

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the Georgetown Township Planning Commission, held
Wednesday, May 18, 2022**

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Samy at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Tom Healy, Gary Veldink, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Michael Moores, Kelly Kuiper

Absent: Jessica Ulberg

Also present: Victor Vuong, Zoning Administrator

#220518-01 – Planning Commission Agenda for May 18, 2022

Moved by Gary Veldink, seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Yeas: Tom Healy, Gary Veldink, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Michael Moores, Kelly Kuiper

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#220518-02 – Minutes of the April 20, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting

Moved by Gary Veldink, seconded by Kelly Kuiper, to approve the minutes as presented.

Yeas: Tom Healy, Gary Veldink, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Michael Moores, Kelly Kuiper

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#220518-03 – Public Hearing – The layout of the Preliminary Plat of Edson Farm, part of P.P. # 70-14-28-400-006, located at 2465 Edson Dr., zoned Low Density Residential (LDR), Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan.

Doug Butterworth of Creekside Construction, the applicant, presented the request ([application](#), [plan](#)) with the following comments:

- The reason why this proposal is going through the platting process for one lot is because this could not be accomplished as a land division. The State's rules allow splitting a parcel larger than 10 acres to exceed the 4 to 1 depth to width ratio, but the Georgetown Township Zoning Ordinance goes above that and requires all divided parcels to not exceed that ratio. That's why he is going the subdivision route. The person buying the 10-acre piece will still farm it and the other three parcels will be split off.

The Zoning Administrator presented the [staff report](#).

Tom Healy asked is the plan to continue farming on the larger lot?

Doug Butterworth said yes. The person buying it runs a restaurant in town.

Tom Healy asked do they anticipate attempting to divide the lot into multiple parcels later?

Doug Butterworth said no. The original plan was to develop the entire parcel similar to a development he has in Hudsonville, but this parcel is affected by a floodplain and the soil is not conducive to that plan.

Kelly Kuiper asked what was the Township's thought process between having different requirements for a land division and for a plat?

The Zoning Administrator said he will look into the history of it.

Gary Veldink said he doesn't think this is the proper way to do it because the applicant is having to do more than what he's getting out of it.

Doug Butterworth said it cost him about \$15,000 more by going through the platting process. The State's rules for land divisions allow parcels larger than 10 acres to exceed the depth to width ratio of 4 to 1, but the Township's ordinance does not allow that.

Kelly Kuiper asked what did all the other agencies look at?

Doug Butterworth said he sent all of his applications in and two of them have already been approved and there was not much for the other agencies to review.

The Chairperson opened the public hearing.

No one from the public made public comments at this time.

The Chairperson closed the public hearing.

Moved by Tom Healy, seconded by Gary Veldink, to adopt the staff report as finding of facts and to recommend to the Township Board to grant tentative preliminary plat approval of Edson Farm, part of P.P. # 70-14-28-400-006, located at 2465 Edson Dr., zoned Low Density Residential (LDR), Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan, as shown on the site plan dated 4/7/2022, and with the following conditions:

- a. Building envelopes meet ordinance requirements, but will be reviewed for exactness at the time building permit applications are submitted. Lots affected by a drainage easement are situations noted to be created by the developer and would be considered a self-created situation in case any variance requests are submitted in the future based on those circumstances.**
- b. All fees, including deferred assessments, shall be paid prior to the issuance of any building permits.**
- c. An attached garage with a minimum of 400 square feet shall be provided.**
- d. Sidewalk will be provided by the individual property owner at the time a house is constructed. (Unless waived by the Township Board.)**
- e. A land division application shall be submitted to split parcels A, B, and C.**

Tom Healy addressed a [letter](#) received from Kim VanZyll, 2520 Edson Drive, and said this step is only for tentative preliminary plat approval. If any changes are needed further in the review process, it can be addressed before final approval.

Josiah Samy said maybe the Planning Commission should look at the ordinance on land divisions.

Kelly Kuiper said with this being a tentative review, the Planning Commission is only ensuring the lot configuration meets zoning requirements at this time. Beyond that, a lot of agencies review the plat as well. Tentative preliminary approval does not grant a building permit.

Yeas: Tom Healy, Gary Veldink, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Michael Moores, Kelly Kuiper

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#220518-04 – Public Hearing – (SUP2201) Debbie Essling (Deb’s Daycare), 3313 Oakmont Dr., is requesting to have a group day care home, under Sec. 8.3(E), on a parcel of land described as P.P. # 70-14-17-478-004, located at 3313 Oakmont Dr., in a Low Density Residential (LDR) district, Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan.

Debbie Essling, the applicant, presented the request ([application](#), [plan](#)) with the following comments:

- She is requesting to have a group day care home. She currently has one in Hudsonville at 2987 Barry Street for 9 years. They want more room and more space. She’ll be running the day care in the lower level.

The Zoning Administrator presented the [staff report](#).

Tom Healy asked will it be a max of 12 kids?

Debbie Essling said she has a third daughter who works with them as well. They could technically watch more children if they are related.

Tom Healy asked what’s the anticipated max with relatives?

Debbie Essling said two to three extra, up to 15.

Tom Healy asked how will she promote her business?

Debbie Essling said she really doesn’t think she’ll have to because of the demand for day care. She has a wait list of nine right now and possibly some kids from the neighborhood. She’s been doing this for 25 years and have never had to advertise.

Tom Healy asked where are the children coming from?

Debbie Essling said the Jenison and Hudsonville area.

Tom Healy asked what is the pickup time?

Debbie Essling said it has switched to 4:30 p.m. to avoid rush hour. It’s been very accommodating for the parents. Drop off opens at 7:00 a.m. so children come between 7:15 to 9:00 so it’s pretty

staggered. The City of Hudsonville only allowed 4 cars in the driveway at a time, not including her cars. She has asked parents to not park on the street and they have been great about it.

Tom Healy said the ordinance does not prohibit parents from backing into the driveway.

Michael Moores asked will the only time they see traffic be during the drop off and pickup times that has been stated?

Debbie Essling said no, sometimes the children have doctor's appointments, but she has asked the parents to not schedule appointments during the day. So the drop off is usually between 7:15 to 9:00 in the morning and the children go home as early as 3:30 p.m.

Jeannine Bolhouse asked will fencing be installed?

Debbie Essling said yes, she talked to the contractor today and there will be white vinyl fencing.

Jeannine Bolhouse asked will the entire backyard be fenced with a 6-foot-high fence?

Debbie Essling said yes.

Jeannine Bolhouse said the State has rules on the ratio between the number of staff versus the number of children. Will they be meeting the requirements of the State?

Debbie Essling said yes, the State also does unannounced visits.

Josiah Samy asked is there ever a major rush for pickup if children are leaving for appointments or if parents get out of work early?

Debbie Essling said on occasion that could happen maybe once or twice a month, but when it does happen, she asks the parents to stagger.

Josiah Samy said he recommends staggering the times.

Debbie Essling said some parents have more than one child, so that results in less traffic.

Kelly Kuiper said she lives just up the road so she's aware of the traffic situation in the neighborhood. The neighborhood deals with traffic very well. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, a single-family home averages 10 trips per day. There are three access points to this street; two from Baldwin Street and one from Sugar Maple Drive. If you remove the connection to Sugar Maple Drive, based on current traffic numbers, this would be a 2.5% increase to traffic. The applicant is being held to a higher standard than everyone else in the neighborhood because of this application.

Gary Veldink asked the applicant if she is licensed.

Debbie Essling said yes.

The Chairperson opened the public hearing.

Michelle Guppy, 3356 Oakmont Drive, said she has concerns about traffic. Buses from both school districts come through the neighborhood. She supports day cares, but would not like to live next to one. Her family moved here for the privacy.

Matt O'Rourke, 3302 Oakmont Drive, said he is against it for three reasons. Section 20.3 establishes the general standards for a special land use. He disagrees they are met. The first standard is not met because this is in the back of a subdivision with minimal traffic. The restrictive covenants will be violated, but he understands the Planning Commission doesn't have authority to enforce the restrictive covenants. This may become an annoyance to the neighborhood. Section 20.4(N) establishes the specific standards and says they are not met. There's no reasonable place on the street for drop off. The school bus stop is right next door to the day care. The additional congestion and confusion will be a danger to everyone. Vehicles can't turnaround in the driveway and backing into the driveway is not in the spirit of the ordinance.

Aubrey VanSlyke, 3301 Oakmont Drive, said Georgetown Township is not zoned for businesses like this. If you allow this then you're going to allow more businesses at this location. There are lots of buses that go in and out here throughout the day. They don't stop until about 4:30. Her family moved here because of the location in the neighborhood. They expected the only traffic back here to be from the people who actually live there.

Steve Guppy, 3173 Oakmont Drive, said he moved here 8 years ago. He was one of the first houses and traffic is wonderful. It's a great place to live. His house is down the street near the exit. He asked why is the Planning Commission entertaining adding a business? This will affect the neighborhood and its property values. If employees have to park in the driveway, it will be impossible for cars to turnaround in the driveway. Four cars in the driveway cannot be done. Who will be enforcing this? If parents drop off at 7:30 a.m., who will be there? A day care is okay if it's small.

Chris Essling, 3313 Oakmont Drive, said he is the CFO of the day care and Debbie's husband. The day care is allowed by the State. The number is what it boils down to. They are just asking to have more children. They've been there since May 2 and they have a lot of work to do just to satisfy State requirements. Why do we allow kids to drive karts down the street? Why do parents drive unlicensed vehicles down the street? Why are unlicensed vehicles allowed to park in the street? The speed limit is 25, he obeys the speed limit. We need to get on top of the illegal stuff going on in this neighborhood instead of getting on them for bringing in kids.

Alyssa O'Rourke, 3302 Oakmont Drive, said we need to focus on the task at hand. Instead of talking about the speed, kids driving karts, and adults in unlicensed vehicles, they need to stay focused on the day care.

The Chairperson closed the public hearing.

Debbie Essling said she's open to any suggestions regarding the concerns to make everything safe. She understands the traffic concerns, but is willing to work around that. Kids are the next generation, why are we disputing over them? It's a business that enhances the next future.

Chris Essling said where we lived in Hudsonville, we used the driveway as a play area. At this house, the play area will be in the backyard in a fenced area.

Josiah Samy said he understands the concerns about traffic and speeding. The Planning Commission has no authority over the speed limit or speeding. He recommends talking to the Road Commission or Sheriff's Department. Regarding Aubrey VanSlyke's concern that more businesses will be allowed at this location, this would not happen because the ordinance does not allow group day care homes to be within 1,500 feet of each other. About Matt O'Rourke's concerns related to the general standards and specific standards, the Planning Commission will determine if they are met. Regarding Steve Guppy's question about who will enforce compliance with the standards, when it comes to complaints, the Township is complaint driven. The Planning Commission should now talk about the standards.

Tom Healy said what Matt O'Rourke said regarding Section 20.3(A) and the character of the neighborhood is challenging from the aspect that the Zoning Ordinance provides for home-based businesses in many different instances. In this particular instance, it requires a special land use permit. Once a special land use request is determined to meet the standards, it's essentially entitled and must be approved because you can't deny it by law. Given there are six other group day care homes approved in the Township, it's no different than any other ones in the Township. As to the traffic concerns, he understands them, but it's pretty substantial what Kelly Kuiper identified about the traffic count and activity. Regarding the comment about the bus stop being there, there's going to be buses coming and going whether there are 5, 10, 15, or more kids. That's not going to change the volume of buses, or garbage trucks, or any traffic coming down that street. Each of these standards exist in the proposed motion and all of those items are required to be met by ordinance and if they are not, a complaint can be communicated to the Township and the Code Enforcement Officer can go out there.

Michael Moores said based on what he's heard, like what Tom Healy said, as long as they adhere to the ordinance, there's nothing to stop it. It sounds like the issues lie within the neighborhood and how the ordinance and traffic laws are not being adhered to and that should be addressed.

Jeannine Bolhouse said she was on Planning Commission for all the other six group day care homes and she remembers for at least four of them, neighbors came to the meeting to complain, but later they came in and said it's never been an issue and they've never noticed it afterwards. She has personally dropped off her kids to day care for 8 years and it is like a family and it's very important to have a safe place for a child. Somehow to indicate these parents will drive through the neighborhood as if they could run over kids in the neighborhood is baffling. She's positive these parents will bring kids to Deb's day care because it's a great neighborhood and a safe place to drop their kids off. The neighbors are the ones that will create a safe neighborhood for the kids. The State licensure for day care is no joke and they do come in unannounced. She gets emails on a regular basis. If you have an infant or toddler, you need one adult for every four kids. She's been called before to come pick up her kid because the day care didn't have enough adults at the time; these ratios are very strict.

Josiah Samy said regarding the standards in Section 20.3, nothing will make the home out of the norm. All of the standards must be met just like the standards for the State. All of these standards appear to be met and they must remain met.

Kelly Kuiper said the general standards in Section 20.3 appear to be met. The day care will not change the home's character; it's still a house and still has a driveway. It will not make the home's character any different from other homes. When it comes to the specific standards, standard 1 is met. Regarding standard 2, it is not the Planning Commission's job to make a decision based on speculation. This is by far the largest driveway out of all the other approved day cares and she

confirmed with the Zoning Administrator that there has not been any complaints filed on the other group day care homes; she doesn't feel comfortable denying the request based on speculation. If the applicant doesn't meet the requirements later on, then the permit can be revoked, but she should be provided the opportunity. Standards 3, 4, and 5 are met as well.

Gary Veldink said his biggest concern is standard 2. 40 feet is not that wide for a driveway. He's not saying it can't be done, but it's difficult. It has to be met as a condition of approval and that's on the applicant to meet.

Moved by Kelly Kuiper, seconded by Tom Healy, to adopt the staff report as finding of fact and to approve Special Land Use Permit (SUP2201) Debbie Essling (Deb's Daycare), 3313 Oakmont Dr., to have a group day care home, under Sec. 8.3(E), on a parcel of land described as P.P. # 70-14-17-478-004, located at 3313 Oakmont Dr., in a Low Density Residential (LDR) district, Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan, based on the findings that all applicable standards of the ordinance have been met including the general special land use standards in Sec. 20.3 and the specific special land use standards in Sec. 20.4(N), and with the following conditions:

- 1. A minimum of 1,800 square feet of 4-foot-high fenced outdoor recreation area shall be provided and maintained.**
- 2. Off-street parking shall be maintained for family members and employees of the facility and drop off areas shall be maintained so that vehicles are not required to back into the roadway.**
- 3. The property shall be maintained in a manner compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and sign permits shall be obtained for any sign (which could be a maximum of 2 square feet).**
- 4. The facility shall be in compliance with all applicable State licensing requirements.**

Yeas: Tom Healy, Gary Veldink, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Michael Moores, Kelly Kuiper

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Moved by Gary Veldink, seconded by Michael Moores, to approve the site plan and submittal materials, as presented, based on the findings that all applicable standards of the ordinance have been met, and with the items not shown on the plan as listed in Sec. 19.4 waived.

Yeas: Tom Healy, Gary Veldink, Josiah Samy, Jeannine Bolhouse, Michael Moores, Kelly Kuiper

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#220518-05 – Public Comments

No one from the public made public comments at this time.

#220518-06 – Other Business

The Planning Commission had discussion about whether or not on-street parking should be allowed.

#220518-07 – Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.