



**SAUGATUCK
TOWNSHIP**
WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

Planning Commission Minutes 7/26/21

The Saugatuck Township Planning Commission met July 26, 2021.

1) Call to Order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Israels.

2) Roll Call

Present: D. Ihle, R. Israels, J. Helmrich, D. DeFranco, D. Shipley, D. Webster

Absent: M. Wurth

Also present: L. Wells, Zoning Administrator

3) Approval of Agenda

Helmrich added item 1 under New Business, "Election of Officers"

Shipley added under item 4 of New Business, "Township Pledge"

Israels added under item 1 of Old Business, "Review of Committee Responsibilities"

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by DeFranco. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

4) Approval of Minutes: PC Meeting 4/26/21

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the minutes of 4/26/21 as written. Seconded by Ihle. The Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

5) Public Comment:

1) Sean Steele, 3416 Riverside Drive, identified himself as the property owner of 3291 Blue Star Highway, the property for which a SAU and Site Plan Review Application had been submitted. Steele believed that the property had been somewhat forgotten and that he wanted a use for the property that would be good for the community. Steele said that he had reviewed and turned down many offers to purchase the property from buyers whose intended use for the property would not enrich the community. Steele believed that the use proposed by the present prospective buyer would be beneficial for the community and was harmonious with surrounding land uses.

Public Comment Closed



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

6) New Business

1. Election of Officers

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to elect the following slate of Planning Commission Officers: Israels (Chair), Ihle (Vice-Chair), and DeFranco (Secretary). Seconded by Webster. The Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

2. Special Approval Use and Site Plan Review application from Grant Venue LLC, agent Nederveld, for a 6600 sf Event Center at 3291 and unaddressed parcels on Blue Star Highway, parcels are as follows:

- 20-010-037-10
- 20-010-037-00
- 20-010-035-30

Parcels are zoned C-1 and R-1 and are in the Blue Star Highway Mixed Use/Residential Commercial District. The use is considered “other similar commercial uses not specifically listed.”

Planning Commission considers use and site plan as separate motions.

Wells reviewed staff report and recommendations on file.

Dave Ash and Mike Baker represented the project. Explained that the proposal would keep the three existing structures on the property and construct a new structure. Whereas the original application proposed having gravel driveways and parking areas, the plan has been updated such that all drives and parking areas will be paved per the request of the Township engineer. Project representatives stated that applicant is willing to meet the requirements as laid out by the TWP engineer and Fire Department.

Israels Opens Public Hearing

1. Brian and Candice Grant, 857 Allen Dr. Holland, MI, identified themselves as the applicants. Grants explained that they are the owners of Port 393 in Holland, an event center, similar to the one they are proposing to construct in the TWP. Grants stated that the proposed event center would have no liquor license, would need to be closed no later than midnight with staff cleaning up afterwards, and would be in operation year-round. Grants were confident that their business could attract people and businesses to the Saugatuck area year-round. Grants said that they were flexible to any restrictions/prohibitions regarding smoking/marijuana use on premise that might be



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

required by the PC. Grants clarified that individuals could not casually show up to the space for a drink, rather the space would be accessible only for attendees of private events. Grants planned to repurpose all existing buildings onsite; expressed a love for the site as it presently exists because of its natural beauty and garden-like feel. The Grants believed that they can attract lots of people with the natural beauty of the site, and are confident that they could book events off-season which would support the community during times when business is historically slow. Grants clarified that there would be an in-house DJ and that they would be in control of sound; any outdoor activity would be moved inside by 7pm. Grants also stated that they were exploring alternative transportation options for guests arriving at event space.

2. Joe Novakoski, 3347 Gas Light Lane, owns property adjacent to the property applicant is seeking to purchase. Novakoski submitted correspondence to the PC detailing his concerns with the SAU and Site Plan submitted by the applicant. Novakoski expressed concern with the following items: (1) possible noise disturbance from the site and its effect on property values, (2) whether parking capacity proposed in the site plan was sufficient given the applicant's proposed use, (3) lack of screening for refuse in site plan, (4) potential for patrons going outside to smoke and create noise disturbance, (4) insufficiency of plan for storm-water runoff given that the proposed area is a likely a wetland, (5) potential septic issues, and (6) traffic issues that could arise at the Old Allegan and BSH intersection due to proposed use. Novakoski expressed appreciation for applicant's addressing the paving of the site's drives and parking areas.
3. Dr. Howard Peschke, 6549 Old Allegan Rd, stated that he owned 10 acres by Old Allegan Rd, east of the site the applicants propose to purchase. Peschke stated that he had lived at this location for 32 years and purchased the land because it was quiet. Peschke was concerned that noise from the proposed use would negatively impact wildlife in the area.
4. Nick Cappelletti, 3279 Blue Star Highway, owns the property directly to the south of the site applicants propose to purchase. Cappelletti stated that he owned other properties in the TWP and has resided in the community for 28 years. Cappelletti expressed his opposition to the event center because of its proposed capacity of 300 persons. Cappelletti was not opposed to the idea of a large event center in general, but had specific concerns with respect to the proposed site of the use, believing that the use conflicts with the vision of the community as outlined in the Master Plan. Cappelletti quoted the Tri-Community Master Plan, and reiterated that the plan emphasizes the maintenance of a small town feel and rural character. Cappelletti said a 300-person event center was not harmonious with the Master Plan. For his own business on BSH, Cappelletti chose to develop a boutique feel as is fitting with the intimate nature of other businesses along the BSH corridor. Cappelletti emphasized that BSH is not a safe thoroughfare and wished



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

that the proposed project would not occur at the site presently under consideration.

Public Hearing Closed

Shipleigh asked applicant about their willingness to create a natural buffer on the residential portion of the property. Applicant was very willing and wanted to maintain the natural and garden-like feel of the property. Applicant noted that parking areas would be concealed by existing structures. Ihle said he walked the property and noted the beautiful wooded buffer. Asked if the applicant intended on purchasing the heavily wooded residential lot behind the commercial lot. Applicant confirmed that was their intention. Ihle asked if a wetland impact study had been conducted. Applicant said no. Ihle inquired into the applicants' plans for the residential lot. Applicant noted that they can hear highway noise and would like to keep the woods on the residential lot to minimize highway noise.

Webster asked applicant to clarify how the existing structures would be utilized in the business. Applicant explained they would be used for bride and groom suites. Webster asked where employees would park and if there was a parking plan if the event center was booked to capacity. Applicant said they are researching alternative transportation options for patrons. Helmrich inquired about the location of the applicants' other event space. Applicants noted they live 50ft from their other location. DeFranco asked how the applicant arrived at a 300-person capacity as the optimal capacity for the proposed business. Applicant noted that they typically service parties of approximately 175 persons, but wanted to the flexibility for larger parties.

Israels complimented applicants on their business in Holland. Israels asked about refuse and whether caterers would take their own refuse off-premise. Applicant confirmed this to be the case. Israels asked whether there will be kitchen equipment. Applicant said that there will not be a kitchen, that caterers would bring all their own materials.

DeFranco asked Wells to clarify what the PC would be approving with the SAU application in contrast to the Site Plan Application. Wells explained that the SAU concerned hours of operation, capacity, lighting, noise amplification, parking plan, connection to utilities, installation of sprinkler system, requirement to maintain natural buffer, compliance to the Tree Preservation Ordinance and would be contingent upon review and approval of the site plan. Webster inquired about the Blue Star Highway Overlay District, asking Wells if the applicant had to comply with the C-1 zoning. Wells said that the applicant had moved all C-1 activities to the C-1 portion of the property and all residential-like activities to the residential portion. Wells said the PC could combine all the parcels to have dual zoning or specify that the SAU is only for the commercially zoned area of the property. Helmrich asked the applicant if they host non-profit groups. Applicant confirmed that they have many non-profit groups rent their event space in Holland. DeFranco asked the applicants if they were comfortable with preserving the back wooded portion of the property. The applicants confirmed they were comfortable with that.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

Israels asked if there needed to be a fence on the east side of the property. Helmrich asked Wells whether the back lot zoned residential can be excluded from the SAU. Webster noted that the SAU application aligned with the economic goals outlined in the Master Plan.

Israels read a statement from Commissioner Wurth in support of the project.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the SAU application to allow an event center on parcels 20-010-037-10, 20-010-037-00, and 20-010-035-30 with the nine conditions identified in the Staff report in addition to the following conditions: (1) Wooded landscape on R1 portion of the property be preserved and (2) all lots combined into a single parcel, with approval contingent upon a driveway permit being secured from the Allegan County Road Commission and upon review of site plan. Seconded by Ihle. The Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Applicants' engineer from Nederveld reviewed the site plan submitted on behalf of the applicants. Stated that the applicants are willing to meeting the requirements of the TWP review and work with the health department on a septic system. Noted that the applicants still needed to submit a landscaping plan.

Webster asked if the applicants would be amendable to put in landscaping for privacy purposes on the south portion of the property. Applicants agreed and stated that they wanted to be good neighbors. Helmrich asked the applicants if they would be submitting architectural renderings. Applicants said yes. Helmrich asked if approval of the site plan should be tabled until the PC received more details. Webster specified that the PC would like to see more detailed plans regarding the following items: landscaping, compliance with lighting ordinance, paved parking, architectural drawings that (1) identify materials, (2) are to scale, (3) include colors, windows, and landscaping that show all sides of the building and that satisfy the architectural requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Applicants' engineer emphasized that applicants would conform to all requirements of the TWP. DeFranco clarified that applicant should include landscaping plan for south-side of the property.

A **Motion** was made Webster to postpone site plan approval. Seconded by Helmrich. The Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

3. Pond Ordinance

Wells reviewed the existing "one-paragraph" pond ordinance that presently exists. Wells thanked Webster for researching examples of pond ordinances. Wells explained that the new pond ordinance draft calls ponds "man-made water bodies." Wells reviewed the language of the draft pond ordinance that requires oversight if a man-made water body would be over ¼ acre in size.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

Webster recommended adding a definition of “man-made water body.” Webster asked if staff should submit edits to the draft ordinance one more time before scheduling a public hearing. Israels, Helmrich and DeFranco thought the draft ordinance was ready for a public hearing. Wells would submit final edits for review by Planning Commissioners and place a public hearing for the ordinance on the agenda for the August meeting.

4. Township Pledge

Shipley introduced the idea of replacing the Pledge of Allegiance with a pledge to the Township, which the PC would draft. Shipley explained that some people are uncomfortable with the Pledge of Allegiance, but that everyone could get behind a pledge that is supportive of the TWP.

DeFranco preferred to say nothing at all than draft a TWP pledge in replacement of the Pledge of Allegiance. Israels noted her Catholic upbringing and concern with showing respect for the veterans of our community. Israels was not in favor of removing the Pledge of Allegiance. Ihle noted that he was a boy scout troop leader and was opposed to removing the Pledge of Allegiance. Helmrich noted that he was uncomfortable with some of the words in the Pledge of Allegiance. Wells noted that the bylaws did not require a pledge to be on the agenda.

7) Old Business

1. Review of Committee Responsibilities

Israels offered support for Planning Commission’s special committees. Encouraged special committee chairs to develop expectations for committee members and develop explicit “Meeting Norms” to facilitate healthy conversation.

2. Committee Reports

Planning Commissioners heard special committee chairs report on progress of their special committee. Commissioners heard reports from Ihle (Blue Star Safety), Helmrich (Economic Development), DeFranco (Rural Character and Conservation), and Webster (Attainable Housing).

3. Township Board Update

Township Board Summary: May 12, 2021, June 9, 2021, June 21, 2021, and July 14, 2021

Submitted by Board and PC Member Jon Helmrich



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

- **The Township Board met via Zoom on May 12, 2021:**
- Public Comment was made from Commissioner Kapenga, Parks Commissioner Goshorn, and residents regarding Riverside Drive road project and the Van Horn pond.
- Voted to approve the draft FY2021 budget and proceed to public hearing in June.
- Requested that Legal Counsel and Zoning Administrator provide a detailed timeline on the background on the Van Horn pond project.
- Approved Township pension, dental, and health plans, as well as the general liability insurance.
- Approved a Proclamation to declare June as LGBTQ+ Pride month and display the Rainbow flag at Township Hall.
- Township rep to Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority is resigning; we need a replacement rep.
- Township is working with Douglas and Saugatuck on the Communities of Interest effort relative to redistricting.
- More Public Comment on Parks Commission and Riverside Drive road project.
- **The Township Board met via Zoom on June 9, 2021:**
- Public Comment was made on Riverside tree road project and the nature easement there; Chief Janik expressed appreciation for Board's support of the Fire District's budget.
- Tabled for two weeks and a new public hearing the ACRC plans for Riverside Drive and Dugout Road.
- Adopted the Fiscal Year 2022 budget for the Township; no public attended for the Public Hearing portion. Also approved the FY budget for Fire District.
- Zoning Administrator Wells submitted a timeline and overview document regarding the Van Horn pond and excavation project.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

- Voted to not adopt an ordinance for Off Road Vehicles that the County has endorsed.
- Battery collection has begun at Township Hall thanks to the Tri-Community Recycling Committee.
- Manager Frey was appointed to be our rep to the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority replacing Mike McGuigan who has moved away.
- **The Township Board held a Special Meeting on June 21, 2021:**
 - Special Board meeting held on the Dugout Road and Riverside Drive road resurfacing and widening plan of the County's Road Commission.
 - 12 residents spoke against the plan primarily due to the large number of trees to be removed; 1 resident spoke in favor.
 - County Road Commissioner was present to answer and address board's concerns. ACRC was adamant that they could not accept a plan with fewer than 100 trees being removed.
 - Board voted to support a plan to remove only 50 trees which, in effect, kills the entire plan for now.
- **The Township Board met on July 14, 2021 in person:**
 - Clerk Bigford chaired the meeting in Supervisor Osman's absence.
 - Public Comment made on recycling, a Coastal Alliance endorsed plan for an alternative marina submitted to ACE which would run along the river and not require major excavation on the site, Blue Star traffic and speed, and County Commissioner Kapenga on desire to use ARPA funds for Broadband expansion.
 - Board voted to re-appoint Rebecca Israels to the Planning Commission, appoint Michael Wurth to the open PC seat, and re-appoint ZBA Commissioner Kercinik to another term.
 - Two of the elected Park Commissioners have resigned and will need to be replaced by board appointment to serve remainder of their terms. Goshorn and Baarman have left.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

- Board accepted the legal settlement with the Bowdish and Van Horn families which allow public water to be extended to the Van Horn properties on 66th Street. The cost of the project will be divided among the 19 parcels as a Special Assessment over a 10-year period; Township will need to secure a bond to finance the project.
- Approved the revised inter-local agreements to allow the Township to join the Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority as a full, equal voting member. Two representatives need to be appointed by the board in August.
- Voted to accept receipt of the American Rescue Plan Act funds which will amount to around \$350K. Decisions on how to spend the federal COVID relief need not be made until 2022.
- Treasurer Helmrich reported on Fiscal Year End finances. General operating funds closed the year 6% ahead of budget for revenues and 6% below budget for expenditures. A strong Year End position. Total investments are now \$1.8M which is a 135% increase since December 2020 as new investments continue to be made for the Township.

4. Staff Update, Consider Moving Meeting Time to 6pm

Commissioners agreed to move Planning Commission meeting times to 6pm.

13) Adjourn

A **Motion** was made to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 pm by Webster. Seconded by Shipley. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Next P.C. meeting: Monday, August 30th, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

WWW.SAUGATUCKTOWNSHIP.ORG

3461 BLUE STAR HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 100
SAUGATUCK, MI 49453

PHONE (269) 857-7721
FAX (269) 857-4542

Motions:

1. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by DeFranco. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
2. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the minutes of 4/26/21 as written. Seconded by Ihle. The Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
3. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to elect the following slate of Planning Commission Officers: Israels (Chair), Ihle (Vice-Chair), and DeFranco (Secretary). Seconded by Webster. The Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.
4. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the SAU application to allow an event center on parcels 20-010-037-10, 20-010-037-00, and 20-010-035-30 with the nine conditions identified in the Staff report in addition to the following conditions: (1) Wooded landscape on R1 portion of the property be preserved and (2) all lots combined into a single parcel, with approval contingent upon a driveway permit being secured from the Allegan County Road Commission and upon review of site plan. Seconded by Ihle. The Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.
5. A **Motion** was made Webster to postpone site plan approval. Seconded by Helmrich. The Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.
6. A **Motion** was made to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 pm by Webster. Seconded by Shiple. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Next P.C. meeting: Monday, August 30th, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully,

D. DeFranco, P.C. Sec.