



City of Plymouth

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 - 7:00 P.M.
City Hall Commission Chambers

City of Plymouth
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Plymouth, Michigan 48170

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1. ROLL CALL

Chair Sisolak called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.
The Board said the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Chuck Myslinski, Scott Silvers, Tim Joy, Jennifer Kehoe, Shannon Adams, Adam Offerman, and Karen Sisolak.

ABSENT: Hollie Saraswat and Joe Hawthorne

Also present was John Buzuvis, Community Development Director; Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant; Nick Moroz, City Commission Liaison; Bob Marzano, City Attorney; and Shawn Keough, City Engineer.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mark Menuck, 990 Pierce, provided an update on Starkweather School explaining that the building is near completion and he offered the Commission a tour.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Comm. Joy, supported by Comm. Myslinski, made a motion to approve the February 12, 2020 regular meeting minutes, as amended.

MOTION APPROVED 7-0

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Comm. Kehoe, supported by Comm. Myslinski, made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended to switch old and new business.

MOTION APPROVED 7-0

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Comm. Myslinski was grateful to see the Starkweather School project near completion and that it was a successful preservation effort.

Comm. Adams asked about the City's protocol surrounding public meetings amid the coronavirus.

Bob Marzano explained this is something the City will be monitoring closely to ensure everyone's safety.

Chair Sisolak encouraged everyone to sign up for the City's news alerts to stay informed.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) PUD15-01: 550 N. Holbrook, PUD Amendment

Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant, presented her review. She explained that the PUD was reviewed in 2016 and three public benefits were offered: preservation of Starkweather School, this green/park area, and an easement for future access to Hines Drive. She explained this amendment is a slight change from the previous amendment requested in 2018. She explained the area of amendment is the 3,300 square feet to the east of the Parkview parking lot. She evaluated the request based on the PUD criteria and believed that the proposed modification makes the park less usable. She raised five issues in her review and did not recommend approval.

Comm. Kehoe asked what the Board's options were.

Ms. Elmiger explained that they could approve, approve with conditions, postpone, or deny.

Mark Menuck presented his case. He explained the success of the building, located at 409 Plymouth Rd., has caused the need for additional parking spaces. He responded to each of Sally's review items. He clarified the calculation of encroachment is less than what was presented on the original plans. He suggested a new parking lot layout that would reduce the encroachment further and increase the depth of the parking spaces to the required 20 feet. Mr. Menuck suggested making the area more welcoming like a garden style entrance. He explained a letter summarizing specifications for what is required to build and park over the pipe. He suggested planting trees over the pipe or elsewhere on the site. He is agreeable to installing a screen wall or fence, which could be installed to ensure there is no conflict with the pipe. Mr. Menuck explained the existing parking lot lights will illuminate into the proposed addition area. He explained if additional parking lot lighting was required, they would install light blockers or other shielding. He explained the lots could be reduced to add greenspace and still have useable lots.

Garth Jackson presented his case. He explained why parking on the side would not be feasible. He explained the proposed lighting changes and how lower poles and different lighting technologies would benefit both properties. He explained the light dimming system.

Citizen Comments

None.

Board Discussion

Ms. Elmiger explained that if the Board were to support the project, they would need to schedule a public hearing. She explained the 409 Plymouth Rd. property must then also submit a site plan review for expansion of parking.

Comm. Silvers believed that the proposal created a more contiguous piece of parkland. He explained his critical desire was to ensure an easement to access Hines Drive.

Comm. Myslinski explained he initially suggested sacrificing lot 19. He felt that it was an infringement on an otherwise open and accessible greenspace. He expressed concerns with the proposed changes to the parking space layout as offered verbally by the applicant.

Comm. Kehoe agreed with Comm. Myslinski's comments. She saw the proposed project as diminishing the public benefit. She was not in support of the amendment.

Comm. Myslinski felt that the benefit of the park was just an addition, because the primary public benefit was the preservation of the old school.

Chair Sisolak wanted corrected drawings to be presented to the Board prior to a decision.

Comm. Silvers felt that providing a smaller area up front allowed for more space and a logical access point to Hines Drive which would accommodate a pathway that took advantage of the steep grade.

Comm. Myslinski disagreed and countered that the finished elevation would not be able to change due to the underground detention.

Comm. Silvers wanted a gateway to be provided off the road.

Comm. Kehoe did not agree with requesting a PUD amendment based on the change in tenancy in the Parkview building. She felt that it could easily swing back to not requiring as much parking. She did not want to sacrifice the PUD for an insignificant addition of parking.

Comm. Silvers asked what the required number of parking spaces was for the office building. It was confirmed that 59 or 60 parking spaces was required and provided currently.

A motion was made by Comm. Joy, seconded by Comm. Silvers, to postpone the PUD amendment of PUD15-01 Starkweather School (550 N. Holbrook). The conditions of postponement include re-submission of accurate drawings and a submittal packet that addresses the issues raised by the Planner as well as discussed by the board.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a) PUD 19-01: 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail Zoned B-2, 686 Maple & 674 Maple Zoned O-1 (Final Site Plan Review – Discussion Only)

Ms. Elmiger explained that the aim of the discussion is to make the list of outstanding items easier to see and organize for the Board to consider.

Mike Ferrantino and Mark Abanatha explained the changes necessary to accommodate 9-foot-wide porches.

Comm. Kehoe asked about adding a railing. It was confirmed that a railing was not necessary because the porch height did not require a railing by code.

Comm. Silvers asked about the window spacing. It was confirmed that was done to accommodate the shed roof detail.

Comm. Myslinski asked about the multiple steps up to the porches. It was explained that there is a grade change that accommodates that number of steps. He asked about limiting the artificial grade change because it is not appropriate. He asked for clarification on if that meets the ordinance or not.

Mr. Ferrantino explained that all the homes in the area are built up, likely due to where the water table is.

The Board discussed the riser height and the grade.

Ms. Elmiger explained how existing grade was calculated. She explained that the height of the building must be 30 feet tall based on the zoning ordinance.

Shawn Keough asked about the below grade window well.

The Board discussed the location of the egress windows on the front of the building.

Ms. Elmiger explained that if the proposed egress window did not meet the projections into setback ordinance, it would be added as a deviation for the Board to consider as part of the PUD.

Comm. Kehoe believed the usefulness of the porch was questionable but was fulfilled as an ask of the Board.

Mr. Ferrantino explained the changes proposed to the ramp to accommodate pedestrian access. The changes include moving the dumpster and ensuring clear views to possible pedestrians.

Comm. Kehoe asked for the Engineer's opinion about pedestrian safety on the ramp.

Mr. Keough explained that typically people and cars should not be in the same spot. He explained that having a driveway off Maple would have been a much simpler solution to the ramp.

Bob Marzano explained that the responsibility is on the resident to be aware of vehicles. He suggested warning signage but recognized that residents must be aware of the condition that exists in their backyard.

Comm. Myslinski clarified that there is no curbed, separated access for pedestrians – just pavement markings.

Comm. Silvers asked for signage distinguishing the property and access as private property.

Mr. Ferrantino asked if the site plan could be critiqued at this time in the process. He explained that he believed the ramp had been approved on October 9, 2019.

Comm. Kehoe read the motion from the October meeting minutes and explained that approval had been conditioned on many things. She explained that the Board's concerns and questions are requesting a change to the site plan, not an explanation from the applicant.

Comm. Myslinski explained that he felt the preliminary site plan approval was an approval of the concept and the idea of townhouses. He was still not in favor of the ramp or depressing an otherwise flat site.

Mr. Ferrantino explained that the intent was always to maximize the amount of City property dedicated to parking and preservation of the Jewell building. He explained that they must have 10 units to make the project economically feasible and setbacks and greenspace was not able to be increased because of this.

Chair Sisolak explained the Board's responsibility is to review the PUD with a long-term vision of the City. She wanted to be clear on exactly what the applicant is proposing and the tradeoffs the Board is considering.

The Board discussed ideas how to make the gate and ramp safer. Those ideas included warning signs, programming the gate to reduce car conflicts, moving the gate, adding a red light to indicate the presence of pedestrians, traffic management, and eliminated landscaping.

Ms. Elmiger suggested adding a symbol of a light to the site plan and a note explaining how it operates and how it helps people navigate the ramp.

Ms. Elmiger took a straw poll. She asked if the three proposed traffic management ideas proposed (1. Addition of warning signs, 2. If a car is coming up the ramp, the gate will be programmed not to open, and 3. Red and green lights added at the bottom of the ramp to give people permission to proceed) would make the ramp palatable to the Board. A majority voted in the affirmative.

Comm. Kehoe asked that the structural engineer's report affirming the Jewell building can be restored would be a condition of the PUD agreement.

The Board discussed receiving an official report or an opinion letter from the Structural Engineer. They agreed they would accept a letter.

Ms. Elmiger went through the CWA review. She asked that the curb cuts/access be shown on the demolition plan. It was clarified that that change would be indicated on revised drawings.

Ms. Elmiger asked for a photometric plan including foot-candles.

The Board clarified that most lighting is building-mounted and other lighting is within the retaining wall.

Ms. Elmiger asked that the screen wall extend the entire length of the property.

The Board discussed and requested screening of the transformer box.

Chair Sisolak expressed concern with lack of greenspace on the site. She also believed that the basement room with the window well should be counted towards the total density calculation.

Ms. Elmiger agreed that the extra room in the basement would be counted toward the total density calculation.

The Board discussed density calculation, density as described in the future land use categories, and the zoning plan. They further discussed green space and the impact of it on height and building massing.

Comm. Silvers did not believe that lack of greenspace was an issue on an urban site like this one.

Comm. Kehoe had an issue with the amount of concrete.

Ms. Elmiger explained the density deviation would be a five-room deviation, which is above the 25% density bonus provided in the PUD ordinance. It was clarified that 36 rooms are permitted, and 50 rooms are proposed.

Ms. Elmiger listed the proposed deviations. They include 1. Density 2. 2.5-foot side yard setback deviation 3. The amount of open space (4,500 SF required; 1,800 SF proposed) 4. Landscape strip on the north side of the townhomes is 10 feet instead of 15 feet 5. Clear vision area 6. Egress window well in the front yard setback. She believed that numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are insignificant in nature. She believed that the density is what is desired as outlined in the Master Plan.

Chair Sisolak disagreed with Ms. Elmiger's assessment of density outlined in the Master Plan.

Mr. Ferrantino explained that should the City elect to develop the parking lot there would be additional greenspace provided by parking lot islands.

Comm. Silvers shared a SketchUp model he developed of the proposed townhomes and its impact on the adjacent single-family home.

8. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Buzuvis reminded the Board to turn in their signature pages to receive their City-issued email address.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, a motion was made by Comm. Silvers, supported by Comm. Myslinski to adjourn the meeting at 10:18 PM.

MOTION APPROVED 7-0