

**ANN ARBOR CHARTER TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2007 3:00 PM**

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Chair Richard Mitchell at the Township Hall, 3792 Pontiac Trail, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

Present: Chair Richard Mitchell, Clerk Rena Basch, Commissioners Larry Burgess, Doug Price and William Dutil.

Also present: Building and Zoning Official Gary Dresselhouse.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Basch moved to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2007 ZBA meeting. Price seconded and motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS - None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

ZBA-4-07 – Request by Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, for a variance from Zoning Ordinance Sec 74-501 (50’ front setback requirement) in order to place a sign at the Raymond F. Goodrich Preserve located at 3695 Dixboro Road (parcel IDs I -09-12-400-023 and I -09-12-400-025.)

1) Petitioner presentation

Tom Freeman, Deputy Director of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation described the Goodrich Preserve property. The County purchased a conservation easement on these parcels through the millage-supported Natural Areas Preservation program after the Goodrichs nominated their property. The program acquires and preserves land and provides public access, but the public access is strictly for passive recreation (e.g. hiking, bird watching, contemplation of nature, etc.) No development is done on the Preserves; no restrooms, pavilions, picnic tables or similar amenities will be constructed. There will only be soft surface trails. The Goodrich Preserve is one of 9 in the County. Mr. Freeman described the benefits of this preserve as it connects to University of Michigan’s Horner Woods.

Mr. Freeman discussed the drawing of the proposed access and 4 parking spaces. The County intends to remove the invasive species trees and bushes along Dixboro Road. He described the proposed sign construction. Not much traffic is expected in the preserve, but the sign is important to notify the public that it exists. The County is not set upon any particular location for the sign, but they would like to avoid removal of trees and still have it be visible.

2) Zoning Official’s Report - Memo provided in ZBA packet.

Before reviewing his report, Mr. Dresselhouse clarified with Mr. Freeman that only 4 parking spaces will be installed.

Mr. Dresselhouse corrected item D in his memo (dated Sept 14, 2007) – Sec. 74.595 Setbacks on arterial roads provides an exemption for the placement of signs, therefore the 60 feet from road centerline does not have to be added to the existing district setback. The required setback for this parcel is therefore 50 feet from the road right-of-way per Sec 74.501. It should be noted that the submitted drawings mistakenly list the RC front setback as 35 ft. Sec. 74-834(b) requires that a sign in an RC district not exceed 18 ft², and from the drawings it appears the proposed sign is 20 ft².

Mr. Dresselhouse recommended that the ZBA could permit a reduction in the required front setback, but it should not be in the road right-of-way. He thought the sign should be 3-5 feet outside of the ROW. He also thought fewer trees would have to be removed if the sign was placed on the left (south) side of the proposed driveway.

3) Discussion

Mr. Freeman indicated that the County is flexible with respect to sign position and size. There will be no lighting on the sign. He has already met with the adjacent property owners to discuss their concerns and to give them a 24 hour phone number to reach County Park's officials in case issues arise.

4) Public Hearing

Mitchell opened and closed the public hearing at 3:21 pm; there was no public comment.

5) Zoning Board of Appeals Action

Mr. Dresselhouse clarified that the front setback is measured from the road ROW, not the road centerline, so the requested variance is quite large. The ZBA agreed that the five criteria for granting a variance have been met. The Commissioners also agreed that the sign should not be in or too close to the Dixboro Road ROW. They discussed recommended wording for the setback variance.

Basch moved to grant the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Goodrich Preserve a variance from the Zoning Ordinance Section 74.501 requirement of a 50 foot front yard setback for placement of a sign no closer than 2 feet from the Dixboro Road right of way. Price seconded the motion.

Ayes: Basch, Burgess, Dutil, Mitchell, Price. Nays: None. Motion passed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Dutil moved to adjourn at 3:36 pm. Burgess seconded. Motion passed.