

CALL TO ORDER

The regular December 19, 2012 meeting of the Buchanan Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Stephanie Wagner-Hemminger at 7:03 pm.

Members Present: Timothy Gray (Vice Chair), Stephanie Wagner-Hemminger (Chair), Janet Dehring, John Pitz, and Dennis Wentworth.

Members Absent: Kimberly Scarpone and Thomas Pressey.

Others Present: Planner Lynée Wells, Williams & Works; applicants Tim Ritchie & Amy Ritchie (GNAT); four (4) township residents; no members of the press; Buchanan Township Building Official Chris Fuchs; Buchanan Township Ordinance Officer Joseph Kring; and Recording Secretary Cathy Ganus.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited by those in attendance.

ADDITIONS / CHANGES TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Gray, second by Dehring to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2012 regular meeting as presented. Voice vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

Bertrand Township Planning Commission – Receipt of letter regarding update of Bertrand Township Master Plan

OLD BUSINESS

Buchanan Township Master Plan Update Public Hearing

[The Public Hearing was opened at 7:06 pm.]

Planner Jay Kilpatrick has entered semi-retirement and Lynée Wells has been assigned to Buchanan Township as the planner of record. Wells went over the updates Kilpatrick has made to the Master Plan per the PC meetings held the last several months.

The Berrien County Planning Commission commented that the Buchanan Township Master Plan Update appears to be consistent with the master plans of neighboring communities and the County. Comments were also received from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and those comments were mostly clarification of items included within the Plan (the SWMPC name change, NATS inclusion and activities, as well as the reference to the 11th Street / M-51 roadway).

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Buchanan Township Master Plan Update Public Hearing (continued)

Township resident Mario Palmisano stated it was his opinion that the public had not had sufficient time to review the Master Plan. Ganus advised she had published notification in the *Berrien County Record* that the Master Plan document was available at the Township Hall for review.

[The Public Hearing was closed at 7:12 pm.]

Gray expressed gratitude to Williams and Works for their work on the Master Plan update.

Motion by Gray, second by Wentworth, to approve the Buchanan Township Master Plan Update as presented to include the changes suggested by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (Resolution # PC-12-01). Roll call vote was requested by the Chair and showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

NEW BUSINESS

GNAT (Red Bud Recreation, Inc.) Special Land Use Permit(SLUP) Amendment Public Hearing

[Public Hearing was opened at 7:14 pm.]

The Ritchie Family has reorganized some of their properties, which has resulted in the previously approved SLUP for Red Bud Recreations, Inc. as being known as GNAT Properties LLC. Amy Ritchie explained the request for SLUP amendment (application dated 11.02.2012). The following amendments were proposed for site 1 (parcel # 11-06-0014-0012-01-0):

1. Replace gate trailer/office building with a 24' x 48' double wide modular office building.
2. Replace 12' x 12' deck with 70" x 70" deck with steps on the east and west sides.

Amy Ritchie went on to state they would like to complete future improvements as follows:

1. Addition of a concrete sidewalk on the south side of the office building. The new concrete would meet the overhang from the slab foundation to form a total 6' wide sidewalk.
2. Addition of a concrete pad on the west end of the office building, which would be up to 20' x 30'.
3. Construction of a canopy / roof structure over the ticket lanes to provide shelter for incoming vehicles and track staff at the point where tickets are purchased. The proposed canopy would cover the six lanes used for incoming vehicles only (south lane is for exit traffic only), would be open on all sides, would be a minimum of 15' in height (to allow semi trucks to travel under) and approximately 100' wide with a depth of 40' to 60'.

Resident Dale Weldy stated he was not opposed to the improvements but suggests traffic control needs to be addressed. His suggestion would be to move the canopied structure / office building to the west to allow traffic to get off Red Bud Trail.

Resident Mario Palmisano stated traffic is an issue. He suggested that traffic be routed around the perimeter of the track property to allow people to get off Red Bud Trail.

[The Public Hearing was closed at 7:27 pm.]

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

GNAT (Red Bud Recreation, Inc.) SLUP Amendment Public Hearing (continued)

Discussion ensued with the planning commissioners asking questions of Wells regarding the change in intensity, the canopy structure, whether a building permit was required prior to the construction of the office building, and signage that is currently in place on both Red Bud Trail and N. Main Street.

Wells then reviewed her staff review regarding conformance with Special Use Approval Standards, Chapter 24, Section F.

Wagner-Hemminger stated she was opposed to the signage on N. Main Street. Amy Ritchie advised she would be willing to take the sign down. Dehring inquired of Amy Ritchie whether she was now aware that a building permit is required and if any changes are to take place they would need to come to the Township for approval prior to said changes being effected. Amy Ritchie advised that she just hadn't thought about it but would comply from here forward. Wentworth questioned commercial signage on the canopy. Fuchs advised it was a zoning issue and would be dealt with through zoning mechanisms.

Wells advised that the Planning Commission would need to meet again for site plan review.

Motion by Dehring, second by Gray, to recommend to the Buchanan Township Board of Trustees that the Special Land Use Permit amendment application dated 11.02.2012 as presented by GNAT Properties LLC (Red Bud Recreation) for parcel # 11-06-0014-0012-01-0 be approved with conditions as follows:

1. All conditions of approval from the original application shall remain.
2. Maximum height of the ticketing canopy shall be 16 feet at eave height.
3. The applicant shall adhere to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
4. Any activity related to maintenance and upkeep of the property shall be considered customary and typical, and shall not require amendment to the special land use. Typical activities may include building maintenance, internal circulation enhancements, security upgrades, etc. so long as the result of the maintenance does not increase the scope or intensity of the Special Use.
5. A building permit must be obtained.

Roll call vote was requested by the Chair and vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Cathy A. Ganus
Recording Secretary