

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Chambers 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
June 10, 2013

Chairperson Bowman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Farmington City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Present: Babcock, Bowman, Chiara, Crutcher, Gronbach, Scott, Schneemann

Absent:

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Gronbach , seconded by Chiara, to approve the agenda as submitted.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes of Regular Meeting – May , 2013
- b. Acceptance of Building Department 3rd Quarter Report January 1, 2013 through March 31, 2013

MOTION by Schneemann, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the items on Consent Agenda.

Motion carried, all ayes.

OUTSIDE DISPLAY AND SALES REQUEST – MOMMIES MUST HAVES, 22882 ORCHARD LAKE ROAD

Director Christiansen stated the Petitioner had submitted plans for outdoor displays and sales at 22882 Orchard Lake Road. The property is zoned C-2, Community Commercial, and as such seasonal commercial outdoor displays and sales is a permitted use.

Sam Yeoman, owner of Mommies Must Haves, spoke indicating the reasoning behind his request, stating that outdoor displays of store items generate more traffic to their location.

Chiara stated that other outdoor display requests were usually limited to seasonal which encompassed an eight month term and inquired why the Petitioner was asking for nine

months. The Petitioner then modified his request to comply with the eight month timeframe of April 1st to November 30th.

Bowman inquired if the Petitioner would have a salesperson attending to the outdoor items and the Petitioner responded that the store windows face Orchard Lake Road, thereby allowing visual overseeing of display.

Babcock asked what kind of items would the Petitioner put outside and he responded bigger items such as strollers, outdoor toys and the like.

Gronbach asked Petitioner to specify proposed areas as the sketch included in the Commissioner packets was difficult to understand. Petitioner responded 5' x 20' within the front yard along Orchard Lake Road and 3.5' x 36' outdoor display within the south side yard along existing sidewalk adjacent to the building. Gronbach stated he has concerns about the side area.

Scott stated he has a problem with outdoor sales in general and they are usually only for seasonal goods, but that Petitioner's request is equivalent to a permanent garage sale. He indicated the ordinance does state that display areas are to be limited to paved area and not to obstruct traffic or circulation, as such he is not comfortable with Petitioner's request and would not support it.

Crutcher also commented on the paved area requirement in the ordinance.

The Petitioner responded to Commissioners his goal is to make Farmington more vibrant and get more attention to the strip center which would help it grow.

Schneemann agreed with Crutcher's statement about the requirements of the ordinance and concurred with Scott's statement on the east/west sidewalk, that it would block pedestrian travel and because of that reason would not be able to support display of goods in both locations.

Chairperson Bowman asked Petitioner if he would narrow scope of his proposal and Petitioner stated he would not object to that. Bowman then opened the floor for discussion on the narrowed scope of the request, applying only to the display in front of building facing Orchard Lake Road.

Scott reiterated his concern over request not addressing seasonal aspect of display.

Babcock cautioned Petitioner of the merchandise creating an attractive nuisance and the liability involved with such.

Further discussion was held concerning the merchandise to be displayed and store hours.

Gronbach indicated he did not think what Petitioner was requesting was in the spirit of the ordinance and suggested he come back with another plan that would follow the guidelines in the ordinance.

Petitioner stated he would never do anything to place kids in jeopardy and only wants to make the business successful and Farmington successful.

Denise Lergeigh, audience member and friend of Petitioner, reiterated his need for outdoor display, that sales soared when items were placed in front of the store.

Further discussion was held on Petitioner's narrowed request and how noncompliance can be monitored.

MOTION by Schneemann, seconded by Chiara, to allow outdoor display and sales at 22882 Orchard Lake Road in the 5' x 20' area within the front yard along Orchard Lake Road as long as it maintains compliance with all mandates of the Zoning Ordinance and limited to the time period of 4/1/2013 through 11/30/2013.

Ayes: Babcock, Bowman, Chiara, Crutcher, Schneemann.

Nays: Gronbach, Scott.

Motion carried.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – DRAKESHIRE PLAZA, 35103 GRAND RIVER AVENUE

Director Christiansen indicated the City had been working with the owners of Drakeshire Plaza regarding two prospective tenants expressing an interest in outdoor seating at the center. The seating/patio area would be located on the north side and on the east side of the existing west building. New windows and access doors will be utilized where brick was on the north side on Grand River and allow access to outdoor seating. A wrought iron fence is proposed to enclose this area.

Chairperson Bowman thanked Christiansen for his synopsis of the project.

Chris Biggers from Foresta Architects presented the proposed project in detail and entertained questions from Commissioners.

Babcock inquired about egress/ingress into the patio area.

Schneemann discussed the fencing and suggested small beds of landscape be used in lieu of fencing in some areas and indicated he could not support fencing proposed at its current location and strongly suggested entry doors be reversed.

Babcock discussed ADA guidelines.

Scott thanked owner for opening up façade along Grand River, indicating it is a great improvement.

Further discussion was held on the requirements of outdoor seating and accessibility with the use of a sloped area to allow direct pathways from sidewalk.

MOTION by Schneemann, seconded by Scott, to support approval of outdoor seating submitted by Drakeshire Plaza, with consideration of adjustment of fence location and expansion of north paving to accommodate greater circulation and pedestrian flow. Motion carried, all ayes.

GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR PROJECT UPDATE AND REVIEW

Director Christiansen indicated that a joint Planning Commission Meeting was held on May 16th to review the current status of the Grand River Corridor Project. He stated that the Corridor Improvement Authority was looking for feedback from the Planning Commission on the draft principles and propriety areas as well as some of the implementation concepts discussed at the joint Planning Commission Meeting. He then gave a recap of activities to date on the project with the end goal being a plan for the future of Grand River, starting with a vision, and then identifying specific goals for the Corridor and plan, with special area focuses leading to an implementation strategy. He stated tonight's exercise is to have dialogue with suggestion for changes rather than a presentation.

The first focus was to review principles and make comments and bring back to board. The second part of focus was to look at special areas planned and make comments, suggest changes.

Development Principles:

1. Community image and character
High quality architecture and urban design elements/treatments will create a signature environment along the corridor.

Christiansen stated the plan being developed for the Grand River Corridor is not a site specific plan, it's a guide for the future development of Grand River. In looking at development projects, a potential site plan on a particular property on the Corridor, they will be looking to implement development principles that apply, i.e., making sure they're achieving high quality architecture and urban design elements into any individual site plan or collective redevelopment to create a consistency and an architectural character of high quality along the Corridor. He then welcomed comments from the Commissioners.

Schneemann stated that the term high quality architecture could mean very different things to different people. He then asked what sort of specificity will be assigned to that phrase and what sort of enforcement or planning process will govern the application of that high quality architectural character.

Christiansen responded that as with any planning exercise, the plan, the vision, the concept, the guide, the statement in this case is a general development guide or principle to be followed. The devil is in the detail. It's going to be in the implementation strategy and it's going to be in the overlay district and in the design guidelines that are intended to become part of the overlay district. If there is a site plan for a particular site and we know that we want to achieve high quality architecture, we will look at what the regulations are, which haven't been developed yet, which would be the overlay district and the design guidelines within them to then achieve a level of desired architecture.

Schneemann said that answered his question, there is an intention to develop regulations for an overlay district.

Christiansen stated as planners one of the things they do is they have the planning tools in the tool box on one side, whether it's a Master Plan or a Corridor Plan or a Special Area Plan, there is the vision or the concept. Then there is the implementation strategy. Looking at the City of Farmington, there is a Master Plan, Master Land Use Plan, a guide for future land use. It isn't design specific but it calls out how and where we want certain uses. The detail for implementation is the Zoning Ordinance, that's the implementation tool. That's where all the specific design standards and regulations and criteria are, the spatial requirements for setback, the amount of parking and landscaping, signage, that strategy is what is intended by creating an overlay district. So there is the vision plan that will have principles and a general guide for the land use and a special area plan. And then the overlay district that has the design guidelines, the implementation tool.

Schneemann questioned if the CIA will be putting together those regulations.

Christiansen responded the requirement under State statute is the Board is created and that Board that is created is responsible for the vision plan. The discussion that has taken place is for the Board to develop the planning principles, and to develop the implementation strategy, knowing that the implementation strategy is not a final approval of the Board. Planning is specific to the body that is responsible, in this case the Planning Commission of a community. When it comes to a special corridor project, an additional body is created by State statute, an authority.

He further stated that a Corridor Improvement Authority is like a Downtown Development Authority only it's specific to the Grand River Corridor. The plan they develop will come to the Planning Commission to be incorporated as part of the overall Master Plan.

When it comes to design standards and the regulatory approach, working with the consultants they'll formulate and frame an implementation strategy, the overlay district, that will come to the Planning Commission because the Planning Commission will be required to hold a Public Hearing because it's intended to be an overlay district as part of the Zoning Ordinance.

As planners there are two portions of your tool box; your planning portion and your implementation or rules and regulations portion. The Planning Commission will be involved in both levels. The implementation strategy, the Zoning Ordinance provision, the overlay district not only comes to the Planning Commission but because it's law also must be reviewed and is acted on in terms of being approved or not by the legislative body, by the City Council.

So if an overlay district to be created has a set of rules and regulations and design criteria, it's going to be created by the Board, it's going to be reviewed and a Public Hearing held by the Planning Commission and a final adoption by the City Council.

Schneemann inquired if there will actually be a set of rules and regulations.

Christiansen responded there will be.

Schneemann reiterated there will be a set of guidelines.

Christiansen responded he hasn't seen it yet but that's what the proposal is in the City of Farmington.

Scott stated some of the guidelines should be setbacks, parking issues. He would like to see more general guidelines, more developer friendly which would allow new materials, things to happen further out.

Schneemann stated Scott is advocating a more amassing set of general guidelines versus something that speaks more to architectural character, detail and material and Scott responded in the affirmative.

Scott stated there is an opportunity to get more creative with enhancements or incentives to developers.

Christiansen stated there will be some specificity in terms of bulk and density, in terms of size, in terms of spatial requirements, setback requirements, parking, access points, in terms of landscaping, in terms of signage, so there will be some design standards. But architecture and design materials will be more of a form based code approach than it is going to be the traditional Euclidian zoning where everything is spelled out in level of detail. There's going to be some flexibility but the intent is to have a vision to be implemented with standards but to allow flexibility but at the same time achieving a consistency in character, a theme for the character, a flow.

Babcock stated there should be something in writing that we would work together on projects and that the IGA should have been the place for that mandated cooperation.

Scott stated the whole point of joint board is to work together.

2. Mobility

The corridor will allow for a safe and enjoyable environment for walking and biking, public transit, and automobiles for people of all ages and ability with minimal conflicts between users.

No comments heard.

3. Redevelopment

The economic success of the corridor will be enhanced by supporting a balance of retail, service, office, institutional, and housing in a vibrant and integrated development pattern.

Scott would like more details in general redevelopment area – opportunities around corridor to really look at uses along that portion – look at that a little closer – should it be mixed use business or residential.

4. Neighborhoods and Housing

A variety of housing options will be promoted.

Existing multi-family general principle statement in plan not limited to one type of housing

No comments heard.

5. Natural environment

Future growth and development will respect, enhance, complement and integrate the river corridor.

Need to incorporate river corridor – underutilized resource.

Scott – adding on to that vision right from edge of downtown the river goes all the way – path that goes all the way down – extend Shiawassee Park – developers needs to embrace river type of implementation policy looking to strengthen – goal to capture revenue.

Babcock spoke about block grant monies – BGM.

6. Public space

New public spaces will provide a pleasant environment for community gathering and outdoor activity.

Gronbach wants State highway improvement authority on board – MDOT hard to deal with. Any discussion of Grand River improvement on west side – road needs resurfacing.

7. Connections

The corridor will be well connected with surrounding areas providing choices for people to move throughout the corridor, adjoining neighborhoods, centers of commerce, and public spaces.

Chiara inquired about a roundabout near Target, focus area #2.

8. Sustainability

Future growth and development in the corridor will follow best management practices in environmental planning and construction.

Christiansen stated after tonight's review that he will report to the Board, that the Planning Commission has reviewed and is comfortable with principles noting comments made.

FOCUS AREAS

1. Botsford area – create new streetscape, landscape, pedestrian improvements, middle gathering spot and focus area and cut across, new street going all the way down to 8 mile – all concept. Also recall back to development principles transit stop proposed in this area, area of pedestrian crossing. The uses in area are intended to be supportive for hospital, part of Botsford Medical Campus – mixed use – commercial – hotel – parking area, open space, senior and assisted living

Schneemann expressed concerns about colored boxes and locations.

Northeast corner of Botsford Drive – intersection should be flanked by similar use to other corners nearby – retail oriented mixed use.

Hotel may also be better as mixed use – putting hotel on the point with parking behind it.

Two medical offices and modify to hotel, take L-shape and make that mixed use and hotel mixed use.

And mixed use on Pearl and Grand River, eliminate that, and maybe make that medical, concentrating mixed use so you have mixed use corridor directly adjacent to the crossing and pedestrian focus area.

Scott – blue on end of Pearl street could go to mixed use. Also, not enough thought put in to make it that stringent, most is higher density mode, needs to be more pedestrian friendly.

Crutcher addressed parking and suggested parking structure.

Christiansen said make parking more dense and vertical.

2. Orchard Lake Focus Area A/K/A Mooney Street

Christiansen indicated that Winery is missing from this map and properties adjacent to, going all the way up to Valero and D & W Oil and back to Danboise and four unit strip mall next to it and Legion Hall as well, those areas need to be incorporated and east side of Orchard Lake Road, from Shiawassee all the way down to Orchard Lake is a nonflowing, site by site, small box time period construction, no consistency of flow, parking a challenge.

A mixed use was suggested.

Schneemann suggested that Commission take another look since this area and is in our jurisdiction. He suggested a Saturday workshop to take a more detailed look at it. He also commented on the 300 foot wide by 1,000 foot long parking lot and suggested using the north side of Shiawassee for townhouses and residential.

Babcock commented on it being too separated.

Christiansen summarized comments as having too much parking and too separated.

Babcock also stated it should be walkable.

Scott stated that getting into office retail utilizing Orchard Lake would not be best use for that area.

Christiansen stated plans are conceptual and a vision, but there has to be some direction, some guide. He stated there should be linkage across street to Winery and asked for comments on roundabout.

Babcock stated that office space on roundabout might not fly, but mixed use might be a better option.

Schneemann inquired if there was an economic viability study done and Christiansen responded in the negative.

Gronbach stated that Winery was totally ignored and that they needed to utilize existing features.

3. Grand River North Focus Area

Area includes Target, boulevard and bypass coming into City.

Chiara commented on circulation in area,

Conversation held on taking entire shopping center site as focus area and splitting it off to be a combination of retail mixed use and mixed residential.

North side underutilized.

Schneemann asked why not show the north side higher density residential opportunity rather than specific.

Christiansen summarized discussion on area to emphasize less specifics, more general in residential and roundabout circulation issues.

4. Grand River South focus area

Schneemann expressed concern that corner mid high rise is out of place and suggested mixed use combining office, retail and residential.

Christiansen indicated the final plan will be adopted by the end of August/September and that he will bring comments back to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT

Scott wants a time to sit down and look at the project as a Planning Commission and stated there needs to be more specificity and Commissioners need to be more engaged in same.

Bowman welcomed the two newly reappointed Commissioners Gronbach and Chiara to their new term.

Gronbach inquired if there was any more discussion in regard to the TJ Maxx signage and further discussion was held on the topic of standards and guidelines of signage.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Chiara, supported by Gronbach, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary