

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2019-14		
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Meeting:	February 12, 2019 Township Board	Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2018 Planning Commission Annual Report	

INTRODUCTION:

This 2018 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Commission Annual Report was prepared pursuant to the requirements of Section 19(2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (“MPEA”), which states:

A planning commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body related to planning and development.

This report is intended to serve as the Planning Commission’s report to the Township Board in accordance with the MPEA as quoted above, and it will also outline the activities of the Planning Department during 2018.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

The Planning Director and Deputy Planner serve on various committees and provide support services to several boards and commissions, including but not limited to:

- Garfield Township Board of Trustees (Staff)
- Garfield Township Planning Commission (Staff)
- Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission (Staff)
- Garfield Township Zoning Board of Appeals (Liaison)
- Joint Traverse City and Garfield Township Planning Commission (Staff)
- Joint Traverse City and Garfield Township Recreation Authority (as needed)
- Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (“TTCI”) (Committee Member)
- Grand Traverse County Road Commission (Garfield Township Alternate Representative)

ADMINISTRATION:

The Planning Department was responsible for generating 125 Staff Reports in 2018 (compared to 133 in 2017 and 78 in 2016) for the various boards, commissions, and committees listed above. Day-to-day tasks also include dialogue with Garfield Township residents, the development community, other community stakeholders, and partner organizations; review of new and ongoing development applications for completeness and compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; monitoring development approvals as they proceed through the approval process; administering grants and parks and recreation activities; and site visits.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The Planning Commission meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and is responsible for reviewing development applications, preparing plans, and making recommendations to the Township Board on development applications and zoning amendments. This meeting schedule allows for the Planning Commission to hear, review, and decide on projects during the first meeting and to advance the interests of the community by holding a work session during the second meeting of the month. This

schedule will continue throughout 2019. Commissioner Gil Uithol was not reappointed to the Planning Commission for 2019 and has been replaced by Bob Fudge.

2018 Master Plan:

Following extensive deliberation at the Planning Commission level, particularly with regard to the classification of certain properties on the Future Land Use Map (“FLUM”), a new Master Plan for Garfield Township was adopted in August 2018 to replace the 2007 plan. This puts the Township on firmer legal ground as planning and zoning decisions must be consistent with an *up-to-date* master plan under state law. In addition, the new Plan better reflects the policy priorities of Garfield Township residents today as expressed through the extensive community survey that underlies the Plan. The Plan is a general guide and leaves ample room for more specific sub-area and/or corridor plans to bring the goals and objectives closer to implementation.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEWS:

Conceptual reviews were established in the 2015 Zoning Ordinance to allow for applicants to appear before the Planning Commission with little more than a concept for development. This process is intended to provide an applicant with valuable feedback to gauge the Planning Commission’s interest in a potential project before a full application is submitted. This process has been utilized by several applicants as they are able to discuss a potential project without having to first enlist surveying, planning, and/or engineering services to complete an application. The following projects were conceptually reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2018:

1. Aspen Pines Multi-Family Residential Project – Special Use Permit (“SUP”)
2. Brickways Multi-Family Residential Project – SUP
3. Grand Traverse Crossing Hotel Project – Planned Unit Development (“PUD”)/SUP Amendment
4. Rainbow Child Care Center Project – PUD/SUP Amendment
5. Miller Creek Drive Crematorium Project – SUP

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS:

In some specific cases, the Director of Planning can administratively approve projects provided that they meet all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. This procedure significantly improves efficiency in the review of minor requests. The Planning Department requires that any Administrative Amendment be justified via written findings and provided to the Planning Commission. The following applications were administratively reviewed in 2018:

1. Traditions at Ashland Park Density Reduction (PUD-2001-01-E)

The subject property is located within the Traditions portion of the Ashland Park PUD and will be accessed via Rusch Road and Brimley Road when all proposed infrastructure is in place. The request was to amend the Ashland Park PUD to build single-family homes near the southeast corner of the PUD rather than the duplex units which were approved for that area.

Following research into the application and prior PUD approval and associated amendments, it was found that the applicant could move forward via an Administrative Amendment to the PUD, as the application proposes a reduction in density for units 168-172. Section 423.G(4)(a) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that the Director of Planning may authorize an Administrative Amendment to a PUD provided that specific criteria can be met. In this case, each of the criteria was met and the application was approved.

2. The Crown Phase III (SUP-1991-10-M)

The subject property is located within the northwest portion of The Crown PUD and will be accessed via West Crown Drive when all proposed infrastructure is in place. The request was to amend The Crown PUD to add Phase III to the development.

Following research into the application and prior PUD approval and associated amendments, it was found that the applicant could move forward via an Administrative Amendment to the PUD, as Phase III was conceptually approved previously via Major Amendment to the PUD. Section 423.G(4)(a) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that the Director of Planning may authorize an Administrative Amendment to a PUD provided that specific criteria can be met. In this case, each of the criteria was met and the application was approved with conditions.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS:

The Planning Commission reviewed and approved numerous projects in 2018, which included Site Plan Reviews, Planned Unit Developments, Special Use Permits, and zoning Text and Map Amendments. A brief summary of those reviews is as follows:

PURD-2017-01 Fox Run Multi-Family Residential Project (Ongoing)

The approximately 8-acre subject property, which is zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential, is located at the southeast corner of Garfield Rd and Garfield Woods Drive. The request is to construct 84 two-bedroom apartment units on the approximately 4.25 acres of developable property and leave the remaining 3.75 acres of low, wet area as open space, which results in a density of approximately 10 units per acre. The project was given *preliminary* approval by the Planning Commission in February 2018, and discussion is ongoing with regard to the placement of a proposed walking trail and other recreational amenities as of the drafting of this report.

SUP-2015-01-C Ridge 45 Multi-Family Residential Project Phases 3 and 4 (Approved)

The approximately 7.9 acre subject property, which is zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential, is located immediately south of the approved third phase of the Ridge 45 apartment complex, approximately a quarter mile north of the northwest intersection of Lafranier Road and Lloyd Lane. The request was for a Major Amendment to the SUP for Ridge 45 to add Phase 4 to the development (96 units), bringing the total number of units within the complex to 400. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in February 2018 and construction is ongoing.

SUP-2017-04 Hickory Hills Ski Area Improvements (Approved)

The subject property is the Hickory Hills Ski Area, which is owned by the City of Traverse City but located on Garfield Township property at the westernmost end of Randolph Street. The request was for a SUP to make planned improvements to the Ski Area including additional parking and an improved lodge. The master planning process for the improvements was partially funded by Garfield Township. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in February 2018 and many of the new amenities are seeing use for the first time this January 2019.

SUP-2018-01 Silverwood Drive Child Care Operation (12 or Fewer Children) (Approved)

The subject property is a single-family lot on Silverwood Drive near the intersection of Walden Circle, which was previously operating for some time as a state licensed Child Care Family Home (Capacity 1-6). The request was for a SUP to expand to a Child Care, Small Group Home (12 or less). The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in March 2018.

PUD-2014-02-C Buffalo Ridge Center PUD Master Plan (Approved)

The subject property is the Buffalo Ridge Center shopping mall, which is subject to a PUD approved in 2014. The request was for approval of a master plan for the Center that would incorporate a Hobby Lobby store within the PUD, as well as new sidewalk connections and other improvements. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in April 2018 and construction is ongoing with the store expected to open within the next month or so.

SUP-2017-03 Pine Grove Homes Modular Homes Sales Project (Approved—Expired)

The approximately 3.2-acre subject property, which is zoned C-G General Commercial, is located at the northwest intersection of N US-31 South and Meadow Lane Drive, immediately east of the Meadow Lane Mobile Home Park. The request was for a SUP to sell modular, manufactured, and mobile homes on the property. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in April 2018; however, the applicant ultimately did not record the Report and Decision Order within the required 90 day timeframe. Therefore, the SUP approval is expired.

SPR-2018-01 LaFranier Trust Service Drive (Approved)

The approximately 40-acre subject property is located along LaFranier Road approximately a quarter mile north of the northeast intersection of LaFranier and Hammond Roads. The request was for site plan approval to construct a service drive from LaFranier to allow for the division of a parcel at the northwest corner of the 40 acres. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in July 2018, but the applicant has not yet recorded the Report and Decision Order and has expressed the intent to Staff to reapply at such time that the new access management ordinance is adopted.

SUP-2018-04 Aspen Pines Multi-Family Residential Project (Approved)

The approximately 0.77-acre subject property, which is zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential, is located just east of the intersection of Barlow and Floresta Streets. The request was for a SUP to construct 8 one-bedroom apartment units with 8 associated detached garages on the property. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in September 2018 and construction is ongoing.

SUP-2018-05 Grand Traverse Oral Surgery Dental Surgery Clinic Project (Approved)

The approximately 11.32-acre subject property, which is zoned I-G General Mixed Use Industrial Business, is located at the southwest intersection of N Garfield and W Hammond Roads. The request was for a SUP to construct a 15,000-square foot dental clinic with a 40' x 100' planned future expansion on the property. The Planning Commission approved the request with conditions in December 2018 and construction is ongoing.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS:

Map Amendments:

Z-2017-04 Hammond Road Downzoning (Approved)

The approximately 20-acre subject property is located immediately north of W Hammond Road, approximately a quarter mile west of Townline Road. The request was to withdraw from the conditional rezoning agreement previously in place on the property making the originally A – Agricultural property conditionally C-G General Commercial, and instead conditionally rezoning the property to A – Agricultural with conditions intended to prevent development of the property. The Planning Commission approved the request in January 2018 and Township Board approval was granted in March 2018.

Z-2017-06 Brickways and Church of Christ Property Rezoning (Approved)

The approximately 12-acre subject property is located at the northeast intersection of South Airport Road and Rennie Street. The request was to rezone the property from R-1 One-Family Residential to R-3 Multi-Family Residential without restrictions. The Planning Commission approved the request in March 2018 and Township Board approval was granted in May 2018. As noted previously in this report, the applicant later brought a proposal before the Planning Commission for conceptual review of an apartment complex on the property. No application for a SUP to construct the apartments has been submitted as of the drafting of this report.

Z-2018-02 Living Hope Church Property Rezoning (Withdrawn)

The approximately 3.20-acre subject property is located at the northwest intersection of W South Airport Road and Day Drive. The request was to rezone the property from R-1 One-Family Residential to C-O Office Commercial without restrictions. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the request in May 2018 during which significant public comment was received and the applicant chose to withdraw the request shortly thereafter.

Z-2018-01 Banton Trust Airport Road Property Rezoning (Approved)

The approximately 3.14-acre subject property is located immediately south of W South Airport Road adjoining the Sam's Club service drive entrance along its east property line. The request was to rezone the property from A – Agricultural to R-3 Multi-Family Residential without restrictions. The Planning Commission approved the request in October 2018 and Township Board approval was granted in December 2018.

Text Amendments:

Z-2018-03 Amended Section 322 C-P Planned Shopping Center (Approved)

Recognizing the changing retail environment, this amendment was initiated by the Planning Commission with the intent of modernizing the C-P Planned Shopping Center zoning district to help attract redevelopment. After considerable Planning Commission deliberation and Staff revision, a new Sec. 322 emerged to replace the previous section in its entirety which permits all permitted uses by right, reduces setbacks considerably to allow for outlot construction, and permits drive-thru uses which were previously prohibited, among other changes. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendment in May 2018 and the Township Board voted to follow that recommendation in July 2018.

Z-2018-04 Amended Section 313 R-1 One-Family Residential (Approved)

This amendment was initiated by the Planning Commission when it came to light that Institutional Uses were not permitted in the R-1 One-Family Residential zoning district in the 2015 Zoning Ordinance, whereas they had been prior to 2015. The amendment simply added Institutional Uses to the uses permitted via SUP in Sec. 313 in keeping with other districts in the Ordinance, and corrected duplicate text for golf courses. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendment in July 2018 and the Township Board voted to follow that recommendation in September 2018.

Z-2017-05 Cherryland Center U-Haul Project (Denied)

The request was for two related amendments to permit "Retail and Self-Storage Facility and Truck and Trailer Share" by right in the C-P Planned Shopping Center, which would have facilitated the redevelopment of the vacant K-Mart at the Cherryland Center into a U-Haul facility. The Planning Commission recommended denial of the request in August 2018 and the Township Board voted to follow that recommendation in November 2018.

Z-2018-02 Living Hope Church Institutional Setback Request (Withdrawn)

The request was to amend Section 753.A(2) to reduce the 30-foot setback for Institutional structures and parking areas adjoining residential areas to 10 feet, and the setback from right-of-ways from 40 to 10 feet to accommodate a significant expansion of the Living Hope Church at the northwest intersection of South Airport Road and Day Drive. The request was introduced to the Planning Commission in December 2018 and the applicant chose to withdraw the request shortly thereafter prior to a public hearing being scheduled.

Z-2018-06 New Section 512 Service Drives (Ongoing)

Recognizing the need for effective access management, this amendment was initiated by the Planning Commission. After considerable Planning Commission deliberation and Staff revision, a new Sec. 512

emerged to replace the previous section in its entirety which is sensitive to natural features and allows greater flexibility in design, among other changes. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendment in December 2018, it was introduced to the Township Board on January 8, 2019, and a public hearing was scheduled for the February 12, 2018 Board meeting.

JOINT TRAVERSE CITY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION:

The Joint Planning Commission is comprised of City and Township residents appointed from their respective Planning Commissions and one member jointly appointed by both municipalities. The Joint Commission has not been significantly active since the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance in May 2017 for the Grand Traverse Commons property. In 2018, Linda Koebert was appointed to the Commission. In addition, the Commission decided to go to a quarterly meeting schedule, with meetings to be held at 5:15 PM on the third Wednesday of the month.

STAFF COMMENTS:

2019 is poised to be an exciting year as we have welcomed a new Planning Director, John Sych, to replace longtime Planning Director, Rob Larrea in late December 2018. We are thankful for the strong foundation Rob put in place for the Township and wish him the best in his new position. Erik Perdonik, Deputy Planner, served as the Acting Planning Director in the interim and will return to the Deputy position to support John for the time being. Finally, we are thankful to Gil Uithol for his service to the Planning Commission and welcome Bob Fudge to the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION/ACTION REQUESTED:

Following review, if the Township Board is prepared to accept the 2018 Annual Report in accordance with the MPEA, the following motion is suggested:

THAT the 2018 Planning Commission Annual Report, Planning Department Report 2019-14, BE RECEIVED and FILED.