

MEETING MINUTES OF THE  
GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
APRIL 20, 2009  
REVISED

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Redick called the regular meeting of the Grand Haven Charter Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: O'Neal, LaMourie, Ralya, Redick, Ransford, Worthington, Sheffield, Williams

Members absent: French

Also present: Community Development Director Waterman, Attorney Bultje and Recording Secretary DeVerney

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion by** Ralya supported by LaMourie to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2009 meeting. **Which motion carried.**

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Worthington noted that the first reading of the Wind Energy Turbine Ordinance took place at the Township Board meeting on Monday, April 13, 2009.

Waterman noted the free training that is being offered by Scholten Fant for any of our PC and ZBA members in the upcoming months.

VI. BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING:

None.

Chairman Redick suggested switching the order of business. Without objection, the TND (Traditional Neighborhood Design) presentation was held first followed by the continued discussion on the Robbins Road Sub Area.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Terry Sanford and Mark Miller from Nederveld, Inc. gave a presentation on TNDs (or New Urbanism). TNDs are mixed use, pedestrian friendly communities.

TND components consist of the following:

- Housing, shopping and office (integrated together with a wider demographic to be served).

- Civic institutions
- Roadways
- Neighborhood units (5 minute - ¼ mile radius)

The two (2) patterns of development are as follows:

1. One size fits all program with limited choices.
2. Multiple housing options integrated into cohesive neighborhoods.

Baby Boomers (1946-1964) consist of 78 million people which are the largest generation in American history. Their focus is to be active participators in their communities.

Millennials (1977-1996) consist of 75 million people which are the second largest generation. Their focus is to be active first and worry about work later. Within the millennials, 9% of single men are buying homes while 22% of single women are doing the same. Also within this group, 80% are non-traditional families, meaning couples with no children or single parents.

Sanford and Miller gave examples of TNDs in Chicago, California, etc. but also showed TNDs in Canton Township, MI and Pentwater, MI.

David Bos (Bos Homes) was asked by Waterman to give his comments and concerns in regards to TNDs in GHT. Bos stated that his biggest concern was the loss of quality of life due to lack of vision and lack of planning. The challenge is to think outside the norm.

Bos's question for the PC was this. Can GHT & the PC take an infill site and put unique parameters on the development style?

Bos works with many Baby Boomers. Every 7 seconds a Baby Boomer turns 50 and 85% of them will move at least one more time in their lifetime. Bos questioned how are we going to house 76 million Baby Boomers when most of them are living 20 years longer than their parents did or will.

Bos stated three (3) options that the township could take with regards to 76 million Baby Boomers. They are as follows:

1. Go vertical (over 3 stories high)
2. Spread out but not sprawling (*i.e. free standing, attached condos, townhouses, apartments*)
3. Move in with families

Bos noted that Baby Boomers want the following:

- Live near their children/grandchildren
- Close to shopping centers
- Not isolated
- Sense of belonging
- Want something different

- Be part of a neighborhood
- Be active

Bos stated that people from all over the United States like West Michigan because of the four (4) definable seasons. He also noted that the hardest part of TNDs is the retail and office development, which is already in place in GHT.

Bos asked the following question. How do we create connectivity?

- Be close to elementary schools
- Public transportation
- Close to city sidewalks and township bike paths

Bos noted that GHT could be on the cutting edge with a TND but in order to do that, we need to look outside the box in order to maintain that quality of life.

Comments and concerns from the committee members to Sanford, Miller, and Bos:

1. Is GHT taking proper steps for the future as a survey in MTA shows that most people in Michigan want to live in rural or country settings?
2. You have showed successful areas in Chicago, California, etc., but we have mixed use in Grand Haven will many still vacant. Why is that?
3. If a TND concept is so compelling, why has GHT not been approached before now?

Responses to comments from Sanford, Miller, and Bos to committee members:

1. People want to live in a rural setting but that could mean different things to different people. Also, the majority don't want to live in mixed use. They noted that we need urbanism to create rural.
2. Execution is key. Also, between 2003-2007, there was a weeding out process of contractors that just made a "product", not a "home". The current state of the market has had a significant role in the vacancy rates of GH City projects.
3. Bos noted that he has constructed some TND in Spring Lake Township. He also stated that "execution is key!" And it's all in how you present it.

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Continued discussion on the Robbins Road Sub Area Plan

Waterman noted that the Master Plan is amendable. It is very flexible, with no density, use or height restrictions and it provides an alternative for housing in GHT.

Comments and concerns from the committee members to Waterman and Bultje:

1. Members would like to see some protective language in regards to not considering until the zoning ordinance is updated and include regulations on this type of development.
2. Can senior housing be combined with a TND?
3. Worthington was not opposed to a TND but he wasn't in favor of including it in the Master Plan. It's a compelling proposal so developers could potentially be

knocking down our doors, but if no-one wants this type of development, the current property owner's value goes down. He also didn't like the idea of a round-about at the corner of US-31 and Robbins Road.

4. How many parcels/property owners will be affected by a TND? Was Tysman involved in the original meeting? Tysman wants to sell towards a TND and the developer brought it before the committee first? Are there multiple developers? What is Tysman's property zoned at?
5. What is the current Master Plan zoned?
6. Has Grand Haven City seen this proposal for a TND?
7. Other members were OK with including TND verbiage in the Master Plan because it would be a good opportunity to meet the needs of people in the community, especially having schools and commercial property in the area. Because there are many types of zoning in this area and could potentially become a mess in the next ten (10) years, platted subdivisions would be a perfect change for alternative housing. Members were generally in favor of a round-about at the corner of US-31 and Robbins Road because it could handle bigger volumes of automobiles but were concerned about being pedestrian friendly.

Responses to comments from Waterman and Bultje to committee members:

1. Great suggestion. Waterman will add some protective language verbiage at the end of the chapter.
2. Yes, because a TND is entirely wide open to any uses and not restrictive to residential plat developments style and pattern for safe pedestrian activity.
3. Waterman noted that the southern part would not be developed until the Robbins Road corridor is improved.
4. This would affect only 7-8 property owners due to the large property sizes. Yes, Tysman was involved in the discussion with owners in that area. Yes, it's a multiple phase and wants to remain consistent with the remaining area. Yes, there are multiple developers. Tysman's property is currently zoned commercial in the front and industrial in the back.
5. These properties are currently zoned AG, Residential, Industrial and Commercial. The 1996 Master Plan classifies this area as commercial/high density residential PUD. The current PUD sets density limitations.
6. Waterman stated that Kristen (GH City) was made aware of the TND concept promoted along Robbins Road.
7. Waterman noted that both GHT and GH City want to see changes but a lot of things need to come together to make that happen.

**Motion by LaMourie and supported by Williams to recommend to the Township Board that Chapter 8 of the 2008 Grand Haven Township Master Plan is approved for distribution, subject to Chair approval with minor revisions discussed at the April 20, 2009 meeting.**

**Roll Call – Ayes: Ransford, Redick, Williams, Sheffield, LaMourie, Ralya, O'Neal**

**Nays: Worthington**

**Absent: French**

**Which motion carried.**

X. REPORTS

A. Attorney Report.

Revisions to the PC and ZBA by-laws have been given to Waterman for review.

B. Staff Report.

Waterman noted that in updating the Strategic Plan for the Board of Trustees, the committee would like the PC to be involved in that process.

Waterman also noted that RFPs had been sent out to six (6) consultants.

C. Other

None.

XI. EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by** Worthington and supported by O’Neal to adjourn the meeting. **Which motion carried.** The meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi DeVerney  
Recording Secretary