

**Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, November 28, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting held in person & via Zoom**

**Call to Order:** Chair Ihle called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Ken Butler, Jackie Ground, Jon Helmrich, Dave Ihle, Gordon Stannis, Denise Webster, Michael Wurth

Absent: None

Also Present: Planning and Zoning Administrator Lynee Wells, Recording Secretary Morgan Arens, John Hesse, Bob Cline, Joyce Carver, Beverly Daitch, Michael Daitch, David Bean, Chad VanHorn, Jenny VanHorn, Stephen Phelps, John Tendas, Barb Witt, Dan Witt, Ben Clark, Tracy Clark, Andrew Milauckas, Bruce Schock, Carol Schock, Chuck Hoyt, Jim Smit, Cristy Freese, Ann VanDyke, Toni Perrine, Jerry deVries, Rich Campbell, Becky Briens, Holly Anderson, Bobbie Gaunt, Sandra Randolph, Linda Maurer, Ann Kuhn, Ellen Shook, Glenn Shook, Liz Engel, Dave Engel, Kim Copeland, Barb Copeland, David Lokker, Casey Lokker, Richard Brady, Doug TerHorst, Joe Aernouts, Amy Aernouts, Stephen Townsend, Kathy Fries-Wilson, Stacey Aldrich, Rebecca Israels, Edward Karasek, Daniel DeFranco, Nick Wallace, Scott Wierenga, David Swan, Scott Bosgraf, Thomas Glass, & Chad Bassett.

**Approval of Agenda**

Ihle proposed the adoption of the 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule to be added under "New Business".

A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the October 24, 2022 meeting were discussed and the following adjustments were made:

1. Page 1, "Approval of Minutes", bullet 3: fix typo from "bsic" to "basic".
2. Page 1, "Public Comment", bullet 1: change "and state that" to "and stated that".
3. Page 1, "Public Comment", bullet 6: change "Brewery project's owner's" to "Brewery project owner's".
4. Page 2, "Old Business", first sentence: change "Ihle reaccused himself" to "Ihle recused himself".
5. Page 2, "Commission Member Discussion", fourth paragraph: change "business-like Spectators" to "business similar to Spectators".
6. Page 2, "Commission Member Discussion", sixth paragraph: change to "Webster asked about the driveway and potential dangers. She asked if the driveway should be conforming or if this was for the Road Commission to decide".
7. Page 2, "Commission Member Discussion", the motion: change to "A Motion was made by Butler to approve the Special Approval Use, for Uses Similar in C-1 General Commercial District, proposed Brewery at 6525 Blue Star Highway with conditions from the Township Planner and requirements from KLSWA, the Township Engineer, the Fire District, and the Planning Commission."
8. Page 2, "New Business", bullet 2: change "update at the nest meeting" to "update at the next meeting".

9. Page 3, "New Business", bullet 3: change "states that he was going to nominate" to "stated that he is nominating".
10. Page 4, "Motions", bullet 3: change to "A Motion was made by Butler to approve the Special Approval Use, for Uses Similar in C-1 General Commercial District, proposed Brewery at 6525 Blue Star Highway with conditions from the Township Planner and requirements from KLSWA, the Township Engineer, the Fire District, and the Planning Commission."

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2022 as amended. Supported by Butler. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**Public Comments:**

Ihle opened the floor for public comment at 6:10 PM.

1. Bobbie Gaunt, President of the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance – urged the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing to terminate the Northshore 2017 permit regarding the marina development.
2. Doug TerHorst – in support of AutoCamp.
3. Kathy Fries-Wilson – believes that the Planning Commission needs to consider the area and be careful before rezoning and granting special approval use.
4. Adam Gana – in support of AutoCamp and thinks it's a great idea.
5. Lodi Medina – in support of AutoCamp and is looking forward to it.

Ihle closed public comment at 6:18 PM.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business:**

1. Public Hearing, Rezoning, 20-003-041-00 (partial rezoning R-1 to C-1), 20-003-063-18 (partial rezoning from R-1 to C-1), 20-003-071-00 (rezoning all from R-1 to C-1)

**Public Hearing:**

Public Comment:

1. Bob Cline –feels that another business will be a great addition to the Township. This area thrives on tourists and AutoCamp will help.
2. Tracy Clark – concerned about nature of the business and the amount of traffic this will generate on Blue Star Highway.
3. Barb Witt – loves this community and loves the idea of AutoCamp, but thinks that the location is not appropriate. Would like to see AutoCamp in another location in the Township.
4. Ann VanDyke – loves camping and glamping, but not in that area. She thinks the character of the area will be altered and it will be noisy.
5. Joe Aernouts – believes that Blue Star Highway is a problem regardless of what business goes on the parcels. Blue Star Highway is too fast for a commercial area.
6. Nick Wallace – agrees with everyone who spoke about concerns regarding safety on Blue Star Highway. He stated the Planning Commission should consider the traffic and the development of the area.
7. Scott Wierenga – thinks that the land should stay residential, and suggested turning the property into affordable housing. He stated that the Township has a fantastic tourist economy with no workers, and affordable housing could possibly fix that.

8. David Swan – thinks the Planning Commission should consider noise, light, and the Township maps because AutoCamp could change the character of the neighborhood. Urged the Planning Commission to go slowly when making this decision.
9. Chad Bassett – said Blue Star Highway is a fantastic use of commercial property.

Applicant Comment:

Chad VanHorn, applicant, stated that he hears the public's concerns and that he has done his due diligence and research. Several different opportunities have been offered for the land and he feels that AutoCamp would be the best option.

Commission Member Discussion:

Stannis asked Planning and Zoning Administrator Wells when the Township Zoning Master Plan was adopted and if this land and adjacent property is zoned as commercial. Wells commented that the master plan does indicate that.

Helmrich stated that he believes AutoCamp is beneficial to economic development.

Webster asked if parcel 20-003-071-00 was in fact considered for future C1 use. She stated that she feels like this is potentially taking away opportunity for housing by rezoning these parcels.

Butler stated that traffic on Blue Star Highway is a concern in general. The Planning Commission does not have the jurisdiction to control Blue Star Highway.

Wurth stated that Blue Star Highway is a lifeline for Saugatuck, Douglas, and everyone in between; but he does not see Blue Star Highway as being a large economic corridor. He also agreed with Butler and stated that the Planning Commission does not have power over Blue Star Highway, but it does have influence.

Helmrich disagreed with Wurth, claiming that Blue Star Highway is an economic corridor. He also said that AutoCamp may influence the Allegan County Road Commission to take action regarding Blue Star Highway.

Ground stated that she is hesitant to approve the rezoning due to concerns for housing and potential affordable housing.

Ihle said that he feels that this is the right place for commercial property, however he hears the concerns from everyone. He said he sees both sides and wants to consider both sides carefully.

A **Motion** was made by Butler to postpone the Rezoning, 20-003-041-00 (partial rezoning R-1 to C-1), 20-003-063-18 (partial rezoning from R-1 to C-1), 20-003-071-00 (rezoning all from R-1 to C-1) due to traffic concerns on Blue Star Highway and pending Township staff and Allegan County Road Commission finding. Supported by Webster.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yes: Butler, Ground, Ihle, Wurth

No: Helmrich, Stannis, Webster

Discussion: Webster stated that she would like to approve or deny instead of postponing the decision.

Motion carried 4-3.

2. Public Hearing, Special Approval Use with conceptual site plan, on a portion of 20-003-041-00, portion of 20-003-071-00, 20-003-042-00, 20-003-042-00 and a .75 ac. portion of 20-003-063-18

**Public Hearing:**

Public Comment:

1. Jim Smit – stated this is a great opportunity, that a campground will preserve nature. He also believes that this could be a catalyst for Blue Star Highway to be taken into consideration by the Allegan County Road Commission to address all the concerns residents have.

2. Steve Phelps – supportive of both AutoCamp and Holland Hospital, stating that the community depends on tourism and AutoCamp will be a good source of tax income for the Township.
3. Bruce & Carol Schock – concerned about the change in property value AutoCamp would cause, along with the smell of smoke from camp fires and the noise from campers.
4. Mike Daitch – asked why the approval of AutoCamp is being considered when the rezoning was not approved.
5. Erik Peterson – doesn't believe that AutoCamp is the best use of the property. Also stated that he was disappointed in the audio system in the Township Hall.
6. Tracy Johnson – believes that approving AutoCamp is a slippery slope to losing trees and nature in the Township, urged the Planning Commission to consider this.
7. Richard Brady – AutoCamp isn't what he believes the community wants in that area, he also has questions regarding the maintenance plan for the trailers.
8. Scott Wierenga – has nothing against AutoCamp, agrees with previous comments stating that he thinks that AutoCamp is a good idea, just not in that area.
9. Barb Witt – stated that she is appalled that the Planning Commission would wait for tragedy in order to do something about the concerns of Blue Star Highway.

Applicant Presentation:

Chad VanHorn, applicant, stated he understands change is hard. He stated that there are several different opportunities. He and his wife believe that AutoCamp is the best option because they will work with the community and uphold the community's values.

John Hesse, Director of Land Acquisition and representative from AutoCamp, gave a presentation overviewing AutoCamp as a company and what their goal is for a location in Saugatuck Township. Presentation is on file.

Commission Member Discussion:

Ihle stated that since this section of the meeting is a Public Hearing, the Planning Commission would have to go through this process regardless of the previous motion.

Webster said that since the Planning Commission has to go through this even though the rezoning was postponed. She also asked Planning and Zoning Administrator Wells if they could allow for conditional rezoning. Wells said yes, and the conditions are dependent on what the applicant offers. Stannis stated that he is encouraged to hear that the developer is aware of the issues and concerns of the public.

Wurth asked Wells if the Planning Commission talks to the Allegan County Road Commission about traffic concerns on Blue Star Highway or does the Township manager/staff? Wells stated that the Township staff would communicate with the Road Commission.

Ground and Ihle agreed with Wurth that communication should take place regarding Blue Star Highway.

Butler stated that AutoCamp appears to be a great development, but how can the Planning Commission guarantee this type of campground on the property? Wells explained that it would be considered a condition of the rezoning, if the applicant presented it.

A **Motion** was made by Butler to postpone the Special Approval Use with conceptual site plan, on a portion of 20-003-041-00, portion of 20-003-071-00, 20-003-042-00, 20-003-042-00 and a .75 ac. portion of 20-003-063-18 due to the following conditions: a clearer understanding of the sewer contractual capacity, more information regarding traffic from the Allegan County Road Commission, more detail on the planned employee housing, more information related to the conditional rezoning as offered by the applicant; and a more detail on the site plan. Supported by Webster.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yes: Butler, Ground, Helmrich, Ihle, Stannis, Webster, Wurth.

No:

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

3. Site Plan Review, Holland Hospital, Agent is Driesenga Associates, 3500 Blue Star Highway, parcel: 20-003-012-00 zoned C-1

Applicant Comment:

Josh Bauman, applicant and Director of Facilities & Construction, gave a brief overview of Holland Hospital and the project. He explained why they are building a new location and what the new location would offer.

John Tenpas, civil engineer at Driesenga, explained the site plan and landscape plan. Plans on file.

Commission Member Discussion:

Planning and Zoning Administrator Wells asked the Commission to discuss the tree preservation and if their plan follows the Township ordinance. The Commission agreed that it does not follow, and more tree preservation is appreciated. The ordinance intent relates to undisturbed areas, not cleared with selected trees remaining.

Stannis asked the applicant how manicured the landscaping would be, and explained that natural undisturbed areas would be the intent.

Butler agreed with Stannis, stating that Saugatuck has a very natural look and the Planning Commission wants to preserve that look.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the Site Plan Review by Holland Hospital at 3500 Blue Star Highway, parcel: 20-003-012-00 with the following conditions: tree protection and ground cover must meet with the guidelines of the ordinance and include an undisturbed greenbelt of 40' with selective clearing from 41' to 70'; the clearing for the driveway shall not exceed 30'; pedestrian pathways should be marked; underground utilities shall either follow the property line to the east where the manhole may exist, or follow along the 30' driveway clearing areas; applicant must receive the Township engineer's approval of utilities; and must comply with the Township office staff, Township ordinances, the Township engineer, and Allegan County Road Commission.

Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yes: Butler, Ground, Helmrich, Ihle, Stannis, Webster, Wurth.

No:

Discussion:

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

4. 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule

Planning and Zoning Administrator Wells proposed changing the meeting day from the fourth Monday of each month to the third Tuesday of each month. She kept the submission deadline the same at five weeks before the meeting date.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule as presented. Supported by Butler.

**Voice Vote:**

Yes: 7

No: 0

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**Report**

1. Township Board Update: Helmrich gave an update on the Township Board meetings from November 4, November 9, and November 16, 2022. The report is on file.
2. Staff Planning Update: Planning and Zoning Administrator Wells gave an update on various projects, including Top Grade. Report is on file.

**Adjourn:**

A **Motion** was made to adjourn at 10:04 PM by Butler. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

## Motions

1. A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
2. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2022 as amended. Supported by Butler. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
3. A **Motion** was made by Butler to postpone the Rezoning, 20-003-041-00 (partial rezoning R-1 to C-1), 20-003-063-18 (partial rezoning from R-1 to C-1), 20-003-071-00 (rezoning all from R-1 to C-1) due to traffic concerns on Blue Star Highway and pending Township staff and Allegan County Road Commission finding. Supported by Webster.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yes: Butler, Ground, Ihle, Wurth

No: Helmrich, Stannis, Webster

Discussion: Webster stated that she would like to approve or deny instead of postponing the decision.

Motion carried 4-3.

4. A **Motion** was made by Butler to postpone the Special Approval Use with conceptual site plan, on a portion of 20-003-041-00, portion of 20-003-071-00, 20-003-042-00, 20-003-042-00 and a .75 ac. portion of 20-003-063-18 due to the following conditions: a clearer understanding of the sewer contractual capacity, more information regarding traffic from the Allegan County Road Commission, more detail on the planned employee housing, more information related to the conditional rezoning as offered by the applicant; and a more detail on the site plan. Supported by Webster.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yes: Butler, Ground, Helmrich, Ihle, Stannis, Webster, Wurth.

No:

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the Site Plan Review, Holland Hospital, Agent is Driesenga Associates, 3500 Blue Star Highway, parcel: 20-003-012-00 zoned C-1 with the following conditions: tree protection and ground cover must meet with the guidelines of the ordinance; tree clearing should be minimal in order to minimize the disturbance of vegetation; the clearing for the driveway must be 26 feet with reasonable buffers; pedestrian pathways should be marked; must receive the Township engineer's approval of utilities; and must comply with the Township office staff, Township ordinances, the Township engineer, and Allegan County Road Commission. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yes: Butler, Ground, Helmrich, Ihle, Stannis, Webster, Wurth.

No:

Discussion:

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

6. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule as presented. Supported by Butler.

**Voice Vote:**

Yes: 7

No: 0

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

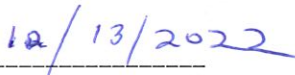
7. A Motion was made to adjourn at 10:04 PM by Butler. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully,

  
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Morgan Arens, Recording Secretary

I, Denise Webster, Planning Commission Secretary, certify that these minutes were approved on December 12, 2022 by the Saugatuck Township Planning Commission.

  
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Denise Webster  
Planning Commission Secretary

  
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Date