

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
August 12, 2024**

**MINUTES**

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, Jeff Dhaenens, Tim Chouinard, and Greg Rassel. Absent was Glynis McBain. Also present were Planning Director Amy Ruthig and Brian Borden of Safebuilt.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge of allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Moved** by Commissioner Rassel, supported by Commissioner Rauch, to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

The call to the public was made at 6:31 pm.

Ms. Melanie Johnson of 3990 Chilson thanked Mr. Dhaenens for his service and time. He offered many opinions that were valid and intricately formed. He is a great participant.

The call to the public was closed at 6:32 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #1...** Consideration of a proposed third amendment to the Master Deed of the Timber Green and fourth amendment to the Planned Unit Development. The proposal entails withdrawal of Units 10, 11, and 12 from the condominium. This land area will then be combined with contiguous property under common ownership (residence to the north with access to/from Chilson Road). The amendment will modify the easement rights of the withdrawal area to clarify that access via Timber Green Court will only be for secondary emergency access. The request is petitioned by Chestnut Development, LLC.

A. Recommendation of PUD agreement amendment

Ms. Catherine Riesterer, representing Chestnut Development, stated they have worked with the homeowner's association on outstanding issues and there are some errors in the documents that need to be corrected, and she will make those before they are finalized.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated August 6, 2024.

1. The applicant must address any remaining comments provided by the Township Attorney or staff with respect to the amended Master Deed.
2. The applicant must address any remaining comments provided by the Township Engineer or Brighton Area Fire Authority.

Ms. Byrne's letter dated July 25, 2025 states that the applicant has addressed all of her previous concerns.

The Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal's letter dated June 11, 2024 states the applicant has addressed his previous concern.

Commissioner Rauch noted that there is only one misspelling in the documents and the Township attorney's comments and changes are in the agreement.

The call to the public was made at 6:38 pm with no response.

**Moved** by Rauch, supported by Dhaenens, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the amendment to the PUD Agreement for Timber Green with the plans dated July 22, 2024.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

#### NEW BUSINESS

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #2...** Consideration of an environmental impact assessment and site plan for a proposed 56-space parking lot addition for Community Bible Church. The property is located at 7372 Grand River Avenue, southwest corner of Grand River and Harte Drive. The request is petitioned by Tower Group.

A. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment (7-17-24)

B. Disposition of Site Plan (7-17-24)

Mr. Scott Tousignant of Boss Engineering and Mr. Brian Townsley of Tower Group were present. Mr. Tousignant provided a history of the development of this site. This evening's request is to expand the parking lot by 56 spaces.

The church requires this amount of parking because there are approximately 60-70 volunteers that are not in the sanctuary during the time of services. He reviewed how the parking requirements and needs are calculated based on the ordinance. Currently, the adjacent property owner allows the church to use their gravel parking lot for the overflow parking.

With regard to Mr. Borden's concern regarding the Harte Drive parking lot setback and landscaping requirements not meeting the ordinance, he has done research and there is documentation stating this is a private road and not a public street so those requirements are not required.

He does agree that they are deficient by four barrier-free parking spaces because the township ordinance is stricter than the federal requirements. He would like to discuss this. They would need to remove a space to accommodate them. He also agrees that the parking lot landscaping is deficient and will meet the ordinance requirements.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated August 6, 2024.

1. The Harte Drive parking lot setback is deficient by 10 feet. The ordinance requires a 20 foot setback because it is in the front yard. If Harte Drive was a driveway and not a roadway, then a 10-foot setback would be required.

Commissioner Rauch stated that when this project was originally planned, Harte Drive was considered a driveway. Ms. Ruthig stated that changes have been made. Harte development is now a PUD and Harte Drive is now a private road and not a driveway.

Commissioner Rauch would like to have the four additional handicap parking spaces installed.

Mr. Tousignant stated that all documents, except for the Livingston County Road Commission map, show that this is a private road. Moving ten feet would eliminate parking spaces.

Commissioner Rauch knows that the ordinance needs to be followed, but in this case it makes sense to allow the 10-foot setback. Mr. Borden stated that in his 2018 review of the expansion, this was treated as a side yard. Commissioner Dhaenens agrees that it should be considered a private road and a side yard.

Ms. Ruthig advised that the PUD documents state it is a private road. Mr. Borden stated since this is a private road and a front yard and not a side yard, then the church was made non-conforming because of the PUD.

Commissioner Rauch believes that the amount of parking that is being requested is needed. Mr. Tousignant agrees stating that at the 10 am service every week, all of the parking spaces in the adjacent parking lot are used. Commissioner Rauch recommended approval of the 10-foot setback be requested by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Borden stated that the Planning Commission can modify the landscape requirements that are noted as deficient in his letter.

2. The excess parking proposed requires Planning Commission approval in accordance with Section 14.02.06. The applicant must provide evidence supporting the need for excess parking.
3. The site plan is deficient by 4 barrier-free parking spaces.
4. The Harte Drive greenbelt is deficient in width and a hedgerow/masonry wall.
5. The parking lot landscaping is deficient in plantings and landscaped area.
6. If any existing plantings are in poor condition, they should be removed and replaced as part of this project.
7. The applicant must address any comments provided by the Township's engineering consultant and/or the Brighton Area Fire Authority.

Ms. Byrne's letter dated August 6, 2024 states that she has no engineering related concerns. The site plan should be signed and sealed by a professional engineer prior to final Township approval.

The Brighton Area Fire Authority Fire Marshal's letter dated August 6, 2024 states the following:

1. Two-way emergency vehicle access roads shall be a minimum of 26-feet wide. One-way emergency vehicle access roads shall be a minimum of 20-feet wide. Access roads to the site shall be provided and maintained during construction. Access roads shall be constructed to be capable of supporting the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing at least 84,000 pounds.
2. Emergency vehicle circulation throughout the parking lot shall provide emergency vehicles with a turning radius of 50-feet outside and 30-feet inside. Vehicle circulation shall account for non-emergency traffic and maintain the vehicle within the boundary of lanes of travel.

Mr. Tousignant will comply with the requirement that the road must be built to support the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing at least 84,000 pounds. This parking lot expansion does not change the existing turning radii, which are currently compliant.

Commissioner Chouinard questioned what the future expansion will be and if it is built, how would that affect the parking. Mr. Tousignant stated there would be additional classroom spaces adjacent to the gymnasium and an extension of that entryway. It would remove approximately 12 spaces. Mr. Borden noted that the change to Harte Drive will affect the future addition as well.

The call to the public was made at 7:23 pm.

Mr. Bill Reiber of 3154 Stillriver Drive questioned if Mr. Harte would be willing to give land to the church.

The call to the public was closed at 7:25 pm.

Mr. Tousignant questioned the process if they are denied by the ZBA and must meet the 20-foot setback from Harte Drive. This would require them to decrease the number of parking spaces. Commissioner Rauch stated the applicant would need to come before the Planning Commission again for approval. Mr. Borden stated the next ZBA meeting is September 17.

**Moved** by Dhaenens, supported by Chouinard, to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment dated July 17, 2024 for a proposed 56-space parking lot addition for Community Bible Church. at 7372 Grand River Avenue. **The motion carried unanimously.**

**Moved** by Dhaenens, supported by Rauch, to approve of the Site Plan dated July 17, 2024 for a proposed 56-space parking lot addition for Community Bible Church at 7372 Grand River Avenue for a proposed 56-space parking lot addition for Community Bible Church at 7372 Grand River Avenue with the following conditions:

- The applicant will seek ZBA approval for a 10-foot setback from Harte Drive.
- The applicant shall comply with an additional four ADA parking spaces.
- The landscaping needs to meet the requirements of a Buffer Zone C per the zoning ordinance.
- The applicant will comply with the conditions on the engineer and fire department letters.
- This Commission finds that the need for 170 percent of the required parking is necessary for the operations of the facility as evidence presented this evening.
- The applicant is encouraged to work with the adjacent property owner to legitimize the use of their parking lot.

**The motion carried (Chouinard - yes; Rauch - yes; McCreary - no; Grajek - yes; Rassel - yes; Dhaenens - yes).**

#### ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

##### **Staff Report**

Ms. Ruthig stated Mr. Wyatt has submitted for rezoning the property that he owns south of 96, east of Latson. An alternate venue will need to be secured for the public hearing so she is unsure of the date.

The Township Hall is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 13 and 14, for a large electrical repair.

##### **Approval of the July 8, 2024 Planning Commission meeting minutes**

**Moved** by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Chouinard, to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

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**Member Discussion**

Ms. McCreary agrees with the public comment regarding Mr. Dhaenens' service.

**Adjournment**

**Moved** by Commissioner Rassel, seconded by Commissioner Chouinard, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary