

ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
January 7, 2009

Members Present: Guzicki, TerHorst, Knoper , Rozema, Obetts, Smit

Members Absent: Rediske

Staff Present: Brummel

1. Meeting called to order at 7:30PM.
2. Distribute the December 15, 2008 minutes.
3. Public Hearings: None
4. Site Plan Review: None
5. New Business:

A. Discussion on procedure

Supervisor Jerry Alkema invited three guests to speak to the Planning Commission. Invited were Travis Underhill from Latitude Engineering, Rick Pulaski from Nederveld Associates, and Bruce Zeinstra from Holland Engineering.

Vice Chair, Jerold TerHorst, introduced the agenda item, and turned the floor over to Mr. Alkema.

Mr. Alkema handed out a table of ten principles of Smart Growth. He had highlighted one of the ten principles which states "Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective." He then turned the meeting over to Rick Pulaski.

Mr. Pulaski had a fifteen minute power point presentation on Form Based Codes. Mr. Pulaski suggested that Allendale Township could adopt a Form Based Code approach to land development which he believed would be more predictable, fair and cost effective. He believes the potential to advance the "Smart Code" principles were intentionally installed into the Township's 2003 Master Plan by McKenna.

Mr. Pulaski believes the smart growth principles are very closely related to the Form Based Code, which considers all areas in the municipality not just residential or commercial. There are standards set which the builder would

have to comply with. He brought examples of what the city of Hudsonville did with using the Form Based Codes. The prerequisites are laid out for the builder, which the whole community had a part in creating, therefore the builder knows what to expect.

Knoper asks if this model is used in the whole city of Hudsonville.

Pulaski states that it is just the commercial areas in Hudsonville; they are using the Lake Forest model (Which is a city in Illinois). They don't have the massive parking standards and they require 3-4 stories in some cases.

Knoper asked if the form based uses allow commercial outside of the downtown area.

Pulaski states that there are more commercial areas outside of the Form Based Model area.

Knoper wonders if the rules are all the same no matter where you build it.

Pulaski states that there are different standards for some key buildings, like where there is commercial close to residential. There are 4 or 5 standards throughout Hudsonville.

Smit wonders if there is a time frame for when they want to get the city looking like the plan.

Pulaski states that they are looking at 15-20 yrs and there are some tax-deductions as incentives for businesses.

Bruce Zeinstra from Holland Engineering states that you get rid of the vague differences in what the style of the buildings are. This would lay out what the requirements would be for the builder.

Pulaski states that the city voted on what they wanted to see, and it was included in the process.

Guzicki wonders how many buildings have been built to these standards in the past 2 years.

Pulaski states that nothing has been built to these standards, but one building was built before the standards voluntarily by the owner.

Guzicki wonders what the reason was that Auto Zone ended up not building in Hudsonville.

Pulaski states that he doesn't know why. Also Mr. Burger's owner liked the new plan Hudsonville adopted, because it cut down on the metal cost, therefore made the project less expensive but explained that Mr. Burger

was built before the codes were adopted and doesn't comply with the new codes.

Guzicki wonders if it would have cost more for Mr. Burger to build to the new codes would they have been as open to the new requirements.

Pulaski states that there is no way to know, but there is a certain threshold that a builder wants to stay under with cost, so it would have been dependent on that.

Brummel states that it's not always the case that the people building here are residents of Allendale and part of the Form Base Code adoption process. We have used PUDs to try to accomplish the same as some of the intents as a Form Based Code. Hudsonville has taken the negotiation out of the process. We negotiate with the builder and if we had a Form Based Code, there will be no room for changes with the developer. He believes that is more restrictive.

Guzicki states that when the developer comes in and wants something different than what is in the ordinances, they go to the PUD to change it to what they want. When they don't get what they want they come back numerous times and try to change our minds, but we try not to sway from the ordinances. That is the only reason things sometimes take longer than they should.

Alkema wonders if any studies were done before the Form Based Code was in place in Hudsonville. Did they show that this is what the public wants to invest in?

Pulaski states that there were many studies done to find out what would be the best for the community, and Form Based Codes were what was chosen.

Brummel asked if Pulaski believed the Farm Based Code to be more restrictive.

Rick states that he doesn't believe it to be more restrictive, it creates examples for the developer to help explain what Allendale wants to see. It's possibly more restrictive, but also less restrictive by allowing more density with the multiple story buildings.

Brummel states that he is not against Form Based Codes, Allendale has a different type of land area than Hudsonville. We have a state trunkline with a 50 mph speed limit right through the middle of the Township's commercial corridor with, for the most part, 300 feet in land depth from the corridor. We also don't own any of the streets like Hudsonville does. We want the same types of walk ability, but we just don't have the same type of area.

Guzicki wonders how much has Hudsonville invested in the Form Based Code adoption.

Rick states that there is \$35K in the portfolio, and another \$85K in the Master Plan and corridor plan.

Guzicki wonders if there is any instance in Allendale where applicants have followed the letter of the ordinance and didn't get approved that same night.

Pulaski states that he can't think of any instances off the top of his head.

Guzicki states that if there is a lot of complaining about not getting approved, it is because the plan didn't meet the zoning standards.

There were many instances that were discussed over why a plan wasn't approved, but it all went back to the fact that the standards were not met in the plan. Every time a plan took a while to pass was because the standards were not being met, and the developer wanted something other than what the Planning Commission laid out for them.

Zeinstra states that when he is drafting a property, he looks at the zoning requirements, usually all the requirements for Allendale are in the Site Plan Review portion, not in a place he would normally look until he's ready to do a Site Plan. From a designer's standpoint it is kind of buried.

Pulaski states that the Alaskan Pipeline had a different interpretation of the ordinances, and the initial Campus West plan was turned down for reasons I don't know. These are some instances from Guzicki's question earlier of why the plan wasn't approved-

Alkema states that the designers don't look good to their client when they think they know what Allendale wants, and they keep getting shot down.

Brummel states that the Alaskan Pipeline Restaurant didn't want to design like Walgreens; they could have, to get a visual of what the township zoning ordinances require for landscaping with front-yard parking they could have gone to Walgreens and looked.

Knoper states that there is wiggle room when we do a PUD, would you want us to get rid of all PUD's?

Rick states not necessarily, but in the Form Based Code there would be less wiggle room.

Travis Underhill states that he would like to discuss the difference between Form Based Code and PUD. With the PUD, it is considered if-then zoning. With Form Based Codes, there would be pictures and definite restrictions.

Most of his clients would like it to be more restrictive, there are more requirements to design to, but it is a more of a smooth process.

TerHorst states that we could sit and talk about this issue for hours, so we should leave it at that and be dismissed.

6. Old Business: None
7. Public concerns and comments concerning items not on the agenda: None
8. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 19, 2009 at 7:30 PM.