

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING / PUBLIC HEARING  
JUNE 2, 2021  
7:00 P.M.  
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Grajek called the meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Chris Grajek, Marianne McCreary, Jim Mortensen, Jeff Dhaenens, and Glynis McBain. Also present were Kelly VanMarter, Community Development Director/Assistant Township Manager; and Brian Borden of Safebuilt Studio, and Gary Markstrom of Tetra Tech. Absent were Eric Rauch and Jill Rickard.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge of allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chairman Grajek noted that the meeting minutes to be approved tonight are the May 10, 2021 meeting.

**Moved** by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Mortensen, to approve the agenda as corrected. **The motion carried unanimously.**

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: The call to the public was made at 7:01 pm with no response.

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING #1...** Review of a special use application, environmental impact assessment and site plan for a proposed 28,851 sq. ft. addition for a retreat center which will include overnight stays located at 1391 Kellogg, southwest corner of Kellogg and McClements Roads. The request is petitioned by the Chaldean Catholic Church of the U.S.A.

- A. Recommendation of Special Use Application
- B. Recommendation of Environmental Impact Assessment (3-15-21)
- C. Recommendation of Site Plan (3-15-21)

Ms. Eavan Yaldo, the architect for the project, Mr. Bert Kasab, Chairman of the Our Lady of the Fields Committee, and Mr. Mike Hickey, Camp Administrator and Executive Director of the camp, were present.

Ms. Yaldo stated they would like to create a cohesive location for faith building and spiritual well being. It will be open to all groups; however, they will limit users who do not align with their mission. She provided a description of the proposed building materials, uses, and site development. They have met all of the requirements of the Brighton Area Fire Authority, Township engineer, and Township planner. They have submitted a proposed operations plan as well as updates to the Environmental Impact Assessment as requested.

Mr. Borden reviewed his letter of May 3, 2021.

He stated that the project has not changed since it was first presented last fall; however, there have been some improvements. The applicant has submitted compliant landscape and lighting plans and the majority of the parking spaces will be paved. A new item proposed is the inclusion of a new waste receptacle and enclosure. They are proposing to use treated lumber instead of masonry but the Planning Commission must approve this. The proposed sign must obtain a sign permit before it is installed.

The request is consistent with the Special Land Use Standards Ordinance.

Mr. Markstrom reviewed his letter dated April 7, 2021.

- The Petitioner will need approval from the Livingston County Health Department for the proposed well and septic updates. This should be obtained and provided to the Township for their records.
- Approval of the proposed site was provided by the Brighton Area Fire Authority.
- The Petitioner shows parking calculations on the plans. Currently the plans show seven new spaces, while the parking calculations show 74 spaces required for the proposed use. The Petitioner is proposing to share parking with the church, which has 102 parking spaces currently. Due to the church and retreat center being used mostly by the same group of people, he finds this co-use of parking to be reasonable.
- The Genoa Township Zoning Ordinance requires that the parking lot be hard surface with concrete curb and gutter. However, an aggregate parking lot may be considered as a Low Impact Development alternative to the zoning requirements. Through the discussions with the Planning Commission, the Petitioner has agreed to pave the parking spaces that are immediately adjacent to the proposed access drive/fire lane. This reduced paving is acceptable from an engineering point of view.
- The tributary area shown on Sheet Six does not encompass all of the proposed site improvements, but it does collect some of the existing drive and church that was not previously captured by on-site storm sewer. The development is proposed on a small portion of the entire site. The parcel contains ponds and basins that collect all the runoff from the developed portion of the property. Since the tributary area to the new basins is essentially the same size as the proposed impervious area addition, we feel the proposed detention meets the intent of the stormwater management guidelines and is acceptable as presented.

The call to the public was made at 7:11 pm.

Mr. Charles Saliba of 1829 Kellogg Road, which is approximately ¼ mile from the camp, stated that at November's meeting, it was noted that funds from rentals would be used to maintain the camp. He is unsure how they are able to spend the money to build this project but need the funds from renting it to maintain the site. He is concerned that this hotel will be open 24 hours a day. He is also concerned with the traffic and the noise. It will bring down the neighbors' property values.

Board Member McCreary requested that the applicant read the proposed operations plan.

Ms. Yaldo read the plan, which included who will be using the property, what type of events and activities will be held, the schedule of activities and what months, days, and times they will be held, they will comply with the Township noise ordinance, the number and titles of employees,

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number of anticipated guests at events, deliveries, trash service, anticipated traffic, and property maintenance and activity clean up.

Ms. Dori Berean of 1273 Euler Road would like to relinquish her time to her husband and agrees with what he will say.

Ms. Kay Baker of 1780 Euler Road would like to relinquish her time to another neighbor.

Mr. Steve Olivieri of 1200 Kellogg Road recalls the Planning Commission asking for a five-year plan from the camp at the meeting in November and wondered if that was provided. Neither Chairman Grajek nor Ms. VanMarter recall that being requested.

Ms. Lynn Drouillard of 6781 Felice stated she can see the existing structure all year and this building will be bigger. She has done a lot of improvements to her home. The lights from the parking lot come into her windows. They have not fixed the fence. She had her home appraised and if this is built, she will lose 10 percent of the value of her home.

Ms. Patricia Kopicko of 6843 Felice stated her home is directly behind this property so she will be able to see the back of this building. There will be a lot of people coming to this camp. She agrees with Mr. Olivieri and would like to see a five-year plan. The applicant is saying they cannot afford to maintain the property now, so how will they maintain this site after it is built. The site is currently not maintained. Their other camps are in very large rural areas. This is not the area for this.

Mr. Mike Berean of 1273 Euler Road provided a letter from his neighbors at 1121 Euler who would like to relinquish their time to him.

Mr. Berean stated this is not about the mission, but it is the wrong location. He read portions of the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan that pertain to this request and the reasons why this application should not be approved in this location. Examples include the access roads, the uses proposed for the site, its incapability with the surrounding neighborhood, etc... The original church should not have been approved. He provided information on the other camps that Chaldean Catholic Church of the U.S.A owns, which included the sizes of the buildings, number of annual visitors, etc. The applicant is currently in violation because they do not maintain the site. He reviewed comments that have been made by the neighbors in previous meetings.

He stated the Township Ordinance allows for the Township Board to hold a public hearing to determine if the original Special Land Use Permit should be revoked. He and his neighbors would like this to occur because they believe the owner is currently in violation of the conditions placed on that approval as well as various Township Ordinances.

Mr. James Drouillard of 6781 Felice is mostly affected by this plan. He showed where his property is located in relation to the site plan. There will be people on this site and they will drive along Kellogg Road 365 days a year. He will hear all of the noise and see all of the lights. This could host thousands of people per year and hundreds of cars. He asked the Planning Commission to deny the request.

Mr. Todd Gessert of 1090 Kellogg Road stated this use does not fit the area and does not help the local community or local residents. He can hear the music when he is inside his home with the windows closed.

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Mr. Mike Baker of 1780 Euler Road stated he and his neighbors like the neighborhood the way it is.

Mr. Bill Maniaci, 1866 Euler Road stated he is a real estate agent and this will affect everyone's property values. This proposal will add traffic to the area. If the music from this site is too loud, he will not be able to enjoy being outside in his yard.

Mr. Patrick Spence of 1838 Euler asked to see the letter of support from the Livingston County Parks and Recreation that the applicant stated was provided. Ms. VanMarter provided a copy of the letter to Mr. Spence. He noted that the Township Board recently denied the other church proposal because it was not a good fit. These neighbors believe this is not a good fit.

The call to the public was closed at 8:10 pm.

Ms. Yaldo understands and respects the concerns from the neighbors this evening. The previous owner of this property may not have had a plan for this site. They now own the property and there is now a clear and concise mission for this property. They want to discontinue the private events such as reunions and weddings as they are not in line with the purpose of this property. This is a 160-acre property. It is beautiful and they want to maintain that beauty and keep it peaceful. They would like the Planning Commission to consider what is submitted and not what is being perceived to occur on this property. She believes that the documentation they have provided shows this and has met with the requests. This retreat center is fully financed as of today.

Mr. Bert Kasab, Chairman of the Our Lady of the Fields Committee, stated the Committee was put together to develop a mission of the property and they have done that. They want to contribute in a positive way to the community.

Mr. Mike Hickey stated he has been a camp director for 30 years. They have had no events with loud music on this property since 2019. There is over two miles of fence around this property and they are having problems obtaining materials and labor to make the repairs. They will fix the fence.

Chairman Grajek asked Mr. Borden for his opinion regarding the ordinance violations, etc. as stated by Mr. Berean. Mr. Borden stated that the request is in compliance with all Township Ordinances. Many of the items stated by Mr. Berean were not applicable to this site and project.

Chairman Grajek stated that the applicant has property rights and they are allowed to come to the Township and make this request. It is reviewed and recommendations are made based on if it meets the ordinances. The Board of Trustees makes the final decision.

Chairman Grajek stated that Livingston County Sheriff Mike Murphy has endorsed this project.

Commissioner Mortensen does not feel that the applicant has addressed the concerns of the neighbors. There have been no noise complaints received by the Township since 2019. The Operations Plan needs to provide additional information. It should state who specifically will monitor the sound, that there would be no outdoor amplification allowed, all groups renting the site would have to sign a document stating they will not violate the sound ordinance, and there should be signs on the property saying "No Amplification". He would also propose a one-year special use permit and each year it would require administrative approval for renewal.

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Commissioner Dhaenens stated that when there is a camp, there is usually someone on site 24 hours a day who answers the phone, greets the public, etc. He understands that the neighbors are concerned with what could occur on this site because of what happened in previous years as well as the traffic and the noise that it could generate. He would like to see the operations plan have more detail as to who will be there and when, what will be the different operations and uses between the church, the camp, and the retreat. He also agrees with Commissioner Mortensen that any approval would be for only one year.

Commissioner McCreary loves the idea of the retreat and believes what the applicant says about their mission. The site conforms to their mission, but it does not conform to the area. She knows the church brings value to the community, but she is concerned about property values. The examples of other retreats provided by the applicant are in commercial areas and not near residential properties.

Commissioner McBain wants to ensure the Township is planning and looking to the future and what it will look like when it is completely developed. This proposal is not harmonious with the neighborhood and the current zoning. It does not make sense to put a church in the middle of a residential, rural area.

Ms. Yaldo appreciates the feedback from the Planning Commissioners and would like to be able to provide a more detailed and comprehensive operations plan. She requested to have this item tabled this evening.

**Moved** by Commissioner Dhaenens, seconded by Commissioner Mortensen, to postpone, per the applicant's request, the review of a special use application, environmental impact assessment and site plan for a proposed 28,851 sq. ft. addition for a retreat center which will include overnight stays located at 1391 Kellogg, southwest corner of Kellogg and McClements Roads petitioned by the Chaldean Catholic Church of the U.S.A. until a future scheduled planning commission meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

#### ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

##### **Staff Report**

Ms. VanMarter stated there will be a meeting on Monday, June 14, with three requests as well as an ordinance update review.

##### **Approval of the May 10, 2021 Planning Commission meeting minutes**

Needed changes were noted.

**Moved** by Commissioner McCreary, seconded by Commissioner Dhaenens, to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

##### **Member Discussion**

There were no items to discuss this evening.

##### **Adjournment**

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**Moved** by Commissioner Mortensen, seconded by Commissioner McBain, to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas, Recording Secretary

DRAFT