

MEETING MINUTES OF THE
GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 21, 2013

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: Redick, Kieft, Robertson, Taylor, Wilson, T. French, Reenders, LaMourie, and Kantrovich

Members absent:

Also present: Cargo and Attorney Bultje

Chair Redick requested that Cargo record the meeting minutes.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Without objection, the minutes of the August 5, 2013 meeting were approved.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Redick noted that there was a file on the Board table containing letters and emails regarding the proposed Special Land Use (SLU) application of the North Ottawa Rod and Gun Club.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Steve Wilson disqualified himself from consideration of the proposed Special Land Use (SLU) application from the North Ottawa Rod and Gun Club ("Club") because he is an active member.

Redick noted that he was a member of the Club many years prior and had last used the facility about eight or more years prior. Attorney Bultje opined that this would not create any conflict of interest.

Robertson noted that her husband was formerly a member of the Club. Attorney Bultje opined that this would not create a conflict of interest.

Redick opened the public hearing at 7:40 p.m. regarding the proposed Special Land Use (SLU) application from the Club regarding the installation of baffle systems on the ranges and other safety measures.

Bultje reviewed the staff memo with the Planning Commission.

1. Curt Walburg, representing the Club, provided an overview of the application, including a PowerPoint presentation that will be included in the file and a model that depicts a baffle system on a shooting range.

During Walburg's presentation, it was noted that the Club has been on the site since the 1920's, incorporated in 1941, and provides numerous shooting related services to groups within the area, including a youth program through the GHAPS.

Walburg noted that the range was closed by the Club since the GVSU Public Safety training incident from 2012.

The shooting range, after the baffle systems are installed, would be considered a "No Blue Sky" range and would fully contain any bullets that are errant or misfired on the Club property.

2. Marc Eickholt (15502 Woodrush Drive) stated that the current site is deficient with an insufficient "No Fall" zone; that the new plan does not address issues of maintenance; that the current plan does not delineate calculated loss for bullets hitting the baffles; and that the plan does not address a lead maintenance program to reduce the possibility of ricocheted projectiles in the backstop.
3. Adam Twa (133006 Sweetbriar Drive) stated that the subdivision is asking for adequate safety measures from human error at the ranges; is concerned with the long-term maintenance (*i.e., weathering*) of the baffles; and believes that the Township should adopt an ordinance to regulate the Club.
4. Bob Brenton (13034 Acacia Drive) stated that the Township should adopt an ordinance to regulate the Club; that maintenance and annual inspections of the baffle system are critical; and, that the plans should include a ground baffle system.
5. John Phillips (12995 Acacia Drive) stated that the Club has stated that the new range will be a marketing tool, which causes him concern regarding traffic; that the Club stated the baffle system would significantly reduce noise; and, that the Club should indemnify the nearby property owners for any future damage.
6. Jeremy Wilder (15438 Sundew Street) stated that GHT needs to ensure that the baffle systems are maintained; that the design plans provided are inadequate in terms of completeness and meeting standards from technical guides provided by the Army or Air force; and, that the proposed system is only a partially baffled system and not a "fully" baffled system.
7. Jason Durand (13075 Acacia Drive) stated that the plans should undergo further review by experts and are currently inadequate in terms of safety, which is paramount.

Redick closed the public hearing at 9:31 p.m. and the Commission discussed the SLU application from the Club.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

The Commission discussed the Club's SLU application, including the following:

1. Commissioner LaMourie discussed the overlap of the baffles (*i.e., a dimension of 4' in height*), stipulations or conditions on the approval of the Club's SLU application, including annual laser checks, maintenance details, limiting the caliber of bullets utilized; and verifying that the design of the baffle system was achieved after construction was completed.
2. Commissioner French discussed who would ultimately "sign-off" or approve the baffle system, which was indicated would be the contractor as opposed to the designer, the range safety officers that were always on duty during range hours, the requirement that shooters stay within defined shooting positions, and whether surveillance cameras should be utilized.
3. Commissioner Robertson discussed whether other options that would limit the shooter's range or motion were considered, including a "tunnel system".
4. Commissioner Taylor discussed how the baffle system would be maintained, if there would be a regular procedure for annual inspections/checklist, and why no ground baffles were included in the design.
5. Commissioner Redick opined that opening the ranges to military or police training would change the nature of the range and it would not longer be covered by the provisions of the Sports Shooting Ranges Act. He also requested that the Club respond to the issues raised by the TRS Range Services letter of October 17th.

Redick continued by delineating queries and concerns that he believed needed to be addressed by Vargas, including apparent discrepancies between articles written by Vargas and the actual design of the baffle system. Redick asked for assurances that the baffle system would fully contain bullets and the limits on the caliber of rounds that could be used with this baffle system.

Redick expressed his concern that the plans were not definitive with regard to design and materials.

Redick did not believe that the improvements proposed by the Club necessitated any type of traffic study.

6. Commissioner Kieft discussed the difference between a Sports Shooting Range and ranges used for the training of police and military personnel.

7. Commissioner Reenders discussed how to verify that the design criteria will contain the caliber of bullets used and whether the Club limited the scope of the baffle system design because of budget constraints.

Without objection, Redick instructed staff to draft correspondence to the Club requesting additional information and clarification of the proposed plans, including but not limited to:

- a. Certification that the baffle system, as designed, would provide full containment of bullets;
- b. Detailed explanation regarding the caliber bullets that could be contained by the baffle system;
- c. The maintenance plan that would be utilized, including the use of a third party review (e.g. the Township);
- d. Only allowing sports shooting with no military or police training;
- e. Hours of operation and other specific safety related conditions that could be included;
- f. Explanation of why bullet traps, ground baffles, winter limitations and other safety measures were not included.

Without objection, the matter was postponed for further consideration until staff forwarded correspondence to the Club and the Club responded.

IX. **REPORTS**

- a. Attorney Report
None.
- b. Staff Report
Cargo noted that staff would be working through a consultant to prepare zoning amendments related to the Right-to-Farm Act and Ham Radio Antennas.
- c. Others
None.

X. **EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



William D. Cargo
Acting Recording Secretary