Meeting Minutes of the  
Natural Features Protection Review Board  
May 26, 2020  
Regular Meeting

Held virtually, pursuant to Executive Order No. 2020-75

A. Call to Order, 4:05 p.m.

B. Roll Call and Excuse Absent Members

Directors Present:
Cole-Wick  
Fuller  
Glasser  
MacNellis  
Martin  
Sylvester

Directors Absent:
Lettow

Staff Present:
McCarthy  
Durkee  
Reilly

Cole-Wick made a motion to excuse absent members. The motion was supported by Martin. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

C. Adoption of Agenda

Fuller made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was supported by Cole-Wick. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

D. New Business:

1. A presentation of the NFP applications for 500 Golden Drive was presented to the NFP Review Board. The project was introduced by Mr. Jay Prince, the Executive Director of Heritage Community of Kalamazoo, representing the applicant. Ms. McCarthy spoke to the board about the application and internal City review. Overall, staff support the approval of the NFP site plan but requested the board further review the plant list. The development team representing Heritage Community of Kalamazoo described the future development of the site for an independent living facility.
The board discussed the main natural features on the site. Ms. Rhoades from Byce & Associates explained how the slopes were evaluated and only one area met the qualifications of a “protected slope”. The slope setbacks will be observed and no construction is planned for this part of the parcel. The applicant’s landscape architect reviewed the planting lists with the board. The trees used for screening are a cedar species native to the Pacific NW and not Michigan. The board requested the applicant change these trees to the Michigan native variety of white cedar.

The applicant explained a delay in receiving the rare species review by MNFI, which they anticipate will be completed in mid-June. Ms. Cole-Wick has familiarity with the MNFI database and was comfortable with waiting on the review results which she expressed would not likely find any potential impact to rare or threatened species. The board agreed to review and approve the application on the condition that the review results show no potential for impact.

Mr. MacNellis made a motion to to approve the NFP site plan for Heritage Community of Kalamazoo located at 500 Golden Drive on condition of the cedar trees being changed to a Michigan native species and the MNFI rare species review being received by staff with no impact to rare species. The motion was supported by Ms. Fuller. The application was approved unanimously by role call vote.

2. The Board did a preliminary review of two conceptual drawings for a new walkway at Memorial Beach Park located in the Oakwood Neighborhood Association. (No action was taken, but the board discussed the various implications of each plan and the potential impact to natural features on the site. The site is located on what would appear to be protected slopes. The slope is wooded and Woods Lake is located at the bottom of the tiered slope. Currently wood stairs lead down to the lake. These stairs have erosion issues that must be addressed. The board expressed support of the project, especially as it relates to providing recreational access to nature and universal access for people with mobility challenges. The board tended to prefer the conceptual drawing with the walkway that required the least ground disturbance and re-grading, which was an elevated boardwalk style stairway.

E. Old Business (none)

F. Board Comments

G. Citizen Comments

L. Adjourn Meeting at 5:53 p.m.

Jamie McCarthy – Recording Secretary

Mitch Lettow – Board Chair