

_____ 7:00 _____ o'clock p.m. Chairperson Wurmlinger called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Buechler , Hilton , Koob , Mills , Muir , Oprita , Wurmlinger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Buechler , Hilton , Koob , Mills , Muir , Oprita , Wurmlinger

ALSO PRESENT: Sharon Wilton, Zoning Administrator & Recording Secretary

VISITORS: Chase Dicken, Rightway Auto

Motion by Buechler, supported by Koob, to approve the agenda as printed and posted. Vote, 6/0 with the addition of item #2 under new business as recommended by Koob-regarding SB #446 and HB# 4722. Regarding approval of short-term rentals in all residential zones. If approved they will allow short-term rentals in any residential area bypassing any local control or regulation.

Koob has called our local senator, representatives, and Jorja Baldwin to express concerns.

Motion by Wurmlinger, supported by Koob to approve the minutes from **11/10/2020** as printed and posted. Vote, 6 / 0

REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Buechler

Offices are open to the public

Cruise weekend is back last weekend in June

Building department clerk is moving to Tennessee, In process of hiring a new one. Job is posted on the website.

Switching between ordinance officers as well. Currently searching for new applicants. A couple of in-house employees have expressed an interest. Will make it official at the next board meeting. Will be beneficial to have someone in the office for walk-ins.

REPORT FROM ZBA REPRESENTATIVE: Oprita absent

No Report

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD: None

- *When the Chairperson calls on you, stand and speak your name and address clearly for the record.*
- *Each person will be permitted to speak one time for 3 minutes until everyone has had a chance to speak.*
- *Any comments to be made regarding the public hearing will be heard during the continuation of the public hearing, below.*

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1

Special Use Approval- Right Way Automotive

- Sponsor Comments
- Citizen Comments

Chase Dicken (spelling of the last name?)

Right Way Automotive

The parcel was purchased in November 2020. Right Way Automotive has demolished the former restaurant and plans to expand its lot.

Dicken said this would double the frontage and allow them to be more successful in Fort Gratiot. No official timeline on paving due to COVID and demand on paving companies. Plans to add landscaping, pave lot and reuse/improve current light poles on site.

Hilton asked if any new structures would be built.

Dicken confirmed lot only. Landscaping will be lower to still have visibility of vehicles.

Wilton asked about the lighting plan, there are existing light poles but will need repairs to make it operational.

Buechler asked if the plan is to use the existing footprint or shape. Right Way will pave over the building footprint and add new access.

Koob expressed concern over the township's approval of combining parcels before the special approval was granted.

Wurmlinger asked about any potential downsides and Koob said it is more of a clerical error, seems backward to approve beforehand.

Wurmlinger asked about addressing the issue within the office.
Wilton said they will discuss.

Koob asked about cars parking on the parcel before approval. Wilton stated they were notified of the need to wait.

Wurmlinger asked about the north side of the property there is a drive, which would be next to Independent flooring. Wilton said she hasn't heard of any concerns from Independent Flooring regarding access.

Hilton asked if Right Way would maintain the sidewalks. Right Way confirmed but asked if township owns or parcel owner owns the sidewalks.

Wilton will confirm, but thinks is parcel owner

Wurmlinger asked the board had any additional concerns.

Buechler asked about the property line next to residential is in Port Huron. A wall or green belt on the backside of the property is required.

Currently, there are trees now, Dicken asked if they would have to remove them. Beuchler said no, not if already there and if it provides decent coverage they would not have to add landscaping.

Beuchler suggested approval of the site plan provided with conditions that the lighting plan will meet the ordinance. The ordinance for the landscape to include the green belt in the back.

Motion by Beuchler, supported by Koob to approve special land use and site plan approval to Right Way Automotive with the following conditions:

Meet parking lot ordinance.
Meet the ordinances for landscape requirements.

BOARD DISCUSSION: *NO PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE HEARD AT THIS TIME*****

Motion by Buechler, supported by Koob, to approve w/conditions; Meet parking lot ordinance.
Meet the ordinances for landscape requirements . Vote, 6/0

Item #2

Michigan Senate Bill 446 and House Bill 4722.

Koob presented copies of each bill regarding permitting short-term rentals in all residential zones and a copy of a personal letter he submitted to state representatives. Koob has serious concerns over the lack of local control and cited personal experiences.

Muir asked how the issue is handled with the township currently, has several in her neighborhood but has not had issues. Wilton said neighbors usually call to complain but she has checked various websites to confirm and then contact the property owner. Usually, then it is taken down but they could still be operating.

Buechler said we don't want to lose local control and has also sent emails. Jorja Baldwin heard from Beeler and they are making some changes to these bills.

The MTA is the state association for townships, they send emails daily to talk to representatives but to be fair his argument wasn't that we don't want to have them, but want to have a seat at the table for local management to set conditions, special approvals and handle disturbances.

Short-term rentals have been happening for a while. But it doesn't make sense for us to create a bunch of ordinances if the state is going to override.

Koob said Burtchville township created ordinances to try to control but they failed miserably.

Wurmlinger suggested submitting copies of each bill into the notes.

Mills asked who is pushing for these bills and who would be representing our township to speak against it. Suggestions are Jorja Baldwin or Rob Crawford.

Buechler said we haven't gone to Lansing in person but have reached out to representatives to express concerns.

Koob would like the township to send a letter.

Wurmlinger suggested checking with Rob Crawford.

Mills suggested that if we could find a case of property values or home assessment being adversely affected by being next to a short-term rental it would make a good case against. Would be curious to know.

Buechler said would probably have to speak with communities where it is more prevalent to get an idea.

Mills can't imagine buying a house without knowing. That might cause a change.

CITIZEN COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS: In order to insure that the comments are recorded as accurately as possible, please follow the format below:

- * Address the planning commission only. Individual conversations should not be held during the meeting.*
- * Please stand at the podium; speak your name and address clearly for the record.*
- * Each person will be permitted to speak one time for 3 minutes until everyone has had a chance to speak.*
- * The minutes will be transcribed from the recording. Please be respectful of the person speaking. Comments made inaudible on the recording by background sounds such as whispering, clapping or interrupting cannot be made part of the official minutes.*

BOARD DISCUSSION: Township Updates

Wilton offered commission members the opportunity to sign up for direct deposit.

OLD BUSINESS None

Motion by Wurmlinger, supported by Muir, to adjourn. Vote, __6/0_____. Time, 7:46 P.M.

The Charter Township of Fort Gratiot complies with the "Americans with Disabilities Act" and if auxiliary aids or services are required at the meeting for individuals with disabilities, please contact Clerk Robert C. Crawford, 3720 Keewahdin Road, Fort Gratiot, Michigan 48059 (810) 385-4489, three days prior to said meeting.