

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

Monday, March 10, 2008

Chairperson Gronbach called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Farmington City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

Chairperson Gronbach noted that the clock in Council Chambers had not been changed to reflect Daylight SavingsTime.

ROLL CALL

Present: Bowman, Buck, Christiansen, Gronbach, Pogue, Scott, Sutton.

Absent: Ingalls, Kuiken.

A quorum of the Commission was present.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Scott, seconded by Sutton, to approve the agenda. Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Christiansen, seconded by Buck, to approve the following item on the consent agenda:

- A. Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2008

Motion carried, all ayes.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE OUTDOOR SIDEWALK SALES FOR KMART, 37175 GRAND RIVER

Mr. Bill Bass, proponent for Kmart, 37175 Grand River, was present to review their plan for outdoor sidewalk sales and to answer questions from the Commission. Mr. Bass stated they proposed to use the front sidewalk for a period of approximately 7 ½ months maximum, for the display of garden and seasonal items through the summer months.

Commissioner Sutton commented she thought there had been previous approval and they just had to have approval by Administration. Mr. Bass replied he was new and there may have been a permit in the past, but had been some abuse of the permit last year and he wanted to make sure everything was outlined according to the permit regulations so they have a valid permit from here forward. He noted they would like to renew the permit on a year-to-year basis.

Chairperson Gronbach asked Sherrin Hood, LSL Planning, Inc., if she had reviewed the proponent's application and she replied she had not.

Building Inspector Koncsol stated there had been requests in the past from prior Kmart administration to display seasonal plants and over a period of time of 10 years other materials such as swing sets and bicycles started to be included in the outdoor display. Koncsol spoke with Mr. Bass regarding clarification from the Planning Commission regarding items that could be displayed. Bass stated they have limited space at this particular store and asked that they be able to display children's' pools and plastic toys toward the end of the selling season and it would be located closest to the front door. He commented they would remove empty racks.

Responding to a question from Gronbach, Bass stated the carts would be for plants and that the other items would be in the area just past the windows where the brick portion of the building starts. Bass stated they would not be using the whole front of the store.

Commissioner Scott asked if they were going to have pallets of dirt and mulch included in the outdoor display and he voiced concern that customers would be out in the drive. Bass replied they might display decorative stone and they would either use shelving or pallets, but not both.

Bass reiterated the empty shelving would be removed as the display items were sold.

MOTION by Christiansen, seconded by Sutton, to approve the requested outdoor sales, as amended, for Kmart, at 37175 Grand River, as outlined in their request letter of February 22, 2008 and in accordance with the site plan that they have submitted and that empty racks and shelving be removed from outside. Motion carried, all ayes.

Mr. Bass asked about outside display for propane containers. Mr. Koncsol stated the Fire Marshall has jurisdiction regarding the size of the container and that Mr. Bass should verify the size with him.

Koncsol informed Mr. Bass he would meet with him regarding the drop off of empty water containers outside the building.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE FAÇADE RENOVATION AT 32729-33 GRAND RIVER

Mr. Al Valentine, Architect for GAV Associates, Inc. was present to review a façade change for Sam Sarkis Photography, located at 32729-33 Grand River. Mr. Valentine passed out samples of materials to be used in the façade change. He stated the new owner, Mr. Sarkis, would like a more contemporary look to the building since he is a photographer. He commented that Mr. Sarkis has a verbal agreement with the property to the east to share their dumpster for trash pick-up. He noted rooftop units would be screened and the size of a new rooftop unit had not yet been determined. It would be

on the northern portion of the building where the two buildings split, but it would be eventually screened.

Valentine stated the parking and paving is all existing and will be restriped; there will be new signage; and some of the doors and windows will be removed, blocked in and painted. He reviewed the areas that would be glazed, and new brick and how it is applied.

Responding to a question by Gronbach, Valentine stated he had not received the review from LSL Planning, Inc.

Gronbach asked Valentine if during the concept meeting with the Planning Department, if they discussed using the E.I.F.S. drywall material versus using brick or stone. Valentine replied they discussed the minimum percentage requirements of masonry in the CBD District. He stated they were under the requirement and they were trying to use a variety of materials and not an all brick building.

John Koncsol stated Mr. Valentine had presented what was discussed at the concept meeting, prior to the review by LSL Planning, Inc. He commented they also discussed dumpsters and the mechanicals.

Sherrin S. Hood, AICP Senior Planner, LSL Planning, Inc., highlighted points of their review of the requested façade change. She stated the exterior finish materials do not meet Section 35-104 C.5, which requires at least 75% of the new façade consist of modular brick or stone, and it permits use of E.I.F.S. as an accent material only. She noted that per the ordinance they are recommending that additional brick or stone be added, but she further noted the Zoning Ordinance does allow for the DDA Design Committee to meet and discuss modifications or deviations to that rule. Ms. Hood stated the Zoning Ordinance does guide the Planning Commission in how it should review deviations to that standard.

Ms. Hood stated any recommendations of the DDA Design Committee must, at a minimum, be based on the following summarized criteria: (a) innovative design must be in keeping with the character of the CBD, as articulated in the Master Plan and Downtown Plan, as well as with buildings along the block; suggested providing photos of all local buildings for comparison to their proposed façade; (b) the building must be oriented toward the front sidewalk so as to maintain or enhance the pedestrian environment; (c) roof design shall be consistent with the block and must also be within the district maximums provided in the ordinance; (d) alternative exterior materials must be of equal or better quality and durability than those allowed. This is intended to allow for use of new technologies, provided they are still in character with the downtown and E.I.F.S. is not considered a high quality material because it is less durable than brick or stone materials; and (e) ground floor windows must be included in the design, and window placement must coincide with the established rhythm and proportions of buildings along the block. She stated the Planning Commission could be flexible

regarding the window area since it is an existing building, but the plan showed an attempt to add more window area than is currently there.

Ms. Hood asked the applicant how they were going to install the new façade and asked if they were going to take it all of the way down to the block of the building. Mr. Valentine replied they were going to apply over the brick. Ms. Hood suggested they inspect the existing brick on the left side of the front facade of the building and restore it to preserve the existing brick to save time and money. Mr. Valentine replied they could take the awnings and shutters off and power wash it, but it would still be an ugly building. He noted the façade needs to be retreated and resurfaced. He commented it would be a plain brick building that needs ornament. Ms. Hood replied she felt the E.I.F.S. could be removed on the left side of the façade and the other details maintained. She noted their main concern was the E.I.F.S. Discussion followed regarding E.I.F.S. use in other buildings and requirements listed in the Master Plan.

Ms. Hood stated deviation to the window area is a lot more reasonable due to the cost and effort that is needed to redesign the actual structural elements of the building and found no objection to the window calculations.

She noted the decorative exterior lighting fixtures are acceptable, but the wall pack fixtures should be replaced with ones that are not adjustable and be in a downward position.

Ms. Hood suggested they scale back on the Sam Sarkis signage in order to allow signage for the future tenant.

Ms. Hood stated the signage and wall fixtures can be reviewed administratively, but the Design Committee needs to meet before the Planning Commission takes action on the plan; which is required in the ordinance. She noted they recommended the signage be revised and also the wall pack lighting.

Gronbach asked the proponent if he wanted to make changes to the façade.

Sutton stated she wanted to hear all of the Commissioner's comments before deciding what changes are to be made.

She commented she did not think it would look attractive if the E.I.F.S. and the cast stone is placed over the existing brick, which would cause a change in surface areas. She asked the proponent if they could use more cast stone in order to be more in compliance with the ordinance. Valentine replied he was open to reducing the E.I.F.S. next to the windows and just keep a swatch above the windows. He stated they could fill in with brick or more cast stone. Responding to a question by Sutton, Valentine stated they would be using new brick.

Commissioner Christiansen verified the changes to be made were not structural, but cosmetic façade changes except for the windows. Christiansen asked Ms. Hood if measurements of the exterior dimensions are taken vertically and horizontally across the building and that they take out each component in this case, the E.I.F.S., stone and brick, and the windows, in order to figure the percentages of the facade. Ms. Hood stated the applicant provided the calculations and she would use a crude way of measuring. Christiansen questioned the 75% of brick requirement and the 70% of window requirement. He further questioned what percentage LSL is considering brick and stone and what percentage E.I.F.S. Sutton replied it would be 75% of the non-window area. Discussion followed regarding percentages pertaining to E.I.F.S. Christiansen asked Ms. Hood if they were calculating the west elevation and she replied that is a separate calculation and it is required because it is a public street; Orchard Ct. is on a corner. Ms. Hood stated she wanted to consult with Jeff Purdy regarding the calculations and will return to the Commission with their findings.

Christiansen verified that any relief from the ordinance requirement for materials is through the committee structure and not that the Planning Commission as a whole can grant any modification to it. It has to be a recommendation from the Committee and then to the Planning Commission. Christiansen stated he liked the design and noted the numbers needed to be worked out.

Commissioner Scott asked Ms. Hood why the Design Committee has not seen the plan before the Planning Commission since they have to review it before the Commission. Ms. Hood stated she would prefer that the Design Committee had reviewed the plan before it was presented to the Planning Commission. Discussion followed regarding whether there was enough time for the Design Committee to review the plan and recommendations from LSL, due to the date administration received the information.

Scott stated the design by formula does not work and could affect the design of the building. He commented it would detract from the design in order to obtain a number. Gronbach stated the guidelines do provide for a review and approval if they feel it is an appropriate exception. Discussion followed regarding the guidelines.

Ms. Hood stated that they have 53% masonry and they are required to have 75% and that it is not a small percentage. She further stated it does not allow for personal preference, but the Code of Ordinances must be included in the review. She suggested that the Planning Commission recommend approval based on review of the Design Committee; which might allow the applicant to proceed more quickly and not have to come back again for another review. She stated the Design Committee must meet by way of procedure for this to be a valid action.

Valentine stated it is a small surface. Gronbach replied there is quite a bit of E.I.F.S. for the size of the building.

Christiansen stated the Planning Commission could take action this evening on the proposed design with a recommendation to the DDA Design Committee knowing that the decision is predicated on the Design Committee supporting the design and if they don't support the design the decision is null and void and they would have to come back to the Planning Commission with a modification to the design and potentially trying to meet the 75% requirement, or close to it.

Gronbach stated the Design Committee meets on Thursday mornings at 7:30 a.m. in Council Chambers.

Commissioner Buck stated that from the façade to the street it is 24 feet by pacing and asked the proponent if they were proposing any changes. Mr. Valentine replied there are to be no changes and the information was from a mortgage survey.

Gronbach asked Ms. Hood if the Planning Commission was reviewing the total site plan and should there be items reviewed pertaining to the plan. Ms Hood responded it is an existing condition, but it is noted as an existing green space. She suggested that Mr. Valentine meet with Mr. Koncsol if there is a significant difference in the green space and LSL was not recommending any significant changes.

MOTION by Christiansen, seconded by Scott, to approve the façade renovation at 32729-33 Grand River, in accordance with the submitted site plan and the rendering the Commission has received along with the package information, on the condition that the DDA Design Committee review and endorse the proposed use of the façade materials, as shown on the plans and that the wall mounted fixtures, on the rear of the building, be replaced with non-adjustable fixtures as indicated in the consultant's staff report. Motion carried, all ayes.

Gronbach informed Mr. Valentine that he should meet with the City Manager regarding submitting the information to the DDA Design Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christiansen asked the Commission members if they received an e-mail from Cheryl Poole, regarding a meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, March 17th to review the A & W located at the Crossroads Shopping Center. Discussion followed on who would be able to attend.

John Koncsol informed the Commission that information would be coming regarding a special land use for a school classroom facility where Peter Nielson had his gym. Koncsol stated he would be forwarding the information to Sherrin Hood for her review.

Koncsol also informed the Commission that the Doggie Day Care was coming back to Farmington and they are looking at occupying the old Forge Precision Building. Koncsol stated he has discussed this issue for a special land use with Ms. Hood.

Gronbach asked what the status is regarding Direct Buy. Koncsol replied they are finalizing their plans with contractors and engineering. Koncsol stated they possibly would start work in the next month or so.

Buck discussed a Planning Workshop that he attended along with Ms. Hood hosted by Oakland County. He commented LSL Planning, Inc. did a good job in their presentation.

Buck noted it was discussed at the workshop that it is good practice to have an agreement that you have the right on the Planning Commission to enter a property and you should not enter the property without that agreement. He asked if that was the practice used in the City. Koncsol replied that it is on the Zoning Board application for variance request for the Zoning Board. Ms. Hood stated there is an area on the Planning Commission application regarding this issue.

Commissioner Bowman stated Farmington was given high reviews during the seminar regarding the way the City's committees work well together.

Buck asked if the Commission could review the Master Plan from Farmington Hills to see how the City is integrating with that. Gronbach noted there had been prior discussion regarding meeting with Farmington Hills to review coordination between the two cities on each Master Plan. He commented they did not meet.

Gronbach asked the Commission if there were any comments they wanted him to discuss with City Council at the next City Council meeting on Monday, March 17th. He will discuss with City Council having a joint meeting with Farmington Hills,

Scott questioned if Farmington Hills Master Plan had to be submitted to the City. Christiansen replied it is not mandated that the City review it, but they can send a copy for informational purposes. Discussion followed regarding review of Farmington Hills' Master Plan.

Christiansen stated Master Plans must be submitted to adjoining communities for review. Ms. Hood replied she would talk to administration regarding this issue. Christiansen commented that it is an integral part of planning by sharing information regarding the Master Plan with Farmington Hills.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Pogue, seconded by Sutton, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary