



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes - Final
Planning Commission, City

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Tuesday, July 7, 2015

7:00 PM

Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St,
Second floor, City Council Chambers

9-a 15-0833

Rockbridge Hotel and Retail Planned Project Site Plan and Rezoning - A proposal to demolish two vacant buildings on this 2.48-acre site located at 3201 South State Street, rezone it from M1 (Limited Industrial) to C3 (Fringe Commercial) and construct a new 6-story, 140-room hotel and a single-story, 2,800-square foot freestanding retail building. Planned project modifications are requested to exceed the maximum height limitation and allow a front yard open space encroachment. (Ward 4) Staff Recommendation: Approval

Matt Kowalski presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Brad Moore, J. Bradley Moore & Associates, 4844 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, representing the owner and developer introduced them and Midwestern Consulting Engineers, and was available to respond to enquiries from the Commission.

Noting no further speakers the Chair closed the public hearing unless the item is postponed.

Moved by Franciscus, seconded by Milshteyn that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Rockbridge Hotel & Retail rezoning from M1 (Limited Industrial District) to C3 (Fringe Commercial District) and

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Rockbridge Hotel & Retail Planned Project Site Plan.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Milshteyn asked if the retail store would be constructed at the same time as the hotel.

James D. Schrim III, RB Hotel Development LLC, 4100 Regent Street, Suite G, Columbus, OH, said their current plan is to build them

concurrently, adding that the interest in the retail has been robust.

Milshteyn asked about reasoning for minimizing the floor plan by 5,000 square feet.

Schrim said it was to assist in minimizing the energy consumption.

Clein said he was pleased to see they had gained access through the adjoining property since he believes this area will get a lot of traffic during football season. He asked about the access easement.

Schrim said they have an executed access agreement waiting to be recorded pending Planning Commission approval.

Clein asked about the public benefit of a Planned Project that they considered was being provided through their project. He read the standards as outlined in the code.

Schrim said there are social, environmental, and economic benefits from their project for the community,

Moore said they have moved the sidewalk back to the retail building in order to engage sidewalk activity and create visual interest on the street which is one of the things the South State Street Corridor Plan talked about. He said orienting the hotel in the east west direction provides a more energy efficient design allowing them to maximize the energy efficiency of the building. He said through providing the bicycle rest stop they will not only be providing people a place to stop and rest but a location for them to repair their bicycles, and they also intend to incorporate a drinking fountain there. He said there are no historic or natural features to preserve on the site.

Clein asked if they intend to provide LEED certification.

Moore said he wasn't sure they would pursue LEED certification but the project would have enough LEED attributes to approach certification.

Schrim added that Hyatt's standard required for a Hyatt place is their millennial new brand that pushed you to meeting or exceeding the LEED energy conservation requirements. He said while they have not intended to acquire LEED certification he feels that they will be putting the dollars directly into the project instead of paying for the certification. He offered to go through the certification process if the Commission so requested.

Clein said while he felt it was great that the petitioner is claiming a public benefit of building an energy efficient building he felt they were asking the Commission to trust their word on the energy efficiency levels without much restraining or forcing them to do so after the Commission gives their approval. He asked how the Commission could ascertain that the petitioner would build an energy efficient building that is part of a public benefit being proposed.

Rampson explained that for projects that have premiums, there are two LEED points required as prerequisites and in those situations we require an engineer's certificate from an independent engineer that indicates that the building has been designed to meet those two points.

Clein said he was wondering if they could require something like that for this project. He said he understood that the bike station and drinking fountain fall under the category of public benefit.

Schrim said they are required by Hyatt to meet their standards in order to meet their design criteria and plans are reviewed and approved by Hyatt as well.

Clein asked about options how to make their energy efficiency efforts official.

Rampson said the Commission could articulate the specifics as a condition to the Planned Project.

Moore asked if the existing language as for the premiums could be used.

Rampson said the question would be if the two Energy and Atmosphere points of LEED would be something that would align with the Hyatt standards or something that they would be willing to commit to.

Moore and Schrim said yes.

Clein said if the item is something that is used as basis for their community benefit of their Planned Project then the community deserves to know more tangibly what it is. He noted that in the past they have had developers promise certain things and deliver something else, so he was looking for accountability.

Peters said as they move forward, the Commission should keep in mind

the difficulty that developers have in negotiating cross access easements, and how the process can be made easier.

Woods commended the petitioner for pursuing this since it was something discussed and recommended by the Commission.

Clein commented that though the project meets the zoning requirements in spirit, to put buildings at the street, it does not really meet the intent, which is to put the whole development at the street. He asked how, in the future, they can advocate for this to happen instead of developers using the outbuilding strategy, which is far more of a suburban approach. He asked how they can make the intent more compelling in the future.

Peters commended the petitioners on revised plans that show bus 'bump-in' [pull off] and future discussion with AAATA. He said considering the number of hotel rooms added, it is good strategy to promote transit oriented design.

Moved by Clein, seconded by Briere, to amendment the motion to read:

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Rockbridge Hotel & Retail Planned Project Site Plan, subject to meeting or exceeding two points for energy and atmosphere, LEED version 4 or 14% better than ASHRAE 90.1-2007.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENT:

Briere hoped that staff could provide an explanation of the two points to Council when the project comes before them.

Woods suggested that the petitioner be prepared to answer questions from Council.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 6 - Wendy Woods, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Jeremy Peters, Sofia Franciscus, and Alex Milshteyn

Nays: 0

Absent: 3 - Eleanore Adenekan, Sarah Mills, and Bonnie Bona

VOTE ON MAIN MOTIONS:

On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 6 - Wendy Woods, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Jeremy Peters, Sofia Franciscus, and Alex Milshteyn

Nays: 0

Absent: 3 - Eleanore Adenekan, Sarah Mills, and Bonnie Bona