



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes
Planning Commission, City

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Tuesday, July 1, 2014

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron St., 2nd Fl.

9-a 14-1003

The Mark Condominiums Site Plan - A proposal to demolish the existing carwash building on this 0.25 acre site and construct a 11,910 square foot, three-story, 7-unit residential building with garages below. The property is located in the Old West Side Historic District and received a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposal on March 13, 2014. (Ward 5). Staff Recommendation: Approval

Thacher presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Vince Caruso, 556 Glendale Circle, Ann Arbor, Allen Creek Coordinating Committee, said there is no information in the packet indicating the location of the floodplain. He urged caution in considering this project. He noted that the Delonis Center was found to be in the floodplain after the site plan was reviewed, and they had to move the building. He said that the Near North project was also scrapped because of floodplain issues. He said that residents of the Allen Creek area want to do a study of the creek. He said there has been a Green Streets initiative to reduce pervious pavement. He said he wants to make sure we don't put people in harm's way. He noted an example of people in Ohio, drowning trying to get cars out of garages.

Lynn Borset, 322 Virginia, Ann Arbor, said that aesthetically, it's a shame that this building will be taller and provides nothing to recommend with its exterior design.

Brad Moore, 4844 Jackson Road, Suite 150, Ann Arbor, architect for project, introduced the project team and said he was available to answer questions. He explained that all of the floodplain area is below the level of the garage. He said the proposed residential units will be located over the garage. He said he worked with City staff to identify the flood elevation. He noted that the building aesthetics are a result of a long process of negotiation with Historic District Commission. He noted that the Old West Side president and vice president both spoke in favor of the project.

Steve Thorp, 124 Chapin Street, Ann Arbor, resident of downtown, said that if any part of a property is in a floodplain, it has to be addressed and

not ignored. He said that this development is not compatible with the goals from the Downtown Plan for a diversity of new downtown housing opportunities since it is not affordable for median income. He asked when this was going to stop. He said this type of development is changing the character of the city. He said the Commission should emphasize diversity and protect the liveability of residentially-zoned neighborhoods next to downtown. He said traffic issues are directly related to downtown development, as are property taxes. He said he walked by the site and saw that the developer's sign had graffiti that said "More Yuppified Housing for Ann Arbor."

Noting no further speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Clein, seconded by Giannola, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Mark Condominiums Site Plan and Development Agreement.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Clein asked about floodplain delineation.

Thacher pointed out the floodplain line on the site plan image.

Clein asked about construction in the floodplain.

Thacher said that the proposed building stays out of the corner of the site where the floodplain is located.

Clein asked about whether there is habitable space in the floodplain.

Moore pointed out the entrances to garages, at grade level.

Bona asked whether residential development can be built in a floodway.

Rampson said no.

Bona suggested the petitioner make the floodplain line clear in materials for Council. She asked how the flood elevation is determined.

Kathy Keineith, Perimeter Engineering, the project engineer, said FEMA does cross sections through the floodplain and analyzes the flow data.

Bona asked what is being done for flood mitigation.

Moore said there is engineered storm water detention on the site, which will percolate into the soil.

Keineth said there is both infiltration and detention being provided.

Bona asked about the elevation of the pipe.

Keineth said the floodplain elevation is about 811, and the pipe in Liberty is not that deep. She explained that the emergency overflow out of the detention basin will go into the street.

Bona asked what level of stormwater management is being provided.

Keineth said first flush detention is being provided.

Bona asked about landscaping.

Keineth said the plan includes planting new street trees and foundation plantings. She said there will be a series of retaining walls and terraces designed to blend the grade into the site to the north.

Bona said this detail might be helpful for City Council to see, since there is a lot of grade change.

Bona asked about the Historic District Commission review. She said she understood this project did not have to go through the Design Review Board.

Moore said yes, the Historic District Commission had authority over the design of the building.

Bona asked if the development had to comply with character overlay district requirements.

Moore said yes.

Bona noted the comments from Mr. Thorpe about the master plan goals and said housing diversity is a continuing challenge when you have such high valued property. She said currently, there is a zoning premium for affordable housing that is not being used. She noted that the Committee, discussed earlier in the meeting, will be looking at how to get affordable housing across the city, not just downtown. She said this housing can't always be on-site. She said relative to property taxes, most residents are concerned about development lowering their property value. She said stability is what we should be conscious of. She noted that density brings less traffic and that its downtown's attractiveness that's bringing cars in.

Woods said she was glad the water main issue was able to be resolved. She asked what happens with West Liberty when the water main gets replaced and the extend of the street work.

Keineth said they haven't done a design for the water main yet. She said they plan to put the water main 3-5 feet at the back of curb and abandon the existing 6 inch water main in Liberty. She said there will be three tie-ins; at Third Street, Second Street, and their property, so there should be little disruption.

Moore clarified that this project is a several day project.

Briere asked about the footing drain disconnect program. She asked if staff is helping the developer find properties to disconnect.

Rampson said the citizen committee is meeting weekly, and the development agreement language is beng review to provide flexibility in meeting the sanitary flow mitigation requirements. She note there are a number of multiple-family developments that may also be available for disconnects.

Peters asked about design guidelines for new buildings in historic districts.

Thacher said the Historic District Commission applies the Secretary of Interior Standards first, then the Ann Arbor guidelines. She said the Commission looks for a design that is compatible and doesn't overwhelm historic structures in the district. She said the biggest issue for the Commission was the front setback. She said the Commission felt the new building should be pushed back so it would not obscure the adjacent Peter Brehm house. She said their objective was to preserve the viewshed, not distract from it. She said that the Commission encourages modern buildings in this type of situation.

Clein noted that the design is admirable in finding a moderation between modern and historic. He said having the building pushed back helps. He asked where condensers will be located.

Moore said most of the equipment will be on the roof, with two potentially on the north side. He said this will depend on the actual mechanical design.

Clein asked about exterior materials, which he did not see labeled on the plans.

Moore showed an elevation and pointed out the labels for materials. He

said they will be using brick, iron work and smooth factory-painted hardi-panel.

Clein asked whether they intended to use brick veneer.

Moore said the brick will be full depth brick, except on the cantilever portion.

Clein suggested this detail be included in the information for City Council.

Bona observed that it would have been good if they considered a lightweight material rather than lightweight brick.

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

Yeas: 9 - Bonnie Bona, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Eleanore Adenekan, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Paras Parekh, and Jeremy Peters

Nays: 0