

March 30, 2012

Matt Kowalski AICP
Planning and Development Services Unit
City of Ann Arbor
100 N. Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8647

RE: Maple Cove and Maple Village Site Plan – SP12-001: Response for Council

Dear Matt:

Please include this response to Planning Commission and staff concerns from the PC meeting on March 20, 2012 with your transmittal to City Council.

As noted in the staff report dated March 20, 2012, the “staff supports redevelopment of this site as residential which is consistent with the City’s Master Plan. The proposed re-development of this site will result in an improvement to the Maple Road Corridor, and will bring the parcel into conformance with all existing development codes and regulations.”

The concerns voiced by the Planning Commission and staff have been heard and carefully considered by the Developer. At this time, the Developer has respectfully declined to make any revisions to their proposal since their plan is in complete compliance with the City Code. The rationale for this is as follows:

1. With regard to traffic concerns over two curb cuts, the Developer greatly desires that the two types of residential development retain their own separate access and identity. The intent is to create two separate communities adjacent to each other. Responsibility for landscape, building and infrastructure maintenance will be separated for each community and is outlined in the Master Deed and Bylaws. The City’s Transportation Engineer has stated that the Developer is “entitled” to two curb cuts for this project, and the Fire Marshall did not identify any threat to health, safety, or welfare by having two, separate curb cuts.
2. With regard to the lack of sidewalk servicing the single-family lots, the proposal is consistent with City Code, and sidewalk is not required. The Developer feels that sidewalks are not necessary for these lots due to the low volume of traffic on this private street, and desires to create a space that is multi-purpose, used by pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles alike. This concept is similar to the European “woonerf”, a “shared space” designed to be used by pedestrians, playing children, bicyclists, and low-speed motor vehicles, becoming a public place for people instead of single-purpose conduits for automobiles. Traffic speed will be controlled with signage and traffic calming devices such as tables or speed bumps. The PC expressed concern of children being able to get to the school bus, etc., but there is no sidewalk along the west side of Maple Road in this location, except for the proposed sidewalk the Developer intends to install along the frontage of this project.

3. With regard to the lack of open space or park contribution, there is no requirement for open space for any use within the Office Zoning District. Per the City's definition, the apartment development includes approximately 33% open space. The Developer intends to create roof-top deck areas for the use of the apartment tenants. These can be used for passive recreation activities such as picnicking, sunbathing, exercise, or cookouts. For more active recreation, Garden Homes Park is less than 1,100 feet walking distance, and includes traditional park amenities and playground equipment. Based on the anticipated demographics of the apartment tenants, the Developer feels this should be sufficient for their recreational and open space needs.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,
MIDWESTERN CONSULTING, LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. James Gorenflo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R. James Gorenflo
Project Manager