

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS  
City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street  
Farmington, Michigan  
April 8, 2019

Chairperson Crutcher called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, on Monday, April 8, 2019.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chiara, Crutcher, Kmetzo, Majoros, Perrot, Waun, Westendorf  
Absent: None

A quorum of the Commission was present.

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Director Christiansen, Recording Secretary Murphy

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Chiara, seconded by Waun, to approve the Agenda.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. March 11, 2019 Minutes**

MOTION by Majoros, seconded by Perrot, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND CONCEPTUAL/PRELIMINARY PUD SITE PLAN REVIEW –  
BLUE HAT COFFEE (FARMINGTON MASONIC TEMPLE), 23715 FARMINGTON  
ROAD**

Chairperson Crutcher introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Director Christiansen stated this item is a scheduled Public Hearing and Conceptual/Preliminary PUD Planned Unit Development Plan Review with the Planning Commission on a proposed PUD Planned Unit Development Plan located at the Farmington Masonic Temple.

At the March 11, 2019 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission discussed and reviewed with the Applicant the proposed PUD plan and Concept Plan located then at the Farmington Masonic Temple and scheduled the required Public Hearing for this evening. A copy of the minutes from that meeting and also the Public Notice with respect to this evening's Public Hearing is attached with your staff packet.

The Applicant, Farmington Masonic Temple Association, has submitted a Preliminary PUD Plan for Blue Hat Coffee. The preliminary plan includes conceptual preliminary site plan, preliminary proposed floor plans, and preliminary proposed building elevations. Also attached is an aerial photo of the site and again, the minutes were attached with the draft for your review for this evening's meeting as well.

The Applicant and their team are here this evening to present the preliminary PUD plan to the Commission and the Commission is requested to hold the Public Hearing as scheduled and then to consider action on the proposed preliminary conceptual PUD and to forward that plan, if the Commission is so inclined to the City Council for the next step in the PUD process and their consideration.

With your staff packet then is the aerial photo for the site. The property is located at the northwest corner of the intersections of Farmington Road and Grand River. You'll see the subject property, 23715, and the Tax I.D. number. The property, which is the Masonic Temple, has been located at this property for a few years, dating back to 1876, and we've had that dialogue before and we've had a lot of review of this property over time. The Masons, here in Farmington, are still very active on the property and their representatives of the Masonic Temple Association here that oversees and has stewardship on the property here this evening.

Chairperson Crutcher called Jeff Scott, architect for the project, to the podium.

Jeff Scott, 15316 Grand River, Farmington, Michigan, came to the podium. He thanked the Commission for seeing them tonight, and that they are present with many supporters for this project. He stated what he thought he'd do is very briefly go over the changes, that they are excited that this project is going to go forward hopefully. They did meet with not only the DDA Design Committee, but the Historical Commission, and they also met with the Parking Committee. And out of those three meetings that they've had, they have incorporated four or five minor modifications to the site plan. The most recent site plan, the A-1, that shows the modifications. The Parking Committee, a lot of discussion was held regarding the changing it over to three-hour time limit as well as whether there should be dedicated employee parking. After that meeting, the tenant came to agreement that they wouldn't require the employee dedicated parking spaces to be provided and everyone came to a consensus that that lot would get shifted over to a three-hour time limit in lieu of unlimited time where it is now. The thought being with the new Oakland Street modifications going on, that there's now untimed parking at that adjacent location.

So that's one of the items that will be showing up. The other one had to do with the corner monument sign. There were some discussion regarding the monument sign which we had proposed and the corner sign which we were going to expand across right at that

corner. The thought was that can we shift with the DDA Design Committee, can we we shift that farther down to the west and then not expand the existing sign and the landscaping but then add another sign right along Farmington Road and we felt that would be an acceptable solution. What was concerned here was the visibility, there shouldn't be any issues with any vegetation, and one of my big concerns is that we disrupt some of the stately trees on the site and that's one thing we don't want to do.

Another issue that was brought up, landscaping around the perimeter, that was not an issue, we were happy to do that and we've got the rendering updated that will show that.

The other issue was discussion of the railing, that they wanted, the Historical Commission as well as the Design Committee, thought it would be best to be in the black railing. The new railing is depicted in the darker color and the sign, has actually moved down. So we're going to get a very simple railing system, not unlike what's happening elsewhere in the City.

The one issue we did deal with, and this is one thing that's different, is we've incorporated the Oakland Street modifications along there. So this is what I've got from Orchard Hills, tried to incorporate them, they've added a sidewalk which has brought some things to the south, that actually affects our parking so we actually lose a couple more spaces just because of how that was reconfigured. And then one thing we have done and we're working with staff as we speak and OHM, to we feel we need to clip a little bit of this one curb out there to accommodate trash removal. Which appears that the original plan really didn't take that into account. So right now we originally had the dumpsters located right here (indicating), and they were going in this way. Well, now, by pushing that a little bit, one aisle over to the east and then with the one way, pull that curb back, you can service, get in and get out.

So those are really the modifications that we've undertaken from what you've seen before. Like I said, we're excited to have this happen so we can get this up and running. I'd be happy to answer any questions. We've got legal teams that can answer any of the more particular agreement issues, but what we're looking for is your approval to send this on to the City Council so we can get the PUD Agreement wrapped up and get some vitality in this corner. Thanks.

Chairperson Crutcher thanked Scott for his presentation.

(Commissioner Westendorf recused himself from the proceedings to avoid any perceived conflict of interest at 7:20 p.m.)

Chairperson Crutcher opened the floor for questions from the Planning Commission.

Majoros asked Scott to confirm if the five spaces that were dedicated for employee parking, and that all twenty spaces would be universal spaces, and no dedicated spaces but the entire lot would now be converted to three-hour time and Scott replied in the affirmative.

Majoros then asked about the dumpster location and asked if there were any other place than bordering Oakland Street, if there was any other possible location other than where it resides.

Scott replied the short answer is no, that they have looked, and taking into consideration the traffic flow and the disproportionate number of spaces, if it was pushed up next to the building and getting a truck to maneuver would be a lot more difficult and further discussion was held. He stated they tried to minimize that impact with those dumpsters.

Majoros asked if any shrubbery or fencing was considered to disguise it and Scott replied that because of the move of the sidewalk down to the south a little bit, two spaces are lost already because over time things seemed to have grown as far as where the boundaries were.

Majoros then asked what the flooring surface on the outdoor patio would be; the fencing changed and the shrubbery and there are modifications but what is the actual flooring like.

Scott replied they are looking at a porcelain paver, it's a paver that will interlock within a grid system so it acts more like a floor and not a deck, a more substantive foundation.

Majoros asked if it was more of like a decking type structure or like a poured or beams.

Scott replied it's going to be beams with skirting around it but then the grid that it sits on, you're not putting the deck boards. So the idea is that they're not going to disrupt any of the drainage patterns within the site, they can still maintain that drainage flow. Visually, it would be skirted off. But by lifting it up and using this type of system, you gain both things. Instead of building a retaining wall, worrying about how you're going to drain between these two areas, without getting up against the building and disrupting it, that's why it's pulled off to the south a little bit, to gain a little more buffer area, and again, to minimize the impact of the appearance of the structure itself. All while getting it level with the floor line for handicapped accessibility.

Chairperson Crutcher stated he want to follow up with the dumpster and asked if this was just going to be a dumpster sitting out or will it be in an enclosure.

Scott replied that right now there are no modifications to what is there existing.

Chiara then asked what the black dot was on the drawing, and Scott replied that is the crosswalk.

Chiara then commented that her preferred the black railing over the white.

Kmetzo asked if there were renderings of what the new sign would look like.

Scott replied that the sign that's going to be on Farmington Road, is really going to be the same sign that was proposed originally.

Kmetzo inquired about the dimensions of the sign.

Scott stated that the way the ordinance is written, it does not really allow any freedom for any type of surrounding structure at all. I believe we're allowed 20 square feet per side and in the way the ordinance is written, it starts at the ground and it goes to the top of whatever is connected with the sign and from end to end. So if you want to stay within the requirements of 20 square feet because the ordinance says 20 square feet, then it would be just the panel. So really what the ordinance forces you to do is take away any sense of design, trying to make a little bit nicer sign, and it forces you to have a box and we're trying to avoid that. The problem is if you scale that whole thing down, there's nothing left. So the beauty of having a PUD is that it takes into account the identity thing. Be a little bit more creative on the signage and allow for a little more extra scale detail that otherwise might be shown on just a 4 by 5 acrylic plate that's illuminated from the inside. These are intended to be illuminated from the ground so it's just at night they would shine on that element itself. So we thought this was a better solution.

Perrot stated that it also ties the sign to the structure.

Scott stated it is Blue Hat, that's the same sign that they've got in Coldwater. I did scale it down to hit that 20 square feet on the internal portion but it's their image, it kind of sets up the character of what they're trying to achieve. So I thought that would be a good way

to just kind of scale it down so the side panel meets kind of the ordinance. But we are looking for relieve on the outer structure that provides the character for the sign.

Kmetzo asked Christiansen if this would then not require a variance because it's a PUD and Christiansen replied in the affirmative, as the Planned Unit Development provision for the Zoning Ordinance, the PUD Ordinance itself, is designed to allow for flexibility and

that flexibility then allows for modifications from the standard ordinance requirements. So rather than a straight site plan with the straight standard spatial requirements, in this case dimensional requirements maximum for a sign, the PUD process and the tools under the PUD, the site plan and the PUD Agreement allow for flexibility. And the site plan is the recommendation of the Planning Commission at the preliminary conceptual level, but the Planning Commission has final site plan approval. And the preliminary conceptual site plan is final approval of the City Council along with the PUD Agreement.

MOTION by Chiara, supported by Perrot, to open the Public Hearing.  
Motion carries, all ayes.

(Public Hearing opened at 7:32 p.m.)

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

Laura Myers, Chairperson from the Farmington Historical Commission, came to the podium and stated she was present at the hearing to drop off a letter which expands a bit on the minutes, that they are in favor of this project and the site plan with the changes that they're talking about in terms of changing the railings from white to black and to be sure that any sign that they end up putting up on the Farmington Road side does not interfere with the existing freestanding historical site sign which they don't think it will, it looks like it's going to be on the other side of the sidewalk. She stated the Historical Commission fully support the use of this beautiful building, it will enable people to come in and appreciate it and Farmington's Historic Downtown and to be able to support the Masonic Lodge and it was chartered in 1865 and they are really happy to see something happening on that corner.

Ron Cline, 23801 Farmington Road, came to the podium to state his concerns about the dumpster and its location, that he would like to see it covered or moved closer to the building because of the close proximity of it to his house. He said in the summer when the weather is hot and depending on how long the trash has been out and the way the wind is blowing can spread the odor to his house and that he thinks the dumpster is an eyesore or at least cover it. He cited that other businesses have bigger dumpsters on wheels and the employees can roll them out during trash day and they can pick it up and then they move them back behind their buildings. He was hoping the dumpster issue would be addressed but he is fine with the coffee house.

Steve Schwartz, 29867 High Valley Court, Farmington Hills, came to the podium stating he is a member of the Masons. He said the idea in the lease they have with the tenant which is contingent upon approval by the City, is that the coffee shop would have virtually all of the first floor except for one very small office which is used to store old books. The

second floor would be for Masonic meetings. When they have parties, which isn't that often, they are now on the first floor so the plan is if they were going to have some event serving food, they would rent some other place. The second floor is just going to be for meetings. This building started in 1876 with twelve members, after 143 years they've grown to about twelve active members, it's very hard to get young people to join the organization so this type of project will really help them keep going for another 143 years and do things for the community that they've done in the past. He thanked the Commission for their support and said that the dumpster has been there since he joined eight years ago, but they should keep trying to find a solution for that.

Mark Acetturra, 33414 Oakland, came to the podium stating his family has owned the Collinwood, the four unit apartment building on Oakland and it's been twenty-one sleepy years of ownership and it is really exciting with the Oakland project and what's happening with Masonic Temple, it's all happening now. He stated what the coffee shop does is preserve that Historic corner and the building without modifying it substantially. On the dumpster issue, he thinks there's a lot of very motivated, creative people here that will do the best possible things. Dumpsters are an unfortunate reality of life and it's been there for thirty years, but he is certain a solution can be found. He stated he came to the meeting tonight to voice his support and to thank all the people that are putting the time and effort into this project to make that corner a viable, energetic corner and he couldn't be happier with the process and the plans.

MOTION by Majoros, supported by Perrot, to close the Public Hearing.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

(Public Hearing closed at 7:40 p.m.)

Chairperson Crutcher opened the floor for questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Director Christiansen stated that if the Commission is looking to consider action this evening on the Conceptual Preliminary Plan, the action would be a motion forwarding the action of the Commission to the City Council for their consideration and he suggested they reference the PUD Plan submitted dated 4-8-19, and that's the plan that is here, that was distributed this evening, it's an evolution of the original plan, it's a revised plan, dated 4-8-19, and on the screen.

Chairperson Crutcher stated he still has concerns with the dumpster location as the neighbor mentioned.

Director Christiansen stated he appreciates his concerns and all of the comments that were made and it is something that staff has discussed, dumpster locations throughout the community have existed in various places on properties for extended periods of time. Some are currently compliant, others are legal and conforming, and some are grandfathered in, they don't have enclosures, they're not in locations but today we would look for them to be. One of the challenges here is the existing location, do you leave it where it's at with the Oakland Street work that's being done, you can't access that location. So really what's being done is just picking it up and moving it one space to the east, at least right now in this site plan. What might be most reasonable is whatever action the Planning Commission takes, and if they were to be supportive of the PUD Plan as proposed, the one dated 4-8-19, is that you would it with the recommendation that alternatives for dumpster on site continue to be looked at as it moves to the City Council and then coming back to the Planning Commission for final PUD site plan approval.

Chairperson Crutcher said historically this building has not been used for this purpose before.

Director Christiansen responded there's a commercial kitchen within this building and do different events, activities, different vendors, it's actually been an incubator for some businesses that have come to existence here in the City. So it has been used but the challenge becomes finding a way with the creativity that exists that Mr. Accettura referred to here in the community to find the best and most reasonable alternative.

Majoros asked Christiansen if the Oakland Street Project as detailed unchangeable or is that pretty much the only solution because he doesn't know how many parking spots are on Oakland now, but with this redesigned Oakland, is that even possible to do any more maneuvering or is all the engineering done?

Christiansen replied it's a project that has moved forward through its process which has not involved the Planning Commission, doesn't involve the Planning Commission and has moved through the various steps and has been final engineered and is actually under construction. Right now in part, you may have noticed the closure and some of the utilities that are going on relocations and so, yes, that's what's going on right now. Adjustments can always be made. If you have a suggestion, that's certainly always welcomed and can be reflected but it is a project that's moved forward. The challenge becomes blending

things together and that's what's being attempted here by the consultant, to try to blend what is the interest of the Masonic Lodge property, the Masonic Temple, with their interesting tenant, Blue Hat Coffee, with Blue Hat's consultants trying to find a way to engage the Oakland Street Project and blend what's being proposed here in the PUD plan together so that it functions as best as possible. But again, the Oakland Street



Project has already moved forward so now it's a matter of incorporating where there might still could be some opportunity for some minor modifications. I know Mr. Scott as the architect has had dialogue with OHM about some adjustments, I just don't know where that might be.

Majoros then asked what are the net add of parking spaces on Oakland Street from its current configuration and Christiansen replied that is not something that he has a lot of detail on, but it's probably in the neighborhood of about 15 to 17 spaces. And then you see it's a one way, it's those numbers of spaces, it's some adjustments to the curbing and the maneuvering, and it was a pretty detailed process.

Majoros stated that it's important that the next time the Planning Commission sees this, it would be important to know what the net overall parking impact is. Because we may be comfortable sacrificing one or two spots to address the dumpster if the net add of the Oakland issue goes from a net fifteen to a net thirteen.

Christiansen replied that can be shared with the Commission, but that the PUD Ordinance is specific that says if parking cannot be accommodated on the property in question, that parking can be used if it's convenient in relationship to the site in question and in particular it prefers public parking and one of the discussions that was had was where is public parking, Oakland Street, as you're talking about right now certainly is one. Of course across the street to the south is the City Hall property and all the public parking there and the public parking in the lot behind City Hall, behind Public Safety, behind the Library. Also, too, if you go across on Thomas Street which is then just south of the funeral home and go in that area, that's all public parking and then there's on-street parking on Oakland up Farmington Road also east on Oakland, so a lot of that. But if you're looking for some more definitiveness, we can give you some numbers. But all of that's contributed to your parking question.

Majoros stated that's what was instrumental in Samurai development, was the overall parking and there's two projects happening at one time.

Christiansen stated that is a good point and that he'll make sure the Commissioners have that information when it comes to the final PUD site plan review.

MOTION by Majoros, supported by Chiara, to recommend approval and to move forward for City Council consideration, the revised PUD Proposal dated 4-8-19 as presented at today's Planning Commission meeting, with these considerations: that the final PUD review conditions of the parking; and consideration and development of alternatives to either dumpster enclosure, location, etc.; and have further discussion about the overall

signage, size of signage and how that relates to what the standard is versus balancing the decorative nature of the sign versus the ordinance standards.  
Motion carried all ayes.

(Commissioner Westendorf returned to Chambers at 7:50 p.m.)

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None heard

### **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Chiara stated he thinks it's great that they finally take advantage of that beautiful building downtown.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Waun, supported by Perrot, to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary