

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
DECEMBER 9, 2019
6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Chairman Doug Brown, Marianne McCreary, Jim Mortensen, Chris Grajek, and Eric Rauch, Jeff Dhaenens, and Jill Rickard. Also present was Kelly VanMarter, Community Development Director/Assistant Township Manager, and Brian Borden of Safebuilt Studio. There were no audience members present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge of allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Grajek, seconded by Commissioner Rickard, to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: The call to the public was made at 6:31 pm with no response.

OLD BUSINESS:

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #1... Review of a special use, site plan and environmental impact assessment for outdoor sales, storage and display for Home Depot. The property in question is located at 3330 E. Grand River, Howell. The request is petitioned by Scott A. Mommer. A. Recommendation of Special Use Application. B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment. (10-2-19) C. Recommendation of Site Plan. (11-21-19)

Brent LaVanway of Boss Engineering and Mr. Scott Mommer of Lars Andersen & Associates, Inc., the consultants for Home Depot, were present representing the applicant.

Mr. Mommer stated that the store's assistant manager has been assigned to address the violations received by the Township and now Home Depot has asked him to assist with the issues and make a presentation to the Planning Commission. He reviewed the plans and what is being requested.

- Three rear staging locations outlined in green on the proposed Site Plan
- Three proposed sales display along the store front
- Three proposed trailer rental display along the store front
- Proposed seasonal sales display along the store front from May through July 4
- Two proposed rental equipment display along the store front
- Proposed plant seasonal display along the front Garden Center

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- Fifteen propose stalls for Equipment Rental in parking field at southerly property line
- Six Proposed stalls for shed display in parking field
- Sixteen stalls for proposed temporary customer pickup for bark/mulch in the parking lot for a period of six consecutive weeks in spring/summer.
- Existing three stalls of Load-N-Go parking, which is where the trucks that can be rented are stored.

He noted that the seasonal sales display and the bark/mulch areas from mid-March until July 4 are a big draw for their business.

He showed photographs of the parking lot as it would be seen from Grand River and Grand Oaks Drive.

Commissioner McCreary asked for clarification of the bark/mulch area. Are they on pallets? How much is there? How is the product put there? Mr. Mommer stated that stock from the storage area in the rear of the store is brought up to that area when the stock gets low.

He stated that all Home Depot stores are provided with an OSRP, which outlines what is allowed and what is not. The store personnel must follow these guidelines. There is not one for this store; however, when they have received their approvals from the Township, it will be provided to them.

Commissioner Dhaenens noted that Home Depot is requesting to do what they are currently doing, which are in violation of the ordinance, as well as add additional storage areas. Mr. Mommer stated they would like to receive approval so they will no longer be in violation. He noted that some of the current storage areas will be relocated. Ms. VanMarter stated that based on previous discussions, the Planning Commission prefers the storage areas remain along the building instead of in the parking lot.

Commissioner Grajek stated the storage areas need to be marked. He added that Home Depot built a store in the Township and put outside storage and displays that are not allowed, and is now asking for permission. He understands that it is needed, but other similar businesses followed the ordinance when they built their stores. He wants the storage areas to be marked and kept clean and in order.

Mr. Mommer stated that there has been a lot of growth in the area, so their demands and sales have increased. When the store was built, they did not expect they would need the additional storage and displays.

Commissioner Mortensen suggested that the store expand more brick and mortar instead of the outdoor storage and displays.

Commissioner Rauch questioned if the customer could pick up their mulch from the back storage area. Mr. Mommer stated Home Depot does not allow customers in the rear storage or loading area of the store. He believes having the mulch in the front is for advertising and not for

logistics. He is not comfortable approving this. It would set a precedent for other businesses. He suggested a location for an expansion to the building where these items could be stored.

Commissioner Rickard agrees. She is not in favor of the products being spread all around the parking lot.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter dated November 5, 2019.

1. The revised plan does reduce the amount of storage proposed for the parking lot and fewer spaces will be used.
2. The Commission may require additional shrub plantings, or allow excess existing trees to count as the required buffer zones.
3. The Commission may allow a 6-foot tall wood fence in lieu of a buffer zone B along the southerly lot line.
4. The height of materials stored within the three parking lot areas will generally exceed the height of screening provided.
5. The applicant must identify the dates/seasons that the temporary sales display area will be in use.
6. At least 2 of the areas proposed appear to block/disrupt pedestrian circulation to/from the building.

Commissioner Rauch showed a proposed location where a row of parking could be replaced with a landscape island where shrubs and trees could be planted and screen the storage areas to the south. It could also provide a barrier to vehicles which would be safer for customers who are shopping or loading their cars in this area. Ms. VanMarter agreed with this suggestion. Not only would it be screened, but it would be a contained area.

Mr. Mommer would not be able to agree to this change tonight. He would have to discuss it with Home Depot.

Moved by Commissioner Dhaenens, seconded by Commissioner Rickard, to postpone the request from Home Depot at 3330 E. Grand River, Howell, per the petitioner's request, until the February 10, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Staff Report

Ms. VanMarter stated there are no items for the January meeting at this time; however, she may still hold it because there may be a new member present to replace Chairman Brown as well as hold the officer elections.

Approval of the November 12, 2019 Planning Commission meeting minutes

Commissioner McCreary noted changes that needed to be made.

Moved by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Grajek, to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting as corrected. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Member Discussion

Chairman Brown stated this is the best Planning Commission he has ever been a part of. All Commissioners thanked Mr. Brown for his leadership.

There was a discussion regarding requiring applicants to obtain and provide certified surveys for all buildings. Ms. VanMarter will research this.

Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Grajek, seconded by Commissioner Mortensen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary