice each hour from 9 am to 9 pm. Also, the comments from community members that they are planning to build a hospital on this property in the future are not correct. That is not their vision for this site. The site cannot support a facility of that size. They are requesting approval for the chapel and the complimentary uses this evening.

Commissioner Mortensen questioned why the website of the church in Missouri states that the plan is to have a hospital and a medical school on this property. The Planning Commission will vote on what is being presented this evening; however, if approved, it is not a commitment for any plans as stated on the Church's website. That would not be compatible with the area and there is no sewer or water available for that type of development. Mr. Tousignant stated that is the vision for the church somewhere in the community, but not on this particular property.

Commissioner Rickard asked for details on the drainage. There is no curbing proposed for the parking lot areas. She asked what the overall plan was for this site. Mr. Tousignant reiterated that they would like to stay within the topography of the site and use the natural drainage path and cause little impact on the current property. The timeline for all of the additional uses on this site is unknown at this time.

Commissioner McCreary questioned if additional buildings are being planned. Mr. Tousignant stated that they do not have plans or a timeline for the remaining portion of the property. The property could support complimentary uses to what they are proposing this evening; however, when that vision is known, it will be presented to the Township. Mr. Palazzolo stated the primary focus of this campus is for quiet prayer and meditation. At this point, they do not have plans for any further development on this site.

Commissioner McCreary asked for the need for the bell. Mr. Tousignant stated this chapel is to replicate a church in Italy and that church has a bell. It is a key feature. This site will allow people who are devoted to St. Padre Pio to have a pilgrimage and experience the same church without the need for them to go to Italy. She understands the want to replicate it, but she is concerned with it ringing every hour on 9 am to 9 pm in this location.

Commissioner Dhaenens likes the project. He noted that other projects similar to this were approved in the Township and they ran into financial problems so they started renting it for weddings, parties, etc. He wanted the applicant to understand why the Planning Commission was asking these questions this evening.

Commissioner Rauch questioned if there is an operations plan, such as hours of operation as well as the specific plans for this site, as have been explained in this meeting. This would help the Planning Commission understand traffic flow, noise, etc. He would like this to be put in writing. Mr. Palazzolo stated at this time, the chapel would only be used on special occasions. They would never have more than one mass a day. The masses would be during the day and the hours of operation would be from dawn to dusk. People would be able to come at any time to walk on the trails.

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Commissioner Mortensen questioned if any change to the Special Land Use would require the applicant to return to the Township for additional approval. Ms. VanMarter stated that if the threshold limits, such as the occupancy or intensity increases by at least 25 percent, then a new SLU permit would need to be reviewed and approved.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated February 2, 2021:

He responded to Commissioner Mortensen's question regarding SLU amendments. Section 19.6 of the Zoning Ordinance addresses amendments to existing SLU. There are major and minor amendment so even if a change does not necessitate the reconsider a SLU, there could be sketch or site plan review that could be reviewed by staff or brought before the Planning Commission

1. In order to find that the proposal is compatible with the Master Plan, the Township would need to determine that the proposal will not adversely impact natural features and agricultural uses in the surrounding area.
2. The Commission may wish to seek input from the Township Engineer as it relates to northbound traffic and compatibility with the surrounding area.
3. The bell tower may generate noise that impacts the surrounding rural residential uses. The Commission may wish to request decibel ratings, or a sound study to ensure compatibility.
4. The applicant must address any comments provided by the Township Engineer and Brighton Area Fire Authority.
5. Should a private school, child day care center or other use be proposed in the future, it will be subject to the applicable review procedures and regulations outlined in the Zoning Ordinance.
6. We request the applicant present building material and color samples to the Commission.
7. The parking lot must include curbing on all sides, as opposed to the bumper blocks proposed, unless the Commission determines they are necessary.
8. The applicant requests that the Commission allow existing landscaping in lieu of additional plantings for the front yard greenbelt and parking lot. This is at the discretion of the Planning Commission.
9. A sign permit will be required from the Township prior to installation of any signage.
10. The Township may wish to have the applicant correct the existing fence encroachment as part of this project.

Mr. Markstrom reviewed his letter dated February 3, 2021:

The Petitioner will need approval from the Livingston County Health Department for the proposed well and septic systems. This should be obtained and provided to the Township for their records.

Per the review letter dated January 22, 2021, from the Livingston County Road Commission, any future additions or changes to the site will require a traffic study and possibly improvements to the driveway approach or Chilson Road to accommodate increased traffic from the site.

The petitioner is not proposing to put curb in the parking lots. He recommends the applicant include concrete curb and gutter in order to better control storm runoff and direct it to the bioswales as well as prevent parking outside of the parking lot.

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The Petitioner is proposing two bioswales to collect additional runoff from the proposed improvements as a low impact development alternative. The bioswales are intended to mimic the site's original hydrology, due to the relatively small footprint of the proposed improvements. The Petitioner provided calculations to demonstrate that the proposed bioswales have enough storage volume to store the additional 100-year storm volume needed as a result of proposed improvements.

He would like to see how the cistern tank is going to be maintained. Is there property backflow protection, how will it be kept from freezing, etc.

Mr. Rick Boisvert, Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal, stated that his previous comments were addressed; however, he did not see the plans that show the meandering entrance drive; it was a straight drive. The turning radius proposed would not work for their apparatus. He would like to work with the applicant to change this to accommodate their apparatuses.

The call to the public was made at 7:38 pm.

Chairman Grajek advised that letters of concern have been received from residents. James Brancheau of 3611 Westphal, Mike Mandik of 3275 Chilson Road, Tim Park of 3529 Westphal, Shawn Nester of 3360 Chilson Road, Billy Martin of 4678 Richardson Road, Linda Holland, and Leslie Bohnett of 3367 Chilson Road all have concerns with the proposal, such as this is a rural location, additional traffic, the bell ringing, etc.

Mr. Bill Galvin of 4037 Chilson Road does not have significant concerns if the project is what is proposed. He is opposed to the bells ringing. He is concerned about the lack of engagement and communication and information sharing done by the applicant and the Township because some people lack technology and are unable to attend this meeting. He would like the Planning Commission to table this request this evening to allow more time for the residents to obtain more information and engage with the applicant and the Township. He is also concerned with the other uses that could be built on this site in the future if the SLU is approved this evening. The applicant could perceive that approval also be approval for future development on this site.

Mr. Bob Moran of 3985 Timber Green Court, which is ½ mile south of this property likes the zoning that was done by the Township at the I-96 and Latson Road interchange. He believes that this proposal belongs in that area. He and his neighbors are opposed to this project in this location. They are concerned with what will be developed in the future. He would like the applicant to provide what their plans are for the rest of this property.

Mr. John Wallbank of 2899 Pardee Road is concerned with what could potentially be built on this site, which could possibly be a medical center. He is concerned about the bell, the security for this property, and the rezoning.

Mr. Shawn Nester of 3360 Chilson Road, which is directly south of the property was not aware of this meeting until this morning when he saw it on social media. He is concerned about the bell and does not see its value. A commercial building in this area is not appropriate. If he knew that this property was going to be developed this way, he would not have purchased his home.

Mr. Pat Powers of 1018 Kellogg Road who lives adjacent to the Chaldean Campus does not believe that the Planning Commission should look at this project the same as that one. He is very excited about this project. People are looking for a place of solitude and worship. It is also a unique opportunity for a healthcare campus. He has met with the applicant and they are sincere.

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Mr. Robert Jones of 3553 Westphal lives 300 feet from this project. He agrees with what was said by his neighbors regarding the bell ringing, traffic issues, and it does not fit the character of the neighborhood. He does not feel that a healthcare facility should be in this location. It will negatively impact the neighbors.

Mr. Duane Johnson of 3990 Chilson Road agrees with the statements made by his neighbors. He agrees with Mr. Moran that there are places in the Township where this can be built.

Ms. Melanie Johnson at 3990 Chilson Road is not in favor of this proposal.

Mr. Derek Sproull of 2099 Chilson Road just learned about this proposal this morning on social media. When he built his house 10 years ago, it was a country area. He is concerned that this area will be built with more commercial uses.

Mr. Ian Campbell of 3912 Chilson Road agrees with the concerns raised by his neighbors, including property values, the rezoning of agricultural land, the expansion of the road, increased traffic, etc. He hopes the Township denies this request.

Ms. Laura McGaffney of 5934 Hartford Way knows the impact that this will have in a positive way. The residents' property values will not go down. It is very impressive to know that top doctors, nurses, and scientists around the world will be in Brighton. She is in favor of this hospital.

Cynthia Telep of 3175 Crooked Lake Road stated that this would negatively impact the neighbors' lives in the area. She agrees with her neighbors. She noted that two members of the public spoke about a medical facility being developed here.

Ms. Lori Petrulis of 2344 Chilson Road has seen the growth in the area. She is concerned with the two members of the public who spoke about a future medical facility and not a chapel. She noted that they do not live in the area. She learned of this development this morning.

Ms. Jessica Sproull of 2185 and 2099 Chilson Road loves her property and loves the country setting. People move here to get away from these types of developments. There are other places they can build this. There has been a lot of activity on that property recently. She learned of this today. She would have liked to have seen a brochure of the project and what was being proposed.

Chairman Grajek stated that property owners within a 300 foot radius of this property would have been notified of the proposal and tonight's meeting.

Ms. Alita Worney's property abuts the railroad tracks. She agrees with what was said by her neighbors who are against this project. There is wildlife in the area. These properties are rural. She also did not receive any notification.

Mr. Chis Petersen of 2960 Beck Road did not receive notification of this proposal. He appreciates church bells and would like to hear them one to two times a day. The building should not be on the property line. If they want quiet, then why are they building a daycare and a hospital? He questioned who is going to pay for the development and what source of funding will they have for maintaining it.

Ms. Kim Miller of 3150 Crooked Lake Road supports her fellow residents who have moved out here for the serenity, land, limited traffic and to have livestock. They will be negatively impacted by this development.

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The call to the public was closed at 8:39 pm.

Ms. VanMarter showed the 300-foot-radius map outlining the properties who qualified for receiving notification of the proposal and tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Rickard agrees with the engineer that curbing is needed; she would like the required landscaping to be planted. She would like the developer with plans of what they anticipate will be built in the future. She would like to see their vision for the complete site in the future. She does not like the bell to ring every hour, and agrees with Commissioner Rauch and his comment regarding the operational and maintenance being put in writing and submitted to the Township.

Commissioner McBain stated that the Master Plan shows this area to maintain five-acre parcels and agricultural uses. She is uncomfortable moving forward without additional information. In looking at this organization, they are dedicated to healthcare.

Commissioner Mortensen stated that what is before the Planning Commission is very specific. The Planning Commission does not have the right to reject a proposal because we think they might do. Bells would have to comply with the zoning ordinance and a study would have to be provided to the Township. He agrees with the operations plan. He would like this item to be tabled this evening.

Commissioner Dhaenens stated this sounds like a wonderful place to be peaceful and tranquil in nature; however, it does not have his support this evening. He would like to see an operations plan, more specifics of what is being proposed, and he would like the applicant to inform the neighbors and engage with them. More trees are going to need to be planted on the south side of the property to help screen this site from the neighbor from the building. He needs more details for him to vote to approve this proposal.

Commissioner McCreary agrees with all of the other Commissioners' concerns. Who will maintain the building and the site, what are the hours of operation? She needs detailed information on what the end result will be.

Mr. Tousignant understands the concerns of the public. He stated they will add trees to the south side of the property. They are putting the chapel in the proposed location because they want to maintain the existing topography of the site. Putting it there would eliminate them needing to cut down trees because it is an open area on the site. This is another reason for not proposing curbing for the roadway and parking lots. It is an outdoor chapel so there would not be people there in rainy weather. He noted the resident's concerns regarding cars being parked on Chilson Road. If there were dedicated parking areas, then visitors would not need to park on the roadway. If road improvements are needed for this development, then the property owner would have to pay for them.

Mr. Palazzolo stated the overall vision is to build a hospital and a medical school to replicate the one in Italy but not on this site. This site will be the foundation of prayer that will be the first step to their hospital and medical school. There will not be healthcare services, a medical school or a rehab center on this site. This is sincerely a place of quiet prayer and meditation. They did engage with the neighbors adjacent to this site and they did not receive any negative responses. They do want to replicate the bell tower and would have liked to have it ring every hour; however, they are willing to have it ring on each hour from 12 pm to 6 pm.

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All Commissioners agree that this item should be tabled this evening. Chairman Grajek reviewed the concerns of the Planning Commission, the consultants, and the neighbors and advised what details need to be provided and what issues should be addressed, specifically, trees being planted on the southern property line, curb and gutter for the parking areas, days and hours of operation, number of weekly services, number of events per month, supervision and security plan, on site contact, maintenance plan, driveway configuration per the Brighton Area Fire Authority, and a schedule and decibel levels for the bell ringing.

Moved by Commissioner Mortensen, seconded by Commissioner Rickard, to table the Special Land Use Proposal, Environmental Impact Assessment, and Site Plan for the Catholic Healthcare International Church, Chapel and Grotto until the March 8, 2021 Planning Commission meeting to allow the applicant to address the following items:

- The planting of trees on the southern property line
- Curb and gutter for the parking areas
- Days and hours of operation
- Number of weekly services
- Number of events per month
- Supervision and security plan
- On site contact
- Maintenance plan
- Driveway configuration per the Brighton Area Fire Authority
- Schedule and decibel levels for the bell ringing

The motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Staff Report

Ms. VanMarter provided the 2020 Planning Commission Annual Report.

Approval of the November 9, 2020 Planning Commission meeting minutes

Needed changes were noted.

Moved by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Dhaenens, to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Member Discussion

Commissioner McCreary received an email from the Board of Commissioners from the Home Builders Association regarding the Fire Authority's development requirement of cisterns of 10 homes or more. These are very expensive and the cost filters to the consumer and contributes to the lack of affordable housing in the area. They are not in favor of this requirement. Commissioner Mortensen stated that the Townships and the City of Brighton have adopted the International Fire Code and that is part of that code. Ms. VanMarter stated they are working on updating the fire codes in all of their communities and Genoa agreed that developments with 10 or more homes will require cisterns. She noted that these comments should be directed to the Township Board.

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Commissioner Rickard stated that fire suppression measures are very important.

Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Mortensen, seconded by Commissioner Rickard, to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary