

Leighton Township Planning Commission Minutes

Date: April 14, 2021, 7:00 PM

Members Present: Tom Smith, Ben Potts, John Hooker, Harry DeHaan, Matt VanderEide, Stephen Shoemaker

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Planner Andy Moore from Williams & Works, Zoning Administrator Lori Castello from PCI plus 10 members of the public and/or applicants.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harry DeHaan at 7:00 PM
2. **Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2021.** Minutes were accepted as presented.
3. **Public Comments for items not on the agenda:** None
4. **Inquiry of Conflict of Interest:** None
5. **Public Hearings:**
 - a. **Harvest Meadows Condominiums, Phase 2.** Zack Boeve of Pathfinder Engineering was present representing Sable Homes. The units in phase 2 would similar to those in phase 1. They are 2, 3, and 4 unit buildings. The layout has been updated to accommodate the updated zoning ordinance regarding building setbacks. There will be a looped watermain which is being coordinated between the two projects and the DLSWA.

Moore reviewed his comments from his staff report and reviewed each of the site plan review conditions from the zoning ordinance. Moore noted that agency approvals have not been received, which are supposed to be obtained between sketch plan review and preliminary plan review. He also had concerns about parking and emergency access.

DeHaan opened the public hearing.

Deb Funk 4280 Cidermill Dr. Wanted to address the parking pad issue, she thinks it's a must. There have already been instances where people have to go move cars to emergency vehicles can get through. When people have more than one or two guests there just isn't enough room for emergency services to get through.

Rose Marie Andrus 4285 Cidermill Dr. One incident involved ten emergency vehicles and it was in the winter so there was no room for anyone to get through. In some areas, if a 2-unit building is eliminated it could provide adequate parking.

Tammy Whitsell 4268 Springwell Court. When Bitely built Harvest Meadows he admitted there were drainage issues and there were. If they take out the berm there will be major problems (but this is not proposed). He says he will do one thing and then does another. The ACDC had to sue him to fix drainage issues but settled the day before court.

Fern O'Beshaw 4271 Cidermill Dr. She sent a letter to the PC, Bitely, and staff. She read the letter aloud at the meeting. To summarize, there is inadequate parking for guests. Most owners would want to see parking lots to accommodate guest parking. Consider removing a couple of two-unit buildings and replacing them with parking lots. Those, along with a public community building, would make the site more appealing. Several residents of the development signed on to the letter. She also noted that the drawing provided by Pathfinder was not up to date as several of the "proposed" buildings are constructed and occupied, and the layout is not consistent in some areas.

DeHaan closed the public hearing.

VanderEide asked about the width of the private drives and if they met ordinance standards. Commissioners also asked about the need for cul-de-sacs for the three proposed dead-end streets. There was a consensus that temporary cul-de-sacs should be installed.

Shoemaker asked about parking, and if construction traffic could park off the street between proposed units. Moore felt that is fine, but that they would have to be directed to avoid the completed buildings. Shoemaker was skeptical of a parking lot being effective but agreed that parking and access are difficult on the site now. He also was concerned that a community building (suggested by residents) would only exacerbate the parking issues.

VanderEide also asked about the stormwater detention. Boeve indicated that a second detention basin was proposed to accommodate additional stormwater, including some water coming from off-site that flows onto the subject property. VanderEide also noted that the pipe sizes vary a lot and asked the applicant to address it. Boeve mentioned that the larger pipe sizes are due to proximity to the basin and that the design is per ACDC standards. Moore said the Township Engineer will review the plans.

Boeve indicated that plans had been submitted to reviewing agencies but they have not received anything back yet.

Shoemaker asked if the addition of parking pads throughout the development would be allowable under the zoning ordinance. Moore felt that was acceptable but would need to review the Zoning Ordinance to be sure.

The Commissioners felt that the application should be tabled until the following issues are resolved:

1. The reviewing agencies have issued permits,
2. Applicant to address the parking issue brought forth by the residents,
3. The site plan should include temporary cul-de-sacs in three locations where stubs are proposed between phases 2 and 3
4. Applicant should explore a widening of the street

Commissioners also discussed landscaping to the north and east but opted to not have that installed as there is no development in those areas. Boeve indicated that the vegetation on the north side of the project is proposed to remain as is.

Motion by Shoemaker, support by Potts, to table the request so that the applicant can address the four items listed above. Motion carried via roll call vote with all commissioners voting yes.

6. New Business:

- a. Accessory Dwelling Units.** Castello reviewed a request she had from a resident who was looking to construct an accessory dwelling for a relative with special needs. Currently the zoning ordinance accessory dwellings in Leighton Township. Moore reviewed a memorandum prepared for the Planning Commission that explores accessory dwelling units and asked for Planning Commission feedback and if they should be permitted in Leighton Township.

Commissioners asked numerous questions about enforcement, separate sewer or septic connections, building sizes, manufactured housing units, etc. Commissioners were open to the idea of accessory dwellings but wanted to see some example ordinances from other Allegan County communities. Moore and Castello will provide the Commission with some examples at the next meeting and the Commissioners at that time will decide if they want to move forward.

- 7. Public Comments:** Fern O'Beshaw noted that the Dorr Leighton Wastewater Authority does not regularly meet and it would not likely meet before the next meeting. Moore said that if the Township Engineer has reviewed and provided his comments by the meeting, the PC would be able to move forward, provided that all other requirements have been met.

8. Correspondence:

9. Commissioner Comments:

- 10. Adjournment. Motion by Potts to adjourn. The motion was supported by Shoemaker and carried via a voice vote with all members voting yes.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Moore, AICP
Leighton Township Planner