



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Meeting Minutes City Planning Commission

Tuesday, May 17, 2011

7:00 PM Ann Arbor Municipal Center, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

Commission public meetings are held the first and third Tuesday of each month. Both of these meetings provide opportunities for the public to address the Commission. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to participate. Accommodations, including sign language interpreters, may be arranged by contacting the City Clerk's Office at 734-794-6140 (V/TDD) at least 24 hours in advance. Planning Commission meeting agendas and packets are available from the Legislative Information Center on the City Clerk's page of the City's website (<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>) or on the 5th floor of City Hall on the Friday before the meeting. Agendas and packets are also sent to subscribers of the City's email notification service, GovDelivery. You can subscribe to this free service by accessing the City's website and clicking on the red envelope at the top of the home page.

1 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mahler called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Present 8 - Bona, Pratt, Mahler, Carlberg, Woods, Derezinski, Briggs, and Giannola

Absent 1 - Westphal

2 ROLL CALL

Rampson called the roll.

Present 8 - Bona, Pratt, Mahler, Carlberg, Woods, Derezinski, Briggs, and Giannola

Absent 1 - Westphal

3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Pratt, seconded by Woods, that the agenda be approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

4 INTRODUCTIONS

None

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

None

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

a City Administration

None

b City Council

Derezinski reported that at Council the previous night, there was no agreement reached in relationship with the Downtown Development Authority on revenues, therefore the budget meeting was recessed until Monday, May 23. One of the major things the Council discussed was the potential cutbacks in Safety Services, including both Fire and Police. He said this has not been resolved because of the uncertainty of revenue. He said there was discussion about data presented on response times, some of which continued into the news media today. He said that Chief Jones has been exploring whether the Assistant Fire Chiefs could take on responsibilities.

Derezinski reported that the Medical Marijuana ordinance will be the next major issue taken up by Council.

Derezinski reported that Council approved funding for demolition of three houses that will be part of the Near North development, which is getting ready to start up.

Derezinski referred the Commission to an article on Grand Rapid's cooperation in supporting expanded transit, which he likened to the City's efforts with its corridors, trains and high speed rail.

Rampson added that the first reading of the Design Review Board amendments went before Council last night, with Councilmember Higgins thanking the Planning Commission for moving the item along in a timely manner.

c Planning Manager

Rampson reported that the Design Review Committee appointed by the Council will do a mock exercise in the next few weeks in preparation for review of future downtown developments.

Rampson reviewed the June Meeting Calendar with the Commission.

d Planning Commission Officers and Committees

None

e Written Communications and Petitions

**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

None

9 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.)

- 9-a 11-0632** Public Hearing and Action on Summers-Knoll School Special Exception Use - A request for Special Exception Permission to convert an office building at 2203 Platt Road to a private school for a maximum of 144 students in grades K-8. Staff Recommendation: Approval

Cheng gave a staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Theresa Angilini, architect for the project, 113 East Ann Street, Ann Arbor, explained that Summers Knoll has 42 students in their current 3,100 square foot facility, which is a quarter mile west of the proposed new location. She explained that the school has flourished at its current location, and now outgrown the facility.

Angilini noted that the proposed building is perfect; it's nearby the current school, next to County Farm Park, providing adequate space, and on a bus route. She clarified the floor area figure, stating that the first floor has 16, 458 square feet, with 3,974 square feet on second floor; totaling 20,432 square feet. She added that there is an attic space over the south west corner of the building with floor area [having ceilings taller than 5 feet] of 2,017 square feet. Angelini said there was a finished, heated garage included with 1,180 square feet. She stated that if the attic square footage is counted then the total would be 22,449 square feet and with the added

garage it would be 23,629 square feet.

Angilini said that the school culture is that parents walk the kids into the school, in a more leisurely fashion, as well as when leaving at the end of the day. She explained that when the traffic assessment was done, the consultant concluded that the driveway needs to remain two-way with cars directed to enter on the north and exit on the south.

Bethany Schulz, from Summers Knoll School, said she was available to answer questions.

Noting no further speakers, Mahler closed the Public Hearing at 7:24 PM.

A motion was made by Carlberg, seconded by Derezinski, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission, after hearing all interested persons and reviewing all relevant information, finds the petition to substantially meet the standards in Chapter 55 (Zoning Ordinance), Section 5:104 (Special Exceptions) and, therefore approves the Summers-Knoll School Exception Use for a private school with a maximum of 160 students and 21,050 square feet of floor area, subject to dedication of the Platt Road right-of-way before issuance of any permits.

Carlberg asked about proposed play space for the children. She noted that the property to the north is known to be pretty soggy. She brought concerns about two-way traffic, which could be a possible conflict with children being dropped off from cars while children are walking to and from school.

Angilini said that purchase of the property hinges on special exception use. She explained that there is an area on the south side of the property as well as the three existing courtyards that will be used for play areas. She said that the students use the County Farm Park and recreation center quite a lot currently. She said they are in the process of purchasing the two parcels to the north. She added they may do mulched trails in the existing woods since the parcel is not all wetland. Angilini stated they won't be making changes to the wooded lots since the school is a green certified school.

Carlberg asked about proposed fencing around the property.

Angilini responded that they will be placing fences to separate the play areas from traffic.

Carlberg asked how they will control crossing when traffic comes from both directions.

Angilini responded that it would take some training.

Carlberg noted that she was on the Planning Commission when the original special exception use came before them, and the plan for circulation was subsequently changed.

Derezinski asked whether the expansion would be with different grades.

Schultz said they intend to slowly add grades, starting with 6th grade.

Derezinski noted that the Commission recently had a tour of the Washtenaw Avenue corridor. He asked if any students would be using public transportation.

Schulz responded that they have several students using the bus.

Derezinski asked if they were aware of the proposal for the adjacent commercial property.

Schulz responded yes, and that they are in communication with the developers.

Briggs observed that the sidewalk does not extend around the entire building, and this doesn't seem acceptable for a school.

Angilini responded that there will be added sidewalk on the south side, because it is the safest area for drop-off. The north side has a detention area, so it would be more difficult to add a drop-off on that side.

Pratt asked where the main entrance to the building is located.

Angilini responded that the main entrance is on the east, with additional entrances at the north and south.

Pratt said this is a good case of adaptive reuse of a facility. He asked what the Commission would be taking action on, since the plan doesn't show a play area, yet he didn't believe the ordinances address that. He stressed his concern with mixing drop-off and parking, noting that these situations often need to be remediated in the future, which is always more difficult than planning in advance. Pratt said there is a reason the public schools separate the two functions. He added that it would seem like having clearly defined walking path will help the situation.

Giannola asked if there would be any crosswalk on Platt.

Cheng said no.

Woods asked if there would be ability to get signage alerting drivers to children in the area.

Cheng responded that since this is a private school, he wasn't sure.

Rampson said that the petitioner can request signage from the Traffic Engineer, who can have the City install them if they meet the standards.

Woods asked if there would be sidewalks on both sides of Platt Road.

Angillini said that the sidewalk on the east side of Platt is continuous, except for the auto repair shop, with the AATA bus stop on the east side of the street.

Bona asked about driveways in Special Exception Use application. Did they indicate this would be one-way?

Cheng said that the petitioner had intended to keep the two-way drives, with parents using the driveways in certain directions.

Bona asked about the shared use arrangement on the north drive.

Angilini said that the north drive has an easement that was intended for the former dealership service drive, noting the easement expires in 2020, and no trucks are allowed.

Bona said that generally the Commission likes to see interconnections with developments. She said she understands the concerns about traffic, but believed it was an internal issue for the school to deal with and not a part of the special exception use. Regarding floor area, she asked staff if attic and garage could and would be included.

Cheng responded that this would be included. He noted that numbers in the staff report came from previous site plan.

Bona asked if it is unacceptable to put in additional floor area. She expressed the need to have clarification on the figures before the Commission move forward with their motion.

Mahler said that they want to make sure that the petitioner recognizes that the Commission will not be approving the 10% but rather the hard number of square footage.

Angilini asked that the request not be tabled because there is a time limit on the purchase agreement.

Mahler said that as long as the petitioner is aware of what the Commission will be voting on, they could proceed.

Cheng suggested that the Commission take the architect's figures and add 10% to the figures to include the expansion they are proposing.

Mahler said that once the Planning Commission approves the motion at 21,050 square feet, the petitioner would need to come back to the Commission if it turned out that they actually needed more floor area. He asked if the Commission would like to make an amendment to the motion.

A motion was made by Bona, seconded by Derezhinski, to revise the main motion to reflect a maximum floor area of 26,000 square feet, based on clarification provided by the petitioner. On a roll call, the vote on the amendment was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 8 - Bonnie Bona, Evan Pratt, Eric A. Mahler, Jean Carlberg, Wendy Woods, Tony Derezhinski, Erica Briggs, and Diane Giannola

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Kirk Westphal

Carlberg said that looking at Standard 4, regarding intensity of traffic and parking on the site, seemed to fit with the Commission's concerns. She noted that if people are taking the bus they would use the driveway to get to the closest entrance. She felt it makes sense to have sidewalk all the way around the building.

A motion was made by Carlberg, seconded by Briggs, to include a condition that clearly-defined walkways to building entryways will be provided.

Angilini asked if the language could be more ambiguous, which would allow more flexibility for additional entrances to be added in the future. She noted that the driveway on the north has a detention area, so they have concern about putting a sidewalk along an area with a steep slope.

Woods said that she was confused about sidewalks that would go all the way around and the building. She reviewed a drawing provided by the petitioner. She noted that the north drive is intended to be used just by vehicles. She asked when they add

middle schoolers, will they walk to the new shopping center?

Angilini said there is a landscape island separating the parking from the drive that may be helpful.

Briggs said that there is a need for defined walking space, not specifically sidewalk. She felt it important to have walking space around the building.

Carlberg proposed changing motion to "with a condition that a clearly defined walking path from Platt to every entrance of the school be constructed".

Pratt expressed confusion on defined entrances into the building.

Angilini suggested that these entrances be identified as the northwest corner and the west side.

Briggs said that there is also a need for a sidewalk along the east side of the building.

Angilini said that they could do this

Derezinski suggested that "with the condition that clearly defined walkways to building entry ways will be provided and also a continuous walkway along the building's east side".

Carlberg and Briggs agreed to the friendly amendment.

Briggs said this needs to be more than a two foot sidewalk with the curbcut possibly being pulled out somewhat.

On a friendly amendment, the motion by Carlberg, seconded by Briggs, was revised to read: "subject to providing clearly-defined walkways to building entryways and a continuous walkway along the building's east side." A roll call vote on the amendment was as follows, with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 8 - Bonnie Bona, Evan Pratt, Eric A. Mahler, Jean Carlberg, Wendy Woods, Tony Derezinski, Erica Briggs, and Diane Giannola

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Kirk Westphal

Pratt thought the bicycle changes were appropriate.

Carlberg said the school had been an asset in the neighborhood, and she commends the school for that.

Woods asked if the petitioner knows will happen with the school's current location.

Schulz said they have been approached by several interested parties, including another school and an office.

A roll call vote on the main motion, as amended, was as follows, with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

The approved motion reads as follows:

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission, after hearing all interested persons

and reviewing all relevant information, finds the petition to substantially meet the standards in Chapter 55 (Zoning Ordinance), Section 5:104 (Special Exceptions) and, therefore approves the Summers-Knoll School Exception Use for a private school with a maximum of 160 students and 26,000 square feet of floor area, subject to dedication of the Platt Road right-of-way before issuance of any permits and subject to providing clearly-defined walkways to building entryways and a continuous walkway along the building's east side.

Yeas: 8 - Bonnie Bona, Evan Pratt, Eric A. Mahler, Jean Carlberg, Wendy Woods, Tony Derezinski, Erica Briggs, and Diane Giannola

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Kirk Westphal

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

No speakers

11 COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

Derezinski asked the students in the audience which school they attended. Several members in the audience responded that they were from Huron High School. Three other students said they were from Eastern Michigan University's planning and public administration programs.

12 ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 8:15 PM

Eric Mahler, Chair
mg

Master Plan Review Committee Meeting immediately following adjournment, in Council Chambers Workroom.

Planning Commission meetings are typically broadcast on Ann Arbor Community Television Network Channel 16 live at 7:00 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month and replayed the following Wednesdays at 10:00 AM and Sundays at 2:00 PM.

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- Cable: Watch CTN Channel 16 public meeting programming via Comcast Cable channel 16.