

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
June 8, 2015

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Babcock, Bowman, Buyers, Chiara, Crutcher, Gronbach

Absent: Majoros

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen, Building Inspector Koncsol, City Manager Murphy, Attorney Saarela

Matt Parks, OHM
Aaron Domini, OHM

Christiansen introduced new City Manager David Murphy to the Planning Commission and to those in the audience as well as the viewing audience.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the agenda as submitted.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

A. May 11, 2015 Minutes

Motion by Chiara, seconded by Babcock, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.
Motion carried, all ayes.

**PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE WITH PLANNING COMMISSION ON PUD
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN – ORCHARD PHASE II**

Chairperson Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated this item is a pre-application conference for discussion and review with the Planning Commission on a proposed PUD planned unit development concept plan for the development of Orchards Phase II. The purpose of the pre-application conference is to discuss the appropriateness of a PUD and the concept plan and to solicit feedback from the Planning Commission.

Applicant Fabio Cervi of Cervi Construction of Livonia, requested a pre-application conference and has submitted concept plans for the development of the Orchards Phase II Site on Slocum, a 15-unit, three-story, townhouse-style apartment building with parallel parking. The concept plan includes a conceptual preliminary layout/site plan and a conceptual/preliminary building elevation. An aerial photo of the site was also included in the Commissioners packets.

Christiansen went over the history of the property, including the development of Phase I, a 16-unit condo development, with a parking garage underneath. He stated Phase II was also part of the overall PUD that was approved and the infrastructure installed, however due to economic conditions Phase II has not been realized as yet. He indicated the DDA purchased the unconstructed Phase II from the bank this past year and has been actively marketing this property and has solicited an RFP. Minimal interest was shown for a condominium project on this property. The RFP was then modified to include an opportunity for a "for lease" product as well. An application was submitted by Cervi Construction who are proposing a 15-unit townhouse style apartment building on the site with parallel parking off the front of the building on the access drive. Christiansen also stated that City Council at their June 1st Special Meeting, considered the Applicant's proposal and feedback was provided to staff who then relayed that information to the Applicant. He went over the aerial photo of the project on the screen.

Bowman thanked Christiansen for the introduction and invited the Applicant to the podium.

Fabio Cervi, Cervi Construction, 12419 Stark Road, Livonia 48150 came to the podium and provided a brief overview of the project. The floor was opened up for questions from the Commissioners.

Crutcher asked for clarification of the rendering on the screen.

Gronbach stated that in looking at the site plan it appears the building is backed up pretty close to the east side of the property line and he confirmed there are no rear entrances, only front west entrances. He also questioned if all parking for the site would be limited to the street parking and Cervi responded yes.

Gronbach asked if the Applicant had considered putting the parking behind the units and moving the units up closer to the street and further discussion was held.

The Applicant indicated he had discussed that option with his engineers and it was cost prohibitive due to storm sewers, the grade, and other factors that added to it.

Christiansen stated the limitations presented with the parking situation.

Chiara inquired why Phase I could not just be replicated for Phase II given its success and Christiansen stated that market conditions were different back then and Chiara stated that he felt condos would be more acceptable down there than for rent apartments.

Christiansen stated that having gone through the recession, the owners of the property were no longer able to carry the property and no one developed the property during those conditions and the property had reverted back to the bank.

Gronbach asked if the roadway in and out was public or private and Christiansen responded it's not officially a road.

Buyers inquired addressed the issue of owner/occupied as opposed to apartments and further discussion was held.

Bowman asked for clarification on what drove the changes in the renderings and the Applicant responded the preliminary discussions with the DDA.

Christiansen stated there are three municipal entities that would be engaged with the PUD review and approval process for any development on Phase II, which would be the DDA, the owner of the property; the Planning Commission which would involve four steps, the pre-application conference, application, Public Hearing, and preliminary conceptual plan review, and then that would move from the Planning Commission to City Council, which would include preliminary conceptual review and draft development agreement and then move it forward to the conclusion of the process, with the final site plan presented to the Planning Commission.

Bowman inquired if the consideration of underground parking was cost prohibitive and the Applicant responded in the affirmative.

Buyers asked if the project was going to have a basement or on a slab, the Petitioner responded it is on slab.

Crutcher expressed concern with putting a project on that site that doesn't have the underground parking consistent with Phase I.

The Applicant stated that he considered it but it was not something in his plans for that project.

Buyers stated from a marketing standpoint with 15 units and only 20 parallel parking spots, it may not be adequate.

Christiansen stated Phase I includes 16 condos with 16 underground spaces and eight on street.

The Applicant stated they would still stay open to the consideration of condos on the site but there would have to be garages and could present challenges.

Bowman thanked the Applicant for their interest in the property and for taking the time and effort to request the pre-application conference.

Christiansen responded he will continue to have dialogue with the Applicant, taking into consideration the comments from the DDA, City Council and Planning Commission, and have additional discussion to see what direction he should go in.

REVIEW OF DRAFT DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

Chairperson Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated this agenda item is presentation and discussion of the recently completed final draft of the Downtown Area Plan for the City of Farmington. He stated at the April 29, 2015 meeting of the Farmington Downtown Area Plan Committee, they approved the final draft of the 2014/15 Downtown Area Plan. He indicated the purpose of this item on tonight's agenda is to unveil the Downtown Area Plan to the Planning Commission.

The draft plan being presented tonight was completed by the Downtown Area Committee which consisted of members of the various boards and commissions including the Planning Commission, the Downtown Development Authority and City Council. Two members of City Council served on the Committee, Schneemann and Scott, and Gronbach from the Planning Commission and the former president of the DDA as well as current president Tom Buck.

He introduced Mr. Aaron Domini and Mr. Matt Parks from OHM.

Bowman then turned the item over to Mr. Domini for presentation.

Aaron Domini, OHM advisor and lead of the planning and urban design, came to the podium. He gave a history of the metamorphosis of the Downtown Area Plan, stating the effort was borne out of the Farmington Vision Plan. He stated when they finished that project, the downtown area was a big focus and that the natural evolution was to dig back down and look strategically at the downtown to see what opportunities there may be.

Some elements that were discussed were increased parking in the downtown, the idea of enhancing the urban context with the downtown, and connecting with the river.

He stated the plan contains three elements, look at existing conditions in the downtown, conduct a very detailed market study to understand its potential and align the Plan with the potential. The third piece was developing concepts, what can be done. And when all those things are layered together it helps crystalize vision and is a powerful marketing tool for the City to communicate its opportunities not only to the folks in the community but also to the private sector.

He indicated they had done a lot of scenario planning within the study area to understand how to develop a site that an investor might go through to understand how to achieve the vision.

In the end it provided a more defined vision of the downtown but also provides City leadership a powerful tool to help market it and build the vision as well.

He stated that due to the length of the document, he would just give a brief overview and highlight some of the key elements. He concluded by saying there was a lot of information contained therein that could continue to guide and make the City a high quality destination point within the region.

Bowman thanked him for his presentation and opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners.

Christiansen also thanked Aaron and OHM for all of their hard work and effort engaging in this task in looking at what opportunities exist here in the City to repurpose a very unique part of our community. He stated there were many components and players involved in the compilation of materials unveiled tonight.

Gronbach stated that having been a member of the committee working for the last year and a half on this, that there is a tremendous amount of material to digest in the document and suggested that the Planning Commission take the time to look through it and to ask follow-up questions at future meetings.

Bowman stated that was a wonderful suggestion.

Christiansen stated another important element would be to work with the schools in helping them relocate facilities and look to find other locations for them so that those areas could be revitalized.

Bowman thanked Domini for his presentation.

APPOINTMENT TO DOWNTOWN PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated that the City Council, at their April 20, 2015 meeting, established a Downtown Parking Advisory Committee and that the City Manager's Office has advertised the open resident and business owner positions of the committee via local media, SWOCC bulletin and a listing in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter and in accordance with the by-laws adopted by the City Council for the Parking Advisory Committee, one member of the Planning Commission must serve on the Committee and that the action desired for this evening was to make that appointment.

He indicated the make-up of the Committee is to include a City Council member, one DDA Board member, two downtown CBD business/property owners, two residents, one Planning Commission member and two ex-officio members, i.e. the City Manager or a representative from that office, and the Public Safety Director and/or their designee.

Chariperson Bowman opened the floor for nominations or volunteers to fill the Planning Commission spot on the Committee.

Crutcher volunteered to serve on the Committee and further discussion was held.

Bowman stated that Gronbach was also considered an appropriate candidate to serve on the Committee.

Christiansen indicated that City Council is looking for a qualified candidate from the Planning Commission to actively participate and attend all of the meetings.

MOTION by Gronbach, seconded by Chiara, to nominate Ken Crutcher to serve as the Planning Commission's representative on the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee. Motion carried, all ayes.

Bowman thanked Crutcher for his interest in serving on the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Bertin 23169 Farmington Road in Wynset Condominiums, expressed concern over the Orchards Phase II plans and the difference between the photos or renderings and the plans presented this evening and the different Code requirements that would come into play. He also stated that apartments require a second means of egress and he does not see that in the plans and suggested that these issues be looked into before any decisions are made. He also addressed the parking requirements and suggested making it a little more compatible with Phase I utilizing similar colors and materials.

Bowman thanked Mr. Bertin for his input.

Christiansen indicated that this is in a very preliminary and conceptual stage and stated the comments are very pointed and well taken and that each item will be looked at in great detail before moving forward.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chairperson Bowman thanked everyone who was involved with “Art on the Grand” and commented on its success.

Gronbach inquired on the status of the World Wide Center’s renovations.

Christiansen stated there was information contained in the Commissioners’ packets addressing the Ten Mile and Orchard Lake area and the Michigan Municipal League’s involvement as well as Lawrence Tech in working to enhance the area and invited everyone to attend the Open House at Farmington Hills City Hall on June 17th at 6:00 to 7:30 p.m where representatives of both City staffs and MML and Lawrence Tech will be on hand to present the conceptual design of this project.

He also commented on an article that was in the media on the groundbreaking for the Riverwalk of Farmington development.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary