



Plymouth Historic Distric Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 7, 2019 - 7:00p.m.
Plymouth City Hall Commission Chambers

City of Plymouth
201 S. Main
Plymouth, Michigan 48170-1637

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Polin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Stan Cole, Linda Filipczak, Linda May, Joshua Mrozowski, John Townsend and Colleen Polin

ABESENT: Jeremy Borys

Also present was Community Development Director, John Buzuvis and City Commission Liaison, Suzi Deal.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

a) A motion was made by Comm. Filipczak and seconded by Comm. Cole to approve the meeting minutes from July 17, 2019 as presented.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Comm. Townsend and seconded by Comm. May to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Polin asked for a follow-up on three items:

1. A letter requested for work done at 306 S. Main, regarding the limestone application and asked for a follow-up.
2. She would like to know if a permit was pulled for work being done on the front porch at 249 S. Main Street and asked for a follow-up.
3. A follow-up is requested on the three awnings installed at 583 W. Ann Arbor Trail, extending to the end of the building, but not installed into the mortar joints as requested.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

H19-06: Demolition of 686 Maple and 674 Maple and part of 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail. New construction at 686 Maple and 674 Maple. Landscaping, paving and exterior modifications at 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail.

Comm. Townsend wanted to convey in the interest of transparency that he has been inside the home at 686 Maple when Mr. Ferrantino was also there, and he did not indicate in any way any opinion he may have had and wanted it included into the public record.

Chair Polin indicated she had a business relationship with the applicant and felt she should recuse herself from this agenda item.

A motion was made by Comm. Townsend, supported by Comm. May, to allow Chair Polin to be recused.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Alex Bogaerts & Mark Abanatha, Alexander V. Bogaerts & Associates Architects, made a power point presentation of the proposed new project.

The applicant went over the primary 3 objectives: 1. Restoration & repurposing of the Saxton's /Jewell building. 2. Create a vibrant neighborhood and aesthetically pleasing development on Maple Street: that acts as transition architecture between the public parking lot and downtown to the north and the existing single-family homes to the south. 3. Provides additional public parking spaces for the City of Plymouth.

The applicant presented a power point presentation of historic photos from 1928. The current windows in the building are not the original windows. The first additions were the barrel roof and flat roof structures in 1960/1965. The applicant showed photos of the deterioration of the buildings from the roof leaking. They intend to keep the two-story brick structure and remove the older two additions along with the two residential homes located on Maple Street. They intend to restore the two-story building back to its original form, greatly expanding the parking along with adding the townhome structure. The ten townhomes will have a double front façade facing both Maple Street and Ann Arbor Trail. The townhomes will act as a transitional buffer between the parking lot and the residential homes on Maple to the South. The design and materials used were designed to work in harmony with the residential single-family homes on Maple Street.

The project will bring: 1. A fresh new look and improvement benefitting to the immediate neighborhood and downtown areas. 2. Reconstruction and expansion of the public parking lot will provide improved aesthetics at a prominent City corner. 3. It will provide much needed parking to the downtown area for both residents and visitors. 4. It will be completely reconstructed with new paving, storm system and landscaping.

The development will help the Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) plan to increase parking inventory, and some of the cost will be paid for with the sale of the Jewell building and an increased tax base. The development will help with the Master Plan which calls for the two residential homes to be multi-family homes. The new townhomes will provide additional new housing further encouraging a vibrant walkable downtown. The project will restore and repurpose the Jewel/Saxton building currently in disrepair.

The applicant explained the restoration of the Jewell/ building. They will be replacing the current window and doors with new metal clad windows and doors. The roof will be replaced with a rubberized roofing. The brick will be cleaned, and the damaged bricking replaced. All restoring and repurposing will be done in accordance with the Secretary of Interior standards guidelines. The applicant showed some historic references for the proposed canopies. There were elevations presented showing the entranceways. The applicant proposed a panelized detail with raised moldings located at the base. The openings to the additions will be glazed over. The applicant went over the materials list. Brick samples were provided, the window and doors will be an architect reserve series, the rear roof will be used as a terrace with black steel railing. The awnings will be a lightweight steel channel and framed back with cable hangers attached through the mortar joints in the brick. The roofing will be insulated adding the membrane roofing.

The applicant went over the townhome materials list. Each of the townhomes will have their own look and color scheme. Every other unit juts out approximately 2 feet. The details are varied from boxed out windows on brackets, hip dormers, to shed dormers.

The townhomes will be double fronted facing both Maple Street and Ann Arbor Trail. There will be three different brick schemes that all tie in. One continuous shingle type will be used, weather wood. The windows and trim will be white and there will be two colors of siding the darker one will be used for the shake with the lighter alternating.

The applicant requested a notice to proceed for the proposed demolitions 686 & 674 Maple and partial removal of the Saxton's building, which meets the DDA's goals & Master Plan, the retention of the homes would not be in the interest of the majority of the people of Plymouth, subject to receiving planning and zoning approvals for the project and the requested action being to issue a notice to proceed and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the rehabilitation and restoration of the Jewell building.

The applicant will not be able to move forward without the notice to proceed along with the certificate of appropriateness, the applicant is scheduled to go before the Planning Commission next week.

Board Discussion

Comm. Townsend asked for clarity of how the openings between the original building and the newer addition will be addressed and the applicant responded they will be glazed windows.

Comm. Cole stated this project is very important to the City and to the history of Plymouth as well and explained the duties of the Historic board members and asked the applicant if he had done a study of repurposing of the two homes to safeguard the heritage of Plymouth. Mike Ferrantino, applicant, explained they have been unable to sell the blue home (twice on the market) and the second home was cost prohibitive, it has been uninhabitable, it has no electricity or water or been occupied since the City has owned it for 8 years now.

Comm. Cole asked if they had any documentation that the home was cost prohibitive and the applicant answered that he did not.

The applicant further explained that the current residential lots on Maple St. would become 70' deep (as opposed to the current 120' deep) to achieve an additional approximately 30 parking spots for the City. Comm. Cole asked if they had a study of repurposing the Saxton building and the applicant answered they have studied the building and the only section that is structurally sound is the two-story unit. Nothing in the addition is to code from the electrical to the HVAC and without removing the additions, no extra parking will be available for the City.

Comm. Mrozowski asked about what the proceeds from the sale of the property would be used for and Mr. Buzuvis explained the money will go towards paying back approximately half of a bond that was used to purchase the property.

Citizen Comments

Bill Lincoln, 606 Maple, explained he lives adjacent to the new development and explained how painful it has been looking at their rear yard with the dilapidated fencing and abandoned buildings for the past 8 years. If this project does not go forward the yellow building that has sat for the last 6 years will not be renovated, if the City felt it should have been renovated, they would have done so by now. The neighbors and I want this to move forward. There will be compromises, he stated his living next door to the proposed very large townhomes. He stated it will be homes and families moving into those townhomes. Mr. Lincoln believes that we need to move forward and if we do not accept the compromise to take down these homes, we lose the not only the renovation of the beautiful Jewell building but we also lose all three dilapidated buildings remaining. Mr. Lincoln respectfully asked the board to accept this proposal.

Patrick Kehoe, 418 Blunk, asked if in the future the power point presentation could be included in the packets beforehand so the Community can participate. Mr. Kehoe felt the deterioration of the homes happened on the City's watch and should be accounted for as one of the aspects of the problem. The purpose of the HDC is to safeguard the City's heritage and what we're seeing are houses being destroyed throughout the community on a regular basis. He was concerned not with the buildings being torn down, but the Row housing look that will replace them. Row houses do not look like the rest of the Community, it doesn't carry forward the heritage. Ultimately the benefits of this need to benefit the Community. This project with the destruction of these properties is not the right thing we should be doing without careful consideration and having the right design characteristics in terms of the new properties being developed. He would like the benefit not to the developer or the parking but to the safeguarding of the Community going forward.

Kevin Roose, 619 Maple, spoke about the duties of the HDC. He stated the HDC should safeguard the heritage of the City, but also stabilize and improve the property values, fostering civic beauty, strengthen the local economy, promote the use of historic districts for education, pleasure, and the welfare of the citizens of Plymouth. In Mr. Roose's opinion, this project does stabilize & improve property values in the City and surrounding neighborhoods. This project will help improve the tax base of Plymouth, which includes funding for better Community development and fostering civic beauty by removing the ugly fencing on empty lots and blighted buildings we must look at every day. Mr. Roose also felt this will strengthen the local economy by bringing in the new office space, with a more attractive and useable parking lot and improved neighborhood. He doesn't feel there is a lot of historical character to the two houses and older Saxton's building, but with the removal and improvement addition of the townhomes will increase the pleasure & welfare of the citizens of Plymouth. This project will greatly benefit the Community and he felt is appropriate.

Debbie Neubecker, 647 Maple, is in favor of preserving the neighborhood. Her view from her front porch is two green doors and the rear Saxton building in disarray with a terrible roof. She can see from her home the yellow house that has been sitting in disarray for 8 years now. She highly doubts someone would spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix up the yellow home. Ms. Neubecker felt this is going to make our neighborhood beautiful and felt what everybody needs to really think about what this will be doing to the neighborhood. She would prefer this project moving forward compared to the deteriorated green buildings facing her.

Dema Lincoln, 606 Maple, stated it confuses her, if these houses were so important how can they be this run down. Where were you when you let them fall apart, since the City has owned them for a long time, where were these studies back then, she asked. She stated it's a mess with the grass getting long and the fencing falling down and looking at this now for years, she felt this proposed project will be beneficial to the neighborhood, Community and everyone.

Rose Roose, 619 Maple, explained she was happy when the white house came down. She felt she is stuck looking at these homes that are not worth saving, compared to what it could be, more of a neighborhood. Ms. Roose explained the traffic congestion on their street, she felt the traffic will be reduced by this project, due to the parking lot north of the townhomes. She would like this proposed project to move forward.

Paul Albanese, 575 Hamilton, spoke about hybrid restoration. He felt this development was a hybrid restoration by restoring the Jewel building with a progressive neighborhood design, benefitting the Community & neighborhood, which keeps the historical charm and is developed responsibly.

Sherry Foust, 581 Maple, felt no one will want to restore the two homes. The townhomes are a compromise but it's a lot better than what we have now.

Tony Roko, Roosevelt, was in favor of the project he felt the developer was mindful and committed to the Plymouth Community with his history of preservation projects.

Wally Janowski, 561 Kellogg, spoke about daily seeing the deteriorating buildings and homes, he felt since the City won't fix up the buildings this developer should be allowed to proceed. He felt it is a great plan and should be allowed to move forward.

Dave Satterthwaite, 543 Maple, has lived here for over 42 years. He appreciates the history of Plymouth, but stated this is a plus, it keeps the residential neighborhood and is in support of this project.

Joe Philips, 302 N. Sheldon Road, spoke about being on the historic district in the past and their roles. He felt the applicant in his opinion did not do a sufficient job in describing the buildings and why they need to come down. He sympathizes with the neighbors having to look at the buildings. He felt it's a great project the architecture is fantastic. Mr. Philips spoke about the additional parking along with the ten units and wondered if it was worth it with the three buildings coming down, in exchange for the parking lot. He read from the Secretary of Interior standards and felt three of the buildings are considered contributing. Mr. Philips spoke about the buildings being owned by the City Commission/Administration, not the historic district board. Mr. Philips spoke about a section of the Ordinance where off-street parking is not permitted in any required or non-required front yard, except for the use as a driveway. The project accentuates the added parking, with the large townhomes in between the parking and residents south on Maple.

Leo Gonzalez, developer of this project, pointed out that merits of each structure, the Jewell building being paramount. To remodel & repurpose the Jewell building is expensive, so they needed a development that would put that capital back into this building, to accomplish this there are compromises that are necessary. He suggested donating the two homes to interested individuals and they could move them to another site within the City.

Dan Sabo, Taylor, Michigan, was not in favor of demolishing the historic homes. He felt the restoration project is fantastic but dislikes the homes being demolished.

Nicole Albanese, 575 Hamilton, she felt trying to save uninhabited dilapidated homes that are not livable or sellable homes makes no sense. She felt in her opinion to protect the Historic District should be to prevent the tear downs of functioning homes. This is a disservice to the historic value of our Community by inaction. Saving the Jewell building is a huge win for the historic district.

Board Discussion

Comm. Cole explained the board members are limited to what they can review which is defined within the historic district Ordinance and they have no control over the maintenance of the homes which comes from City administration, not them. The board must follow the Secretary of Interior Standards, the City of Plymouth Ordinances and the State of Michigan Historic Preservation office. A study was done on the two houses in 1994 they were listed in this study as significant to the Historic District. Comm. Cole read from page 162 in the Secretary of Interior Standards that states: "It is not recommended to build a new building on a historic property or adjacent site that is much larger than that historic building". If the home is torn down and a townhome is built, we are in violation of those guidelines. If the townhomes were built on the green space lot next door, this would be ok, since it is not located within the Historic District. Comm. Cole stated per the Historic Preservation Michigan chapter of planning, a study called "Michigan Modern" says it's time to reassess how Michigan views the history and what makes a historic resource. According to a Michigan park study a building structure must be over 50 years old to qualify as historically significant. The article states: The period following world war II was one of the most significant in Michigan's history, it was a time of unprecedented growth and that

was when the style of the 1950s & 60s was defined worldwide.

Comm. Cole stated there is not another 1950 or 60s building located within the historic district or in any other area, and to lose that (barrel roofed building), Comm. Cole feels would be a big loss to the Historic District.

Parking - Currently there are 47 public parking spaces, the applicant is proposing about 79 parking spaces, which equals a net of about 32 new spaces. There are No dumpsters or loading zones delineated anywhere on the plans. There are also 15 parking spaces located on Ann Arbor Trail which extends beyond this property, located on the public R-O-W.

The State of Michigan also has guidelines for historic Commercial districts. Which states: Parking Lots should emphasize a sidewalk edge with plantings, columns, fences or other vertical projections. In Michigan towns there is no alignment with the front byline, but a strong uniform setback is found.

Comm. Cole explained the state recommends that the parking be setback with the setback along the street, plus provide a buffer or setback. This is not shown on the plans but is shown on the renderings. When this is all done 15 parking spaces will be lost along Ann Arbor Trail and another 4 on Maple Street. When the plans are completed the net will be 13 parking spaces.

The Saxton's proposed awnings cannot be added to a building unless there is historic proof of that. Awnings on the store front of the building is allowed, but not allowed on the side of the building without historical photographic evidence, that would create a false sense of history. The front tiles cannot be removed, unless the applicant can find historic photographs of what was there or through exploration, to find something else underneath. The townhomes are lacking information such as height, dimensions, etc.

Comm. Filipczak has concerns, she stated the City has two houses that are uninhabitable, which are zoned for office not residential, they were unable to sell them, and the financial burden is put on whomever obtains them. She is in favor of the homes being relocated to another area and therefore the City will not lose the homes. Looking at the Saxton's building the two 1960s additions are in horrendous condition in total disarray and possible hazardous to the Community. Comm. Filipczak felt possibly obligated to look at what is a hazard to the neighborhood or Community, Ann Arbor Trail is our pathway into the City, and this is what is seen by all. Comm. Filipczak stated we want to embrace the historic buildings, is there a way to move the two homes elsewhere, but also under special circumstances with a notice to proceed, putting qualifiers on for the Planning Commission so that the townhomes honor the historic district but also embrace the growth of the Community also, without looking at these alternatives moving forward it would be a detriment to the Community.

Comm. May doesn't feel moving the homes is realistic, when you move the homes out of the historic district they are not protected.

Comm. Townsend stated he is dedicated to the preservation of the Historic District. He felt if left the buildings they will just continue to deteriorate. There are compromises, but he does believe the developer needs to do more work, with more details. Comm. Townshend felt the bottom line here is this proposed development does improve Plymouth.

Comm. Mrozowski stated the 1928 Jewel building is the most significant part of the entire project. If this building is rehabbed the correct way, he felt the two additions could be removed, the additions should not have been there to begin with.

Comm. Townsend gave the history of the property. Mr. Saxton bought the Jewel building through bankruptcy, he punched holes in it to add onto his business, but it was done without planning or sound architecture, but doesn't feel if we save those 3 properties, we are not saving anything of quality. He would rather the money be spent on rehabbing the Jewell building. Comm Townsend felt there is a lot of input the board members can give the developers for the

Jewel building & townhomes

A motion was made by Comm. Filipczak, supported by Comm. Mrozowski, to issue a Notice to Proceed for H19-06, for the demolition or movement of 686 Maple and 674 Maple and the demolition of part of 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail, as presented tonight, providing the following conditions are met:

1. That the applicant receives Planning Commission approval.
2. That the applicant receives Planned Unit Development approval.
3. That the applicant returns to the Historic District for Certificate of Appropriateness approvals of Jewell building & townhomes.

MOTION PASSES 4-1 .

A motion was made by Comm. Townsend, supported by Comm. Mrozowski, to allow Chair Polin to rejoin the meeting.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

8. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Citizen Comments

Joe Phillips, 302 N. Sheldon, stated he didn't understand what the give and take was.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Comm. Cole, supported by Comm. May, to adjourn the meeting at 8:49p.m.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.