

Minutes
Natural Features Protection Review Board
November 26th, 2024
Regular Meeting

NOTE*: Public Media Network encountered an equipment error during the livestream of the meeting which effected the video for YouTube and Facebook. The audio was recorded, and the rebroadcast of the meeting audio was completed. The rebroadcast is now available on the City of Kalamazoo YouTube Channel.

Held at City Hall, Commission Chambers

4:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order: Director Martin called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

B. Members absent: Director Murgia

C. Motion to excuse absences

Motion to excuse absent board members made by Director Basset, supported by Director Lettow, motion passed unanimously.

D. Adoption of Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda made by Director Fuller, supported by Director Lettow, motion passed unanimously.

E. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the October 22nd, 2024, Regular NFP Board Meeting, with the Amendment of changing instances of Director Lettow being referred to as Director Randy in the draft minutes.

Motion made by Director Basset, supported by Director Fuller, passed unanimously.

F. General Citizen Comments

There were no general citizen comments, either in person or by phone.

G. Board Comments

No comments

H. New Business

1. **NFP Site Plan for the Friendship Village Campus Repositioning IL & Skilled Additions project located at 1400 and 1402 N Drake Road**

Nolan opened discussion on the Friendship Village, Senior Living campus, planned unit development at 1400 & 1402 properties only, applicants will be discussing what processes they have been through and talk about the Natural Features plans they have so far. They have already been through pre-site plan review and are in the Site plan process. This is for NFP to ask questions and discuss the project with the developers, rare species review, protected trees and Woodland area is large on the 1402 address, then their hope is to come back to next meeting with more plans. They have been to City Commission and Planning Commission and public noticing.

Rachel Hughes-Nilsson presented another overview of the project:

- Presentation on the property with the PUD approved landscape plan with the backward C building is the independent living building, new nursing wing, parking lots, and wrap-around road.
- Developed Landscape planting list with letters on what they chose and why some are non-native.
- Trees required for zoning purposes: Some of the trees being removed from 1400 Drake are being replanted at 1402 Drake Rd.
- 6% of woodlands are being removed mainly from 1402 Drake Rd, on 1400 Drake Rd woodland is not being removed.
- Question for NFP on the fencing and the Ordinance, Will 6-foot chain-link fence be acceptable to use, less cost, posts, and no breaks, will be a solid fence.

Questions?

Director Fredrickson – Signage on fencing? Yes, there will be.

Director Lettow – Question for Nolan, lack of clarity on the code for landscaping. Right of way must have native landscaping.

Nolan – Board can approve the non-native and non-invasive species.

Director Lettow – If same size trees for barrier is not there are they flexible on that? Understands the shrubs but the ornamental grasses and perennials to be at 3 feet but saw that not all of them met that size limitation.

Rachel – Honestly some of the shrubs are less presentable, less flowers and in this community, they want to make sure eyes are directed to the entrance and/or more showmanship.

Director Fuller – Tree protection requirements ordinance, NFP specific?

Rachel/Nolan – The Ordinance is specific about protection fencing is for the critical circular around the edge of the trees. 6-foot above grade 4x4 wood posts with 2x4 wooden cross beams, then you have 6-foot-tall snow fencing. The chain-link could be reused which is 6 foot and its solid fence for protection of trees then the wood.

Director Lettow – Need an updated list for Native and non-native species that will be planted.

Director Basset – We will need to worry about the insects and the new beetle problem with 3 Viburnum species of plants that they destroy and shred viburnum plants and are invasive.

Director Martin – Motion to approve pending full approval from site-plan and pending changes to the landscaping list to remove viburnum species and consider native plants for 1400 and 1402 Drake Rd.

Director Fuller motioned and Director Lettow supported, and the board approved with a roll call vote.

2. NFP Site Plan for 3301 Tech Circle Drive – Office Building Addition & Site Improvements

Nolan – Colony Farm neighborhood by 131 and 94, corner of Drake and Parkview. Zoned for CBTR – Commercial Building Technical Research, one of the only areas to have that designation but they are meeting the use and have a current office building and looking to do an office expansion. They are in Asylum Lake Preserve which is part of NFP, asking about protected trees and lighting is not impacting preserve. Been to Site Plan and will be presenting to the Planning Commission in December with a separate approval process with WMU.

Tom Carpenter with AR Engineering is here to answer questions on his plans. SME is putting an addition on their office building, staying out of wood line. They are looking to remove an existing Beech tree in the front with a data line underneath. One additional in the back and want to keep that one.

Director Frederickson – Tree fencing being used doesn't look like it would work or survive. Or should be removed and put in a new tree?

Tom – It's a 36-inch Beech tri-trunk at chest height, the tree does not currently lean over the building. Want to protect as much as we can but not sure we can achieve the total area around the tree.

Director Lettow – Maybe we need to outline and see if we should mark it as removal or save. If we replace with 2 Beech trees with the disease maybe we should choose a different species.

Nolan - We have lists of species to avoid and have some that are prohibited for applicants to look over. We can add a condition for approval that requires replacing certain species with a certain species the board approves.

Director Fuller – Stormwater management but Tom doesn't have with him, but it is in site plan review plans.

Director Martin – Motion to approve the NFP Site Plan conditioned upon the inclusion of full tree protection fencing specifications on the NFP Site Plan and consideration that the triple trunked beech tree be removed and replaced with native species on the replacement tree list with the exception of another Beech Tree as Beech Bark disease is spreading in the State of Michigan and conditioned upon the switching out of natives on the landscaping list for more native species and approval by City Staff and full Site Plan Approval by the Site Plan Review Committee.

Director Hollander motioned and Director Fuller supported, and the board approved with a roll call vote.

Motion to approve the schedule for 2025 for the NFP Board

Nolan - May meeting adjusted for Memorial Day and conflicts with a City Commission Meeting and for 2024, the December meeting date conflicts with an existing meeting. If we do not have a quorum we can cancel if it comes to that, but it can always be viewed.

The board discussed the 2025 Meeting Schedule:

Director Hollander – Suggested that the NFP Board hold work sessions for NFP Meetings in 2025 even if there are no action items on the agenda.

Nolan – Agreed that this is possible and that there are topics to discuss.

Director Basset – Commented that they agree with Director Hollander's suggestion and that finding time outside of the regular NFP Meetings for subcommittee work is difficult. They also suggested that if there are no action items for an upcoming meeting, can City Staff communicate with the NFP board ahead of time to understand who is available to attend a meeting and if there are not enough board members who can attend, then the meeting can be cancelled.

Director Lettow – Agreed with Director Basset's comments about having time blocked off already for the NFP Meeting and extending for work sessions would be beneficial instead of finding a different day or time.

Nolan – Explained that the meetings in 2024 were front-loaded and back-loaded with meetings and less happening in the middle of the year. Explained that Phase 3 NFP work can be connected to these work sessions.

Director Martin - Motion to adopt the 2025 NFP Meeting Schedule with the change of canceling the NFP Meeting in December 2025.

Director Lettow motioned and Director Basset Supported, and the board approved with a roll call vote.

Public Comments:

There were no general citizen comments, either in person or by phone.

Unfinished Business

None

Staff Reports and Update

None

Communications and Announcements

None

Adjourn Meeting

Director Martin adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.