

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
Monday, December 8, 2008

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, Ingalls,
Scott, Sutton.

Absent: Kuiken.

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: City Clerk Halberstadt, Building Inspector Koncsol,
City Manager Pastue.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Buck, seconded by Bowman, to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Christiansen, seconded by Buck, to approve the items on the consent agenda as follows:

- Regular meeting minutes of November 10, 2008

Motion carried, all ayes.

**PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION TO SCHEDULE
SPECIAL LAND USE PUBLIC HEARING, AUTO XL DRIVING SCHOOL, 22772
ORCHARD LAKE ROAD**

Proponent: Paul DeMars, Vice-President of Operations, Auto XL Driving School

Mr. DeMars provided a brief overview of the site plan for the Auto XL Driving School located at 22772 Orchard Lake Road. He advised the issues raised in a letter from LSL Planning have been addressed. He distributed a report to the Planning Commission reflecting responses to those issues. He also provided the Commission with a list of rules and regulations of the Driving School.

Sherrin Hood, LSL Senior Planner, provided an update on the status of the site plan. She indicated Mr. DeMars has been very responsive to the comments and concerns expressed in her letter. She stated the purpose of this meeting is to review the preliminary site plan and discuss the special land use in order to address any major concerns.

Hood delayed her review of the special land use until the meeting where the public hearing will take place. She stated the proposed use of the property is appropriate for the location. She provided comments on the site plan:

- Re-label parking space in the rear for handicap parking.
- Requested the applicant clarify for the record that the northern building on the site will only be used for storage. Informed the applicant that any future changes in use of the northern building must receive prior approval.
- Adequate parking on the site for the proposed use.
- No instructional vehicles parked on site.
- No room for landscaping on the site.
- Exterior lighting stays as shown on plan.
- New signage requires approval.
- Dumpster is not proposed to stay.

Hood noted there is not a lot of room for improvement to the site due to the fact that much of it is paved.

Commissioner Gronbach asked the proponent if a permit was issued for the sign currently displayed on the site. Mr. DeMars responded he has not yet applied for a permit.

In response to a question, Building Inspector Koncsol stated the sign appears to meet City Code. He confirmed the applicant has not submitted an application for the sign.

Commissioner Scott questioned the viability of the three parking spaces on the southeast corner of the site. He noted there is not enough space to access those parking spaces.

Hood confirmed the parking is noncompliant, but is currently being used.

Discussion followed regarding changing the orientation of those spaces to provide viable access. Commissioner Ingalls pointed out a handicap parking space still needed to be provided.

Hood stated a handicap space could be accommodated in the location closest to the building but it would still be tight. She stated the Commission has the option to allow less parking than what is required or re-stripe the rear spaces. She noted the handicap space could be accommodated in the front of the building. She confirmed the site is only required to have one handicap space.

Commissioner Scott questioned how drop-offs would be handled given the number of students and the narrowness of the alley. He further questioned the maintenance of the alley given the proposed increased traffic flow. He expressed concern regarding adding a number of vehicles on a very tight site with limited parking.

Commissioner Christiansen requested clarification of the former uses of the site. Building Inspector Koncsol responded at one time both a driving school and dance studio were located on the site. He noted the traffic congestion that resulted from students coming and going at that time. He stated most recently an engineering office was located on the site. He confirmed the north building contains an office and is used mostly for storage.

Christiansen noted there are no proposed changes to the site. He stated the issue is intensity of use. He further stated the main concern is how to access the site and parking. He discussed the student flow of the driving school throughout the year. He noted the summer would pose the greatest concern in terms of traffic. He discussed the traffic congestion that would result from the student drop-offs and pick-ups between classes.

Hood proposed consideration of angled parking in the rear of the building if there is adequate space.

Christiansen stated based on the proposed use and the number of students coming and going, the parking spaces become non-functional except for the instructors of the classes. He expressed greater concern regarding how the property is ingressed. He stated the configuration should be a one-way drive between buildings with an exit out the alleyway.

Commissioner Sutton noted that the alleyway cannot be directed given the truck traffic from the party store. She indicated no issues with the proposed use of the site. She noted there will be drivers parking to pick-up students. She voiced her concern regarding the lack of space for snow removal. She expressed her hope that the parking and traffic control issues can be resolved.

Commissioner Ingalls suggested implementing a half hour break between classes to accommodate students being dropped off and picked up.

Mr. DeMars agreed a substantial break between classes would be appropriate.

Commissioner Gronbach advised the proponent to work with City Administration to develop an improved plan regarding the parking and traffic flow issues prior to the next meeting.

Discussion followed regarding student drivers leaving the school for on-road instruction. Responding to a question, Mr. DeMars stated there are typically two or three instruction vehicles parked at the site.

Commissioner Christiansen recommended that Mr. DeMars develop a comprehensive circulation plan for the site prior to the next meeting.

Motion by Christiansen, seconded by Sutton, to schedule a public hearing for Monday, January 12, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. to receive comment regarding the Special Land Use Application from Auto XL Driving School, 22772 Orchard Lake Road. Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were heard.

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Manager Pastue advised a developer has requested the City's consideration to rezone property on Eight Mile Road to a C-3 designation.

Building Inspector Koncsol noted the developer has expressed interest in dividing the six acre site into five or six acre parcels.

Pastue advised the City is considering a program to address home foreclosures that would require a number of code changes. He stated other code changes may include storage of recreational vehicles and outdoor seating and displays. He discussed the proposed sign ordinance and a proposed ordinance pertaining to pawn shops.

Christiansen thanked Sherrin Hood and LSL Planning for the bound copy of the third draft of the Master Plan update. He praised the cover and graphics of the document.

Commissioner Crutcher asked about a possible code violation related to the cars parked for sale at the property on the southwest corner of Grand River and Power Road.

Koncsol responded the vehicles are not in violation since there are no "for sale" signs. He stated a warning has been issued to the owner against using the site as a used car lot since that would require a special land use.

Gronbach questioned if there is a restriction on the number of cars a gas station can store on its property.

Pastue stated the City will monitor the property to determine how long the cars are parked there.

Gronbach noted a site plan has never been approved for that property.

Responding to a question from Gronbach, Pastue stated the draft Master Plan has gone out to adjoining communities for comment. He stated any changes will be considered at the February meeting.

Koncsol noted the City has received engineering plans for Leo Soave building on Brookdale next to the Cleaners.

Commissioner Buck noted the Holly Days Events sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Merchants.

Gronbach advised the Historical Tech Visit has been rescheduled for Tuesday, January 6, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. at the DDA office.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Scott, seconded by Ingalls, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary