

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ORION PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
PC-2013-20, INDIANWOOD-FERNHURST TOWNSHIP-INITIATED REZONING
PUBLIC HEARING, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2013**

The Charter Township of Orion Planning Commission held a public hearing on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 7:05 p.m. at the Orion Township Hall, 2525 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, Michigan 48360.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Thurber, Chairwoman	Justin Dunaskiss, Vice-Chairman
Dick Christie, Secretary	Don Walker, PC Rep. to ZBA
Karyn Pennington, Commissioner	Joe St. Henry, Commissioner

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER ABSENT:

John Steimel, BOT Rep. to PC

CONSULTANTS PRESENT:

R. Donald Wortman (Township Planner) of Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
James Stevens, (Township Engineer) of Orchard, Hiltz, and McCliment, Inc.
Tammy Girling, Zoning/Planning Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT:

Chris Barnett	Char Follis	Jeff Young
Greg Haase	Sheryl Haase	Don Gross
Ken Beaty	Monica Beaty	Cathi Truscott
John MacMillan	John Van Steenis	Todd Rachel
Jean Rachel	Mark Tompkins	Holli Tompkins
Volker Plehn	Eric Wold	Heather Lossing
Michael Lossing	Jim Hauxwell	Brenda Hauxwell
Craig Kempenaar	Cathy Kempenaar	Jim Butler
Dianne Lytle	Marilyn Anderson	Jackie Meyer
Michael Keller	David Walters	Bob Halso
Phoebe Schutz		

Chairwoman Thurber opened the PC-2013-20, Indianwood-Fernhurst Township-Initiated Rezoning Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m. The proposed Indianwood-Fernhurst Township-Initiated Rezoning would be from Multiple-Family Residential-1 (RM-1) to Single-Family Residential-3 (R-3), Sidwell #09-03-252-002, with the subject site located at the southwest corner of Indianwood Road and Fernhurst Court.

Mr. Chris Barnett, Township Supervisor, noted that he is here on behalf of the Township in the interest to rezone this property. The subject site is one of two properties on the lake that is zoned multi-family. It is the Township's intention to sell the property. It was a unanimous decision of the Township Board to sell the property, but before they list the property for sale they would rezone it to less dense zoning since the surrounding properties of the site are zoned R-3 and that is why they are recommending the R-3 zoning.

Chairwoman Thurber offered time for public comments.

Mr. Todd Rachel, 950 Indianwood Road, commented that he and his wife Jean have lived there for 25 years, which is right across the street from the subject site. They are pleased that it is proposed to be a less dense zoning than

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RM-1. He asked that members take into consideration the fact that the curve in the road there makes it dangerous in that area. If 40 homes are going on that site, it would make it even more dangerous and some kind of safety measures would have to be implemented. He suggested that it be zoned to R-1 rather than R-3.

Mr. Volker Plehn, of 1098 Seneca, commented that he has been living in Lake Orion for ten years and his wife has lived here for 40 years. He has a petition (which he did submit to the recording secretary for the file) from about 30 residents of the Indianwood Lake Association, he is not representing the association, but at least some of those members who are living there. They would like the Township to designate that property as a park with shuffleboard courts, sand volleyball courts, and tennis courts.

Ms. Char Follis, of 979 Absequami Trail, just off of Indianwood, commented that they have lived here for 25 years, and they use that road all the time too and it is getting more and more backed up. That property is not big enough for 40 homes. She would also like a nice park there as was mentioned.

Ms. Cathi Truscott, of 534 Fernhurst Court, commented that her biggest concern is the road (Fernhurst), which is eroding badly and is also concerned that their homes may get blocked in.

Mr. Jeff Young, of 80 Chippewa Trail, commented that he grew up at 996 Indianwood Road, two doors down from where Todd Rachel lives. So, he has lived in that area for 61 years. He is happy to have that site rezoned to single-family and he would also be in favor of having a park there.

Mr. Greg Haase, of 552 Fernhurst Court, commented that he is concerned about the road (Fernhurst) as well and where it will exactly be since currently it is a dirt road that isn't really structured. He noted that he and his neighbors would like to buy some of the subject site to be used for their additional parking space.

Ms. Brenda Hauxwell, of 616 Fernhurst, commented that she and her husband have lived there eleven years. She inquired what happened to the plans for a park that was proposed there a few years ago. She also noted that the subject site would not be a good location for more homes due to the unsafe conditions of pulling out onto Indianwood Road from Fernhurst. They would really like to get a park on that site and inquired what would need to be done to make that happen.

Mr. Michael Keller, of 670 Fernhurst, noted that he shares a lot of the same concerns as the Hauxwell's. They really need to have more room for their drive and for parking. It's also very dangerous when you are pulling out onto Indianwood due to the curves and to add more vehicles to that site would make it even more dangerous.

Ms. Holli Tompkins, of 943 Indianwood Road, commented that she and her husband are glad to have that zoning changed and agrees with the previous speakers. They would love to have a park there.

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Mr. John Mac Millan, of 548 Fernhurst, commented that he agrees with many of the previous speakers here tonight. They are very pleased to get rid of that multiple-family zoning on the subject site. He feels that a park may be the best use for the site.

Mr. Craig Kempenaar, of 981 Indianwood Road, commented that his property puts them with the entire view of the entire frontage of the subject site, which is a big peat bog and the condos that were built there in the 1970's and 1980's sank and were unsuccessful and had to be torn down. He believes that the only way you could build a home on that site would be to build it on stilts and have it specially engineered, which could be another nightmare. Eight or ten homes may work, but not 40 homes.

Mr. Chris Barnett, Township Supervisor, noted that there are other parks in the Township: Friendship Park, Civic Center Park, Jesse Decker Park, Bald Mountain State Park, and Oakland County Orion Oaks Park. This property was purchased with Safety Path Fund monies. We do not have a Parks and Recreation millage, we fund it all out of the General Fund. We do have a dedicated Safety Path Millage and have had that for over ten years. The Safety Path Advisory Committee has an interest in recapturing that money to use on safety path projects and one of them is for Indianwood Road. Having been in this job for ten months now, we have a very difficult time maintaining the parks that we have with the staffing that we have and because we don't have a dedicated parks and recreation millage, those all come out of general fund monies. We would love to have more parks, but we cannot do it unless we go out for a dedicated millage, which may be a steep hill to climb right now with this economy. All the Township is proposing is to change the zoning. He agrees that 40 homes would not fit on the site. The site is not necessarily going to be sold to a developer. He understands the traffic concerns and the condition of Fernhurst. They intend to get an easement at the front of the property for a safety path and potentially even some parking for a trail head, which would be part of the paperwork when the site is sold. He noted that we do have a nice sand volleyball court right here in Civic Center Park. He would also like to see the two trails joined together some time in the future. He would love to have this as a park as well, but he hasn't heard that the remainder of the 35,000 residents want a park there and there are not enough staff to maintain yet another park. He also noted that anyone could buy this site or even build a private park.

Mr. Kempenaar inquired whether the Township could split the site into many little lots and make them available to residents to buy some day and sell the rest to a developer to build several homes.

Supervisor Barnett noted that there are many options. He will take the comments to the Board of Trustees for discussion, but we are not in the business of selling real estate. They were just going to rezone it and sell it. The ordinance would have to be looked at. He noted that they are currently updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and welcomed residents' input on the survey. He noted that they get many calls from residents inquiring why the Township doesn't maintain this site. They are stretching the resources as far as they can stretch them. He is not an advocate for raising taxes to build more parks. What they have heard from 400

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residents on the survey is that they would rather have us put money into the existing parks than to develop another park. If someone wants to purchase it and turn it into a private park, that would be great, but the Township does not have the resources.

Mr. Rachel noted that since there aren't the funds to make this site another park, he would like to see this go ahead and be rezoned.

Mr. John Van Steenis, of 969 Indianwood Road, commented that he wants the Township to split the property in small parts for the Fernhurst residents to buy to use for parking and to make improvements to Fernhurst.

Supervisor Barnett noted that right now the Board of Trustees' decision is to go ahead and rezone this site to single-family residential to fit in with the surrounding properties.

Mr. Plehn suggested that the Township wait until the parks and recreation survey is done and see what the Township residents want before going ahead.

Supervisor Barnett noted the importance of the public input to help with decision-making for the Township.

Mr. Keller suggested just designating a portion of the property for those residents to park their vehicles without having to buy it.

Since there were no further comments, Chairwoman Thurber closed the public hearing at 7:57 p.m.

* Attachment