

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
Monday, July 13, 2009

Chairperson Gronbach called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Farmington City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Present: Bowman, Buck, Christiansen, Crutcher, Gronbach, Kuiken.

Absent: Ingalls, Scott, Sutton.

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Building Inspector Koncsol, City Manager Pastue, Recording Secretary Schmidt.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Purdy, LSL Planning, Inc.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Buck, seconded by Kuiken, to approve the agenda. Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Kuiken, seconded by Bowman, to approve the items on the consent agenda as follows:

- Regular meeting minutes of May 11, 2009.

Motion carried, all ayes.

SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATION – 32777 CHESLEY DRIVE

Present: Jason Fochtman, of Jeffrey A. Scott, Architects, P.C., 32316 Grand River Avenue.

Mr. Fochtman, representative for R. Cushman & Associates, Inc., reviewed their application for outdoor storage of classic, restored cars that would be on the subject property, occasionally for sale. He stated there would be no signs or advertising.

Mr. Fochtman discussed updating the landscaping with flowers and shrubs. He noted the suggestion of planting a tree would be detrimental to the finish of the vehicles due to dust, sap and pollen that it would produce.

Public Hearing

MOTION by Kuiken, seconded by Buck, to open the public hearing regarding the Special Land Use application for outdoor storage for R. Cushman & Associates, Inc., 32777 Chesley Drive. Motion carried, all ayes.

William E. King, owner of the adjoining building on Chesley Drive, stated he was prepared to object to the request for special land use, but after hearing the proposal from the applicant he did not have a serious objection. He questioned if the application was approved could the site be down graded to a normal used car lot. Mr. King commented he would object if that were the case since it would bring down the neighborhood.

Chairperson Gronbach replied the Commission would discuss that issue and they would take Mr. King's comments on advisement.

There being no further public comments, Gronbach requested a motion to close the public hearing.

MOTION by Bowman, seconded by Christiansen, to close the public hearing. Motion carried, all ayes.

Consideration to approve special land use application and site plan for outdoor display and sales of vehicles in an Industrial District.

Jeff Purdy, AICP Partner, LSL Planning, Inc., reviewed their letter dated June 26, 2009 to the Planning Commission, which evaluated the proposal based on special land use requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the zoning requirements that would apply to a normal site plan. He stated this is an existing site and building and no significant changes would be made to the site. He noted the Commission has the ability to require reasonable upgrades that are necessary to maintain the character or compatibility of the surrounding area.

Purdy discussed the special land use requirements: noting the site is designated as Industrial and the proposed use is consistent with the City of Farmington Master Plan; outdoor storage is a space extensive use and is allowed in the Industrial District as an accessory use and the addition of nine (9) outdoor spaces for the display of vehicles is accessory to the warehouse use and is consistent with the intent of the zoning district. He commented the display of restored classic automobiles is accessory to the storage of vehicles in the warehouse building and would be compatible with the character of the industrial area. He mentioned the outdoor lighting must not impact the nearby residential area. He noted the site would not involve additional public services and facilities that would be a detriment to the general public and no additional traffic. He commented there are other uses in the area with outdoor storage and the applicant needs to properly maintain the property in order to be in character with the surrounding area.

Purdy stated LSL Planning, Inc. recommended approval of the Special Land Use and Preliminary Site Plan with the following conditions: updating the lighting on the front side of the building with downward light fixtures so as not to impact the neighbors in the residential area, the Building Official and Fire Chief should be consulted for compliance with the building code, fire code and other safety regulations, deferred parking be removed to the rear of the site, at least one (1) additional canopy tree should be provided on the west side of the driveway, details are required for proposed landscaping along the building's front wall and a portion of the east wall, a landscaped screen be considered along the east side of the existing loading dock to reduce its visibility and to improve the site's appearance, and separate permits shall be required for any new signs.

Mr. King commented he did not think outside storage was allowed in that area. Gronbach responded there is outside storage in the area.

Commissioner Crutcher verified there is not any proposed additional lighting on the site. Purdy suggested shielding the current lighting or replace with downward lighting.

Commissioner Kuiken questioned the X-8 parking spaces on the site plan and the proponent explained the 9th parking space was for handicap parking. Kuiken verified that the classic vehicles would be for display for people to view the vehicles and would be stored inside.

In response to a question by Crutcher, the proponent commented the cars would be stored on sight, in the warehouse, but occasionally customers come in from other areas. He noted there is no foot traffic and customers learn about the classic cars through the network.

Terry Shay, representative of Mr. Cushman, stated the cars in the collection range from \$600,000 down to \$25,000 and usually customers make appointments to view the vehicles.

Commissioner Christiansen verified there would be a display of up to nine (9) classic vehicles along the west lot line, outside during the day and inside at night, and are classic vehicles based on the value. He noted the changes proposed would be deferral of three (3) parking spaces for employees and some additional landscaping at the entryway, no changes to the lighting, impact of placement of a canopy tree that would be detrimental to the vehicles, no signage changes, and asked if the recommendation from LSL Planning for parking behind the building was feasible. The proponent stated there is room in the back of the building.

Christiansen voiced concern that the action taken by the Commission is specific to the petitioner's proposal and that it is specific to the vehicle's west lot line, classic cars, and that any changes would require them to appear before the Commission again. He stated he was not sure what a classic vehicle is as defined.

Crutcher asked what the distinction is between classic cars and used cars. The proponent replied the cars are older cars that have been restored and the cheapest car they have is valued at \$25,000.

Kuiken asked what criteria the proponent uses to determine a classic car. The proponent responded the vehicles are completely taken apart and is a new car after restoration.

Gronbach questioned what terminology the proponent uses to determine a classic vehicle. The proponent replied the State of Michigan determines a vehicle that is twenty-five (25) years and older is a classic car. Purdy suggested including in the terminology, restored vehicles, sales by appointment, and specify the vehicles are stored indoors in the evening, which would be the main distinction from a used car lot.

Crutcher asked what would stop a neighboring business to display used cars. Gronbach replied the Commission would decide every special land use request if it is appropriate.

Gronbach requested administration follow-up on clean up of the vacant parcel next to the business. The proponent commented they are using that parcel for storage during renovation of a building on Eight Mile and will be gone within a couple of weeks. Gronbach suggested clean up of the landscape on the vacant parcel and requested administration note this issue.

MOTION by Christiansen, seconded by Buck, to approve the Special Land Use and Site Plan for 32777 Chesley Drive, on the basis that the special land use is compatible with the goals and objectives of the City of Farmington Master Plan, and complies with the special land use requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as the special land use, as proposed, for the display of up to nine (9) classic vehicles, that are restored vehicles, as for sale by appointment only and to be stored on site, inside the existing building, except when on display, to be displayed along the west lot line, as shown on the submitted site plan. The petitioner must provide staff, on the site plan with details of the existing lighting; noting that no new lighting is proposed; the building official and fire chief should confirm there are no safety concerns with the existing or proposed use; that the 3 deferred parking spaces shown on the submitted site plan be relocated to the south portion of the parking area, to be coordinated with staff; that the details for the applicant's proposed landscaping along the building's front wall portion of the east wall, species of plants, etc. be provided and that any separate permits shall be required for any new signs and it should be noted that there are no other changes as proposed. Motion carried, all ayes.

FARMINGTON MASTER PLAN

Review of Master Plan Document

Gronbach discussed changes that were made to the Master Plan.

City Manager Pastue noted "Historic Preservation" was included in the Master Plan.

Christiansen stated he was pleased with the updated plan and was looking forward to adopting it. He felt it is an excellent plan and appreciated input from other boards, the county, and other interests. Commissioner Buck concurred with Christiansen and noted the Master Plan represents great community input and administration, LSL Planning, Inc. and the Commission did a great job.

Consideration to adopt Master Plan with proposed changes.

MOTION by Christiansen, seconded by Buck, to move that the Planning Commission adopt the City of Farmington Master Plan update, which is the fifth (5th) draft for adoption, dated May 13, 2009, in accordance with the City of Farmington Planning Commission resolution of adoption for the Farmington Master Plan provided to us by staff and in our staff packages for this evening. Motion carried, all ayes. [See attached resolution]

Christiansen voiced his appreciation for everyone involved with the Master Plan update and he felt the plan fits the city and is not overdone.

DISCUSSION – TEXT AMENDMENTS

Jeff Purdy summarized recommendations to the Zoning Ordinance amendments to be changed. He discussed that the review process for redevelopment needs to be "redevelopment ready", and update the PUD ordinance to facilitate mixed-use development as recommended in the Master Plan.

He commented there could be modification changes made to the downtown regulations such as design standards, outdoor seating to encourage an active downtown with a lot of sidewalk activity.

Purdy noted the new Master Plan focused on neighborhood centers to allow for mixed-use redevelopment. He also commented on reviewing industrial uses to see what the city would want to allow in the industrial districts that would be consumer related.

Purdy discussed other areas to be worked on regarding zoning amendments: General Commercial, Residential, Industrial, Parking, and other general clean-up items such as 35-54, Preservation of Historic Structures within Non-Residential Districts, better definition/distinguish between institutional uses, and to clarify essential public services, and what is and what is not allowed in a variety of different districts.

Purdy stated they would like to work with staff on preparing a series of proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and return to the Planning Commission for review.

Pastue stated procedures for site plan review needs to be worked on and provide flexibility on redevelopment for the Planning Commission. He noted there were a handful of items that need to be looked at to aid the Planning Commission.

Gronbach stated the Commission needs guidelines regarding older structures and what or what not can be done. Pastue noted staff is meeting with the Historic Commission to update the Historic District.

Christiansen suggested a provision in the ordinance for the Planning Commission to require a historic inventory stating whether or not a structure is historic and then the Commission could act accordingly and it would be on record and on file.

Discussion followed regarding procedures in determining a historic structure and modifications to the Industrial District.

Christiansen asked what the priority is regarding updates to the Zoning Ordinance and Pastue responded it has been figured into the budget and they will try to minimize the cost.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pastue noted the Worldwide Center has been sold.

COUNCIL COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Buck complimented John Koncsol for his helpfulness and efforts made in working with people on development projects.

Kuiken suggested time lines regarding long agenda items in order to have more efficient meetings. Discussion followed regarding a time frame for meetings.

Buck complimented Chairperson Gronbach on the way he conducts the Planning Commission meetings.

Buck noted an article regarding film friendly communities.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Kuiken, seconded by Crutcher, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary