



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes City Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 17, 2013

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

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1 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Westphal called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m

2 ROLL CALL

Rampson called the roll.

Present 7 - Bona, Westphal, Giannola, Clein, Briere, Parekh, and Peters

Absent 2 - Woods, and Adenekan

3 INTRODUCTIONS

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Peters, seconded by Bona, that the agenda be approved. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

6 REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION, CITY COUNCIL, PLANNING MANAGER, PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES, WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

6-a City Council

Briere reported that at the previous night's Council meeting, there was a presentation of North Main Huron River Vision Task Force Report. She said the report includes a recommendation for the Planning Commission to look at a river district zoning. She said this zoning designation currently doesn't exist, but the task force found there is an interest in creating a special district to address height, massing and the character of the river bank. She noted that Council approved the Honda site and approved rezoning of the parcel of land at 3875 East Huron River Drive to Public Land.

6-b Planning Manager

Rampson reminded the Commission that this Thursday is the final engagement piece for the Downtown Zoning Evaluation [D1 Zoned parcels]; a public workshop will be held at 7 p.m. at the Workantile Exchange, 118 S. Main Street. She asked for volunteers at the workshop, if anyone was interested.

6-c Planning Commission Officers and Committees**6-d Written Communications and Petitions**[13-1122](#)

Various Correspondences to the City Planning Commission

7 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Persons may speak for three minutes about an item that is NOT listed as a public hearing on this agenda. Please state your name and address for the record.)

None.

8 PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT BUSINESS MEETING[13-1123](#)

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Site Plan for City Council Approval and Special Exception Use for City Planning Commission Approval - A proposal to remove 4 existing modular building structures and construct a 12,850 square feet, two-story education building addition to the rear of the existing church on this 4.3 acres site. Minor changes are proposed to the existing 142-space parking lot, and the capacity of the sanctuary will remain at 126 seats (Ward 1).

Chair Westphal read the public hearing notice as published.

9 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**10 REGULAR BUSINESS - Staff Report, Public Hearing and Commission Discussion of Each Item**

(If an agenda item is tabled, it will most likely be rescheduled to a future date. If you would like to be notified when a tabled agenda item will appear on a future agenda, please provide your email address on the form provided on the front table at the meeting. You may also call Planning and Development Services at 734-794-6265 during office hours to obtain additional information about the review schedule or visit the Planning page on the City's website (www.a2gov.org.)

(Public Hearings: Individuals may speak for three minutes. The first person who is the official representative of an organized group or who is representing the petitioner may speak for five minutes; additional representatives may speak for three minutes. Please state your name and address for the record.)

(Comments about a proposed project are most constructive when they relate to: (1) City Code requirements and land use regulations, (2) consistency with the City Master Plan, or (3) additional information about the area around the petitioner's property and the extent to which a proposed project may positively or negatively affect the area.)

- 10-a** [13-1125](#) Traverwood Apartments Rezoning, Site Plan and Wetland Use Permit for City Council Approval (west side of Traverwood Drive between Plymouth Road and Huron Parkway) - A proposal to rezone a vacant 3.88 acre parcel at the rear of 2025 Traverwood from ORL (Office, Research, Limited Industrial District) to R4D (Multiple-Family Dwelling District) and attach it to the adjacent 17.96 acre parcel to create a 21.84 acre development parcel. A proposal to construct 216 one- and two-bedroom apartments in 16 buildings, accessed by two new private drives from Traverwood Drive. A total of 152 structured parking spaces and 184 exterior spaces will be provided. A community building, pool and play areas will also be provided. A wetland use permit is requested to allow disturbance of three small wetlands, totaling 0.27 acres. (Ward 1) Staff Recommendation: Postponement
Matt Kowalski presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mike Martin, First Martin, 115 Depot Street, Ann Arbor, Petitioner, introducing his team, James Sharba and Earl Ophoff, said they were available to answer questions.

Paul Bruss, 2613 Meade Court, said he is a runner who runs through Stapp Woods to Leslie Woods. He said he wants to make sure the path will run along the golf course and not through the complex, and would prefer to keep the path as natural as possible. He shared a fantasy that he and other runners have in mind; that a connector trail would run from Stapp through Leslie, and with the help of a small bridge over part of the Ann Arbor Railroad be able to run along Leslie Golf Course to get into Black Pond, run north to Dhu Varren Woods or to Traver Creek pathway. He said there are wonderful ridges in several parks, and if they could figure out how to connect them it would create premium trails. He said it would be better than running along the river through Gallup because it would give relief in topography which is what runners are looking for. He said this project has significant linkage in this 'necklace' around Leslie Golf Course and he wanted to make a point to keep the notion alive, because it could be one of the greatest trails of Ann Arbor.

Noting no further speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed, unless the item is continued.

Moved by Briere, seconded by Clein, that the Ann Arbor City Planning

Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Traverwood Apartments Rezoning, Site Plan and Development Agreement, subject to preliminary plan approval by the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner and subject to approval of an administrative land transfer and an administrative amendment to the 2025 Traverwood site plan, and

that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Traverwood Apartments Wetland Use Permit and mitigation plan.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Bona asked how the plan has evolved through the citizen participation input.

Ophoff referred the Commission to the CPO report, which included seven preliminary plans. He explained that they had originally looked at larger buildings on the site that they showed at the meeting and then received feedback about trails and native forest fragments. He said this made them reconsidered locations of buildings, pulling them down to the south, as well as looking at the kinds of buildings and the intensity of the use. He said they focused on the smaller two-story buildings with smaller units.

Bona asked if the total number of units changed.

Ophoff said the total number units declined from 260 to 216.

Bona said it is unusual for developers to propose less units than allowed, asking the developer why.

Martin said that in costing the project, given the topography and natural feature challenges of the site, it was less expensive to create simpler standard units. He said they originally thought taller buildings would appeal to certain demographic, but then came to understand this may not be the case in this setting.

Bona asked if the cost of construction was the deciding factor.

Martin said that the price to make them economically feasible would not be well received in the marketplace.

Bona asked about the previously proposed parking.

Martin said that it was a podium concept with parking under four stories.

Briere said she remembered the community meetings where they presented two different demographics - families and empty nesters. She asked the petitioner how they would describe their current demographic.

Martin said it would be typical of the other apartment complexes on the northeast side of town, where you would get a mix of graduate students and possible employees of NCRC to families who would be interested in the family units. He said it would be similar to the Windemere complex or Ironwood, where you get a cross-section of tenant, adding that they have tried to set up the complex for a large cross-section.

Clein asked if there are steep slopes on the site that are being addressed.

Kowalski said yes, but they are not being modified, since they will be setback from the slopes.

Clein asked about percentage of imperviousness of the site.

Kowalski said these are in storm water calculations.

Clein asked about photometric plan.

Kowalski said this has been provided and staff has determined it to be acceptable.

Clein asked about alignment of the trail as mentioned by the public speaker.

Ophoff displayed the route on the site plan board, noting that the outlined trail is following the desired path as mentioned by the public speaker, with the final location to be determined in coordination with the City's Parks Department.

Clein asked if the intent was to run along the western property line.

Ophoff said yes, adding that the path would be a woodchip path, unless in the wet areas, where it would need to be slag so it does not float away.

Westphal asked about public access for the proposed path.

Kowalski said the petitioner is working with the Parks Department to guarantee a permanent public access is established. He said that the maintenance of the path is currently being discussed.

Westphal asked if these details will be available when the project goes to Council.

Kowalski said yes, these details would be in the development agreement.

Parekh asked about the disturbance of the small wetland on the southern part of the site and what mitigation would be required.

Kowalski pointed out the removal of the former storm water sedimentation basin that has become a wetland and the location of the proposed mitigation. He explained that these details still need to be worked out, which is one of the reasons staff is recommending postponement at this evening's meeting.

Peters asked what section of the site was previously used for farming.

Kowalski pointed out where the site had been farmed.

Peters asked about soil quality, given previous farming and concerns over pesticides and other possible chemicals. He asked if soil borings had been done.

Ophoff said the site has not been cultivated for many years, noting that a historic photo from the 1940's shows the site post farmed. He explained they have not taken soil samples, but have done an environmental survey which didn't show any concerns.

Westphal asked about the Northeast Area master plan process, and the proposed rezoning of part of the site.

Kowalski said there was a specific site recommendation in the plan, which allowed for taller buildings and office uses as well as recommendations for residential use for this site. He said what they have been presented with by the petitioner is consistent with

the recommendation to preserve the majority of the natural features and respecting viewsheds from the Leslie Park Golf Course and minimizing curb-cuts and maintaining public access through the site which has been viewed as a crucial element.

Westphal asked about intensity of use if the lower site were to be retained as ORL [Office/Research/Limited Industrial Zoning] and about traffic considerations between that site and the residential site.

Kowalski said the peak times are different, with the office/research maybe having more peak traffic and the residential maybe having more of a dispersed traffic intake throughout the day.

Bona asked the petitioner about internal pedestrian circulation and about what she said looks like roadways on the site. She asked about the dominance of the vehicle versus the comfort of the pedestrian and cyclist when on the site and how the drives are constructed and how they will feel to the pedestrian. She asked about the internal sidewalks circulation and how it is proposed to work.

Ophoff pointed out the interior sidewalk system and roadway. He said the new plans show crossings regularly spaced, convenient, and coordinated with mailbox locations.

Bona said she thought her concerns were addressed with the explanations provided by the petitioner; she asked if they would provide one color copy of the plan showing the interior walkways highlighted when the item returns to the Commission.

Briere asked about the plan for road maintenance and snow removal.

Ophoff said they are private roads and will be maintained by First Martin Corporation. He explained that the snow storage areas are indicated on the landscape plan.

Clein said he recognizes the challenge of a large site with natural features and the shape of the site. He agreed with Bona and seconded the request for pedestrian walkways to be delineated (highlighted) on the plan when returning to the Commission. He expressed his disappointment that the design of the site is typical, in that it is designed around the roadways, which results in lots of pavement. He noted that there have been successful developments with less pavement and given the 'dream team' of developers and architects he had hoped for something more unique and less cookie cutter style. He said he was not naïve to the economics of the development but had hoped to get more than presented.

Parekh asked about bicycle parking spaces and locations, noting that there were more than required.

Ophoff said the number of spaces was high due to the many located inside of the designated garages. He explained that they provided additional Class C spaces in external locations on the site, noting two spaces outside each building and at least four at the community building.

Westphal asked about materials.

James Sharpa, Hobbs and Black Architects, said they will be using brick and cast stone, with the roofing material being shingles and some standing seam metals and the almond colored siding proposed to be Hardi-panel, not vinyl.

Westphal asked for clarification on whether the project will be built in phases.

Ophoff said the logical phasing is between the south and north end of the development, pointing out that the sewer line begins from the southern part of the site. He said they will allow timing and market to dictate whether they stop or continue with the northern part of the development in phases.

Westphal said he notes that there is an attempt to save the native forest fragment. He asked if the remaining site will be clear cut or if they are able to save some trees.

Ophoff pointed out that there is 60 feet of fall across the site, and that they will need to do significant earth work on the site. He said they will be able to save one tree next to the proposed community building. He reviewed the trees on the site, showing the areas that are old fields that do not meet woodland standards.

Westphal said even though there is no site plan requirement to leave some of the existing vegetation there is value in doing so to buffer and soften the appearance.

Ophoff pointed out the hedgerows adjacent to Leslie Golf Course, and the Willow Tree Apartments on the southern boundary and the Islamic Academy, where there are significant trees that will be preserved using retaining walls along the edges.

Moved by Bona, seconded by Clein, that this petition be postponed. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

Yeas: 7 - Bonnie Bona, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Paras Parekh, and Jeremy Peters

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - Wendy Woods, and Eleanore Adenekan

10-b [13-1127](#)

Authorization for Planning Commissioners to Attend MAP Conference

Bona provided the history of how the Planning Commission training budget came about, noting that training was added to the budget as a separate budgetary line item during the tough economic times that occurred approximately five years ago.

Parekh asked if Briere and he were to recuse themselves from voting, would there be enough votes to pass the motion.

Rampson said yes, since they only need a majority vote on the item.

Westphal asked if the Commissioners would be missing any Commission meetings by attending the conference.

Rampson said, no.

Clein said it was very educational, useful and helpful for him to attend the MAP conference last year, when he was a new Commissioner, adding that he was able to meet Planners from around the State and it is an opportunity to immerse oneself into Planning issues that assisted him with fulfilling his responsibilities and duties on the Commission and he encouraged Commissioners to attend.

Moved by Giannola, seconded by Clein, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby approves the attendance of Commissioners Briere and Parekh at the 2013 Michigan Association of Planning Annual Conference on October 2-4, 2013 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and further approves the

reimbursement of eligible expenses from the Planning Services conference and training budget. On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 5 - Bonnie Bona, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, and Jeremy Peters

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - Wendy Woods, and Eleanore Adenekan

Recused: 2 - Sabra Briere, and Paras Parekh

11 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Persons may speak for three minutes on any item.)

None.

12 COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

Bona asked about the address of the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church public hearing item scheduled for the next business meeting.

Rampson responded that it is 1717 Broadway, noting that staff will revise the notice to include the address.

13 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Kirk Westphal, Chair
mg

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