

**VILLAGE OF KALKASKA  
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 17, 2008**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 200 HYDE STREET**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

1. Shirley Whipple called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, followed by pledge of allegiance and prayer.

Planning Commissioners Present  
Shirley Whipple, Chairperson  
Virginia Thomas, Village President  
Penny Hill, Village Manager  
Al Jordan  
Francis Kelly  
Sue Walter  
Bob Larsen

Planning Commissioners Absent  
Ruth Hall

Public Present – Dean Farrier, John Siddall, Sheila Atwood, Jerry Gaultier, Phillip Goethals, Mitchell Saxton, Shirley Farrier, Margaret Potvin, Connie Farrier and James Austin.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Kalkaska Memorial Health Center Re-zone Request - Chairperson Whipple stated that the public hearing was in reference to a re-zone request made by the Kalkaska Memorial Health Center for Parcel #041-088-002-10, a vacant property on Orange Street. She asked for a motion to open the public hearing.

Larsen made a motion to open the public hearing. Kelly seconded the motion. On a voice vote, motion passed.

Chairperson Whipple turned the floor over to Manager Hill. Manager Hill stated that the Kalkaska Memorial Health Center was requesting a zone change for Parcel #041-088-002-10 to change from Residential R1 to Medical District MD. She stated that the parcel was split off of a parent parcel in 2007. She stated that the Planning Commission would be looking at substantial reasons why it can't be used for their proposed request, and how the change would fit with the master plan. Would this change adversely affect property values? Would

this change constitute a spot zone, which would make things available to the owners that wouldn't be available to others in the area? Are there traffic issues that could be caused by the change? She read a hand out explaining the objectives they should look at while making a decision on a zone change request (see handout attached to original minutes). She highlighted number five and number nine on the objectives as being the most relevant to this particular zone change request. Manager Hill then asked if the public had any comments.

Chairperson Whipple asked if Mr. Jim Austin, Hospital Administrator for Kalkaska Memorial Health Center, had anything to present to the Commission and the public.

Mr. Austin stated that he has been with Kalkaska Memorial Health Center for 19 years and is affiliated with Munson Hospital. He wanted the Commission to know that he has been working with the City of Frankfort, and stated that Frankfort was jealous of Kalkaska's Hospital.

He stated that the Village of Kalkaska has been behind the growth of the hospital, which has made the difference in their success. He stated that the Hospital Board got together three years ago and asked where they should go with their healthcare system. They decided that they needed to have adequate housing in this community for the elderly. He stated that, in 1997, they added 20 beds to the 60 bed long term care facility and they are now full. They have noticed that people are expressing a desire for senior housing that is not long term care, and residents have been moving to Traverse City where this type of housing is available. They have done two different studies to research the need for adult assisted living. They had originally wanted a 40-bed facility, which was found to be very expensive, so they settled on a 34-room assisted living complex. He stated that this zoning change was necessary as this property abutted their Medical District. He stated that this lot would be the run-off area for the assisted living center. He added that they would make sure this run-off area was very green and attractive for the neighboring residents. He stated that they had looked into tearing up the parking lot at the Dialysis Center and installing basins underneath, but this would add about \$100,000.00 to the cost of the project.

Mr. Austin stated that this facility is for people over 80, designed with indoor large hallways with a streetscape atmosphere, so they will feel as if they are walking outdoors. He stated that the second floor is more like a hotel. The Great Room will be located down at the end of the building closest to the Hospital and will be for meals, entertainment, activities and socialization. They did design the building to facilitate a future addition if necessary. He stated that they have had ten people call already wanting to be placed on a waiting list.

Mr. Austin stated that this facility would create 10 to 15 jobs for the community. He stated that the hospital currently has 260 employees, with 80% living in Kalkaska County and about 30 people living in the Village. The hospital has 45,000 outpatient visits per year. He stated that he is excited about the project and hopes that they will be too.

Chairperson Whipple asked if the public had comments.

Dean Farrier of Farrier Surveying in Kalkaska, and a member of the DDA, reminded everyone of the Grand Vision Program on May 7, 2008. He stated that the most important driving force for the economy of the community is healthcare. He stated that a zoning change should not be taken lightly, but this request would not result in a spot zoning as it is vacant land that abuts to the Medical District. He stated that the residents of the assisted living complex would have family members who come and utilize our restaurants and gas stations. He also stated that they would have an adult daycare program, which will be great for the community.

Sheila Atwood stated that she worked for Kalkaska Memorial Health Center, and stated that all these added services allow them to recruit and attain highly trained nurses and physicians.

Jerry Gaultier stated he was a member of the Board of Directors for the hospital, and he wanted to see growth for the hospital. He encouraged the Commission to give their support.

Phillip Goethals stated he was a member of the Board of Directors for the hospital, and has felt privileged to see all these projects come to light. He stated that the run-off would be a beautiful enhancement to the area.

Shirley Farrier, a Kalkaska resident, stated that she thought the daycare program would be a great thing for seniors and their caretakers. She stated that the voters had already voted for this at the last millage.

Margaret Potvin, an employee with the Kalkaska Memorial Health Center, stated that this facility would show respect for the elders and grant camaraderie.

Connie Farrier, Director of Support Services for Kalkaska Memorial Health Center, stated that they have worked hard with Bill Cousins, previous Village Manager, and the Zoning Board to meet the needs of the community by creating the Medical District. She thought that they would be very proud of this building, both inside and out.

With no further public comments, Chairperson Whipple asked if someone would make a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Walter made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Larsen seconded the motion. On a voice vote, motion passed. Public Hearing closed at 6:40 pm.

#### CURRENT BUSINESS

3. Kalkaska Memorial Health Center Re-zone Request – Chairperson Whipple turned the floor over to Manager Hill.

Manager Hill stated that the Commission could make a motion to Council to either approve or deny the re-zone request, or they could table the re-zone request until the next meeting. Manager Hill stated that the current master plan in effect was from 2002; however, the Commission has been working on an updated master plan that is awaiting a map before

approval. She stated that this did go along with the master plan, and thinks that everyone was in support of the project and the hospital. She stated that the major questions were whether this should be re-zoned, and if the project can still happen without the re-zone. She asked Mr. Austin if they would consider coming to the Commission with a strategic plan for the Hospital Campus, which would allow them to rezone all of their properties at once rather than in bits and pieces.

Mr. Austin stated that they had discussed having a campus plan a few years ago, but they cannot make a determination as to where and how they will be expanding until the hospital has continued success. He stated that they did purchase extra land with the intention of using it, so eventually it will need to be rezoned.

Mr. Goethals stated that the community owns the hospital, so they would be using the tax dollars wisely.

Thomas stated that she was in support of the project and the re-zone. She stated that the current addition being built was beautiful.

Larsen thought the facility was a great idea, but was not sure it followed with the master plan. He was worried about the tax base, and asked what the Village would be gaining besides jobs. He did think it was a wonderful project. He stated that he would like to see them come before the committee with a whole plan for the future.

Jordan stated that he has always supported the hospital; however, he agreed with what Larsen had to say and felt that they should be privy to a long-range plan.

Walter stated that, if the property were not rezoned, it would not keep the project from happening but would cost the hospital more.

Mr. Austin stated that the Board would need to decide whether they would continue the project if they had to add \$100,000.00 to the cost of a current 1 million dollar project.

Walter wanted to clarify where the parking lot was at the Dialysis Center, and if they would be actually ripping up asphalt.

Dean Farrier stated that they would have to rip up all the asphalt parking at the Dialysis Center to accommodate the large basins needed for the project run-off. He stated that underground storage tanks take up more room than a run-off area.

Chairperson Whipple stated that she had watched the hospital pick up properties, but they have never been aggressive and have paid fair prices. She stated that the houses bought and removed by the hospital were eyesores, and what the hospital has done with the properties is an improvement to the community. She did not see any neighbors or communications at the meeting against the re-zone. She stated that it would be nice to see a long-term plan for the hospital.

Jordan made a motion to recommend to the Village Council that they approve the re-zoning of Parcel #041-088-002-10, a vacant property on Orange Street, from Residential R1 to Medical District MD. Thomas seconded the motion. On a roll call vote with Chairperson Whipple, Thomas, Hill and Jordan voting "Yea" and Walter, Kelly and Larsen voting "Nay", motion passed.

Walter asked that the Village Council be made aware of the vote, who voted yea and who voted nay. Chairperson Whipple stated that the Council received the minutes, which contain that information.

#### ADJOURNMENT

4. Motion by Thomas, second by Walter to adjourn. Motion passed on a voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Typed by: Mary Deb Rabourn, Deputy Clerk