1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bohnhoff called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Bohnhoff, Drooger, Garrison, VanderMeulen, Van Leeuwen-Vega, and VanStrate

Absent: Johnson

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Drooger, second from Garrison, to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

Yes: 6 No: 0

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: June 22, 2021 meeting.

Motion by VanderMeulen, second from Van Strate, to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2021 meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Yes: 6 No: 0

5. STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

There were no statements of citizens

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Pre-Application – Samaritas Senior Housing Development

Request for feedback on the acceptability of a senior housing development that will be applying for MSHDA Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

Chairman Bohnhoff introduced this item and Hoisington gave an overview through a memorandum dated July 22, 2021

James Lewis, of Pinnacle Construction Group and Joel Lautenbach, the Samaritas Executive Director of Affordable Living Development, Kim Kroll, the Executive Director of Four Pointes Center for Successful Aging were there to provide support and information.
Lewis explained he has worked for Pinnacle in conjunction with Samaritas on at least 500 units in Chicago, Wisconsin, and now three in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Of those, two are built and the third will begin construction soon. Four Pointes had contacted Samaritas to explain the need for senior housing in the area. LIHTC scoring updated recently and may be advantageous to apply for funding now because the Tri-Cities area typically does not score well. Only 25% of LIHTC applications usually get funded in each category. Kroll explained that Four Pointes established a housing committee over 4 years ago and have been searching for a developer. There is a 3-year wait list for most senior living communities. Lautenbach said Samaritas has spent 87 years in Michigan. Have 15 communities in the state. Breaking ground on the new Muskegon development next week. Samaritas is the largest private provider for foster care, refugees, adoptions, etc. Their organization builds and manages the developments so they can continue helping their customers long-term.

Lewis stated the optimum design is 53-units. Garrison said it is cheaper to build vertical, so maybe some of the other funds can be used to improve the building materials. Van Leeuwen-Vega inquired how many other 4 story buildings there are in the Village. Hoisington will find the information and provide. Drooger expressed concern about the adjacent condos having to look at the tall bare walls. Need to save as many trees as possible or move the building closer to the road to protect their privacy. VanderMeulen stated the wooded area is mature and thick and keeping the trees for nice views of new and existing residents is important. Lewis stated the formal application will include an outdoor common patio and have pedestrian access to the church’s open space.

Regarding the existing blue house Lewis said they had not considered keeping it at first, but now believe it will work well as a caretaker unit. It is usually within the main building, but this option would be more desirable because it is a detached home. Aesthetically, it will help soften the height of the building and it will help screen parking. Van Strate said the house should go and be used as open space instead. Garrison said it is not a sticking point for him, but a bargaining chip for materials. VanderMeulen likes the blue house because it has unique character, which can be lost when developer's reuse templates. Drooger doesn’t care what happens to the house because his concern is the impact on neighbors. Van Leeuwen-Vega is ok with keeping the house, but green space needs attention. She pointed out the “park for no one” in the rendering and requested it be incorporated into the site. Lewis explained there will be outdoor spaces but are not shown on the plans yet. Also considering the use of raingardens to help with stormwater. Bohnhoff would prefer to keep the house because it will help screen the parking along Savidge Street.

Next, the Planning Commission discussed building materials. Van Leeuwen-Vega inquired if the choice in metal paneling is cost-driven; requested they consider brick and/or awning treatments to provide more architectural variety. Lewis explained it relates to energy efficiency with the building code to obtain better scoring on the LIHTC application. Extreme energy efficiency will be key to scoring enough points. Lightweight metal paneling has a difficult time holding up masonry because it is too heavy. Current design is inspired from Denmark in the 1920s. It consists of smooth metal paneling; it is monolithic with vertical seams. Samaritas also applied for a senior living building in Holland, but the overall costs imposed by the City’s ordinances caused the development to be too expensive and the LIHTC application was denied. LIHTC scoring is impacted by the per unit costs, so the pool of money for this development is fixed. Garrison supports affordable housing and wants to capitalize on this opportunity by shifting certain requirements to get the best product. Firmly believes there should be bigger windows and an awning, then he will support. Lewis explained they have found most tenants do not want a lot of windows because they lose privacy. Kroll concurred and said many of their clients are single females who feel vulnerable living alone, and fewer windows helps them feel safe and protected. Currently proposes a double window in the living room and single in the bedroom. Bohnhoff, Van Leeuwen-Vega,
and Garrison explained the single windows facing Savidge Street should become double. The Planning Commission also had general consensus on—the reduced parking ratio; height of the building; prefer the rendering with the pop of color in the center rather than the ends; the location is perfect because there are other seniors living next door.

7. **TRAINING – PLANNING COMMISSION 101**

Due to time constraints, Hoisington reviewed a small segment of the training materials, which includes visiting the project sites before the meetings and complying with the Open Meetings Act. Particularly as it relates to Ex-Parte Communication. Commissioners must try to avoid conversations with residents but in the event it cannot be avoided the protocol is to summarize the conversation at the next regular meeting so the information is on record.

The remainder of the training will be postponed until a future meeting.

8. **STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Darcy Dye, 114 N. Fruitport Rd, said she appreciates the training the Planning Commission is receiving and recommended they consider learning about energy efficiency scoring, green home infrastructure, green home building, and state of the art sustainable building designs.

9. **COMMENTS OF PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

There were no comments.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Van Strate, second from Van Leeuwen-Vega, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Yes: 6  No: 0

Cassandra Hoisington, Village Planner  Stacey Fedewa, Acting Recording Secretary