



City of Plymouth

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 - 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 7:03 P.M.
The Board said the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Shannon Adams, Joe Hawthorne, Tim Joy, Adam Offerman, Hollie Saraswat, Scott Silvers, Chuck Myslinski (arrived at 8:00 PM), Jennifer Kehoe, and Karen Sisolak

ABSENT: None.

Also present was Greta Bolhuis, Assistant Community Development Director; Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant; and Nick Moroz, City Commission Liaison.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Ellen Elliott, 404 Irvin, thanked Chair Sisolak, Comm. Kehoe, and Comm. Saraswat for attending the DDA meeting and presenting the Master Plan to the board. She stated that the presentation was well done, and the Planning Commission was well represented.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Comm. Joy, supported by Comm. Hawthorne, made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from August 14, 2019.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Comm. Offerman, supported by Comm. Joy, made a motion to approve the agenda.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Comm. Saraswat asked for electronic 3D renderings of larger plans.

Ms. Bolhuis explained that electronic storage would likely be a problem, but she would explore it.

Comm. Silvers explained that 3D renderings may be cost prohibitive to most developers.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

a) **PUD19-01**: 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail Zoned B-2, 686 Maple & 674 Maple Zoned O-1 (Revised Preliminary PUD Review)

Ms. Elmiger presented her review. The proposed project is to rehabilitate the Jewell-Blaisch building and construct 10 townhome units along Maple St. She stated that there are two components to a PUD, the first is the PUD itself, evaluated using broad criteria in the Zoning Ordinance, and site plan review. She explained that the PUD and site plan should be evaluated separate. She explained her concerns with the site plan related to building height and environmental protection and recommended that the Planning Commission not make any approval at this meeting.

Comm. Sisolak asked for clarification on what is open for approval. Ms. Elmiger explained that both site plan and PUD are open for revision and/or approval.

Comm. Kehoe asked for confirmation that they have four choices for approval: approval, approval with changes, postpone, or denied. Ms. Elmiger confirmed.

Leo Gonzalez, developer, introduced himself and the development team that was present: Mark Abanatha of Alexander Bogaerts Architecture, Mike Palmear of Giffels Webster, and Kevin Ramirez of Jewell Maple Development Group. He addressed some of the items noted in Ms. Elmiger's review. He explained that lowering the garage floor was not possible due to the depth of sanitary sewer lines. Mr. Gonzalez explained they will reduce the height to 30-feet. He stated their plan is to have more than 50% of the basement below grade to keep the project 2.5 stories. Mr. Gonzalez stated they'd be willing to make an agreement to plant five trees in the parking lot.

Mark Abanatha, architect, presented his case. He explained the proposed benefits of the project to the community. He presented the specific elements that would be rehabilitated on the Jewell-Blaisch building including roof, brick, canopies, windows, lighting, and signage. He presented the specific design elements of the proposed townhouses including siding, porches and porch location, unit layout, building cross-section, and that the building would have two frontages. Mr. Abanatha explained that the project is urban infill and additional greenspace or landscaping would not be appropriate. He believed the project is safe and reasonable related to corner clearance and they would like to be able to place the structure within the required clear view area. He explained the project is roughly 2,500 square feet per unit which is close to RM-2 (Multi-Family Residential) requirements for density. Mr. Abanatha showed how the access drive functions using the travel path of a large SUV. He explained that emergency vehicles would not need to go down the access drive but rather would serve the development along the Maple Street side.

Chair Sisolak opened the public hearing at 7:46 PM.

Mark Wira, property owner of the corner of Ann Arbor Trail and Deer, stated that a strip of the parking lot is private property.

Ms. Bolhuis stated that Mr. Wira's property is not included in this proposal.

Kimberly Link, 628 Harding, asked what price the townhomes would be offered at. She expressed concern that the existing on-street parking on Deer and the additional traffic would cause safety issues.

The applicant responded that they would be for sale in the high \$700s.

Bill Lincoln, 606 Maple, spoke in support of the project. He believed that it may not be fiscally feasible to renovate the Jewell building down the road.

Vicki Nicol, 337 Joy, spoke in support of the project. She felt that the project is a good transition from downtown to residential and it would rehabilitate the best salvageable site on the property.

Wendy Harless, 11677 Morgan Ave, Plymouth Twp., Chair of the Plymouth Preservation Network, stated that a structural engineer would be willing to complete a walk through at no fee. She was directed to contact John Buzuvis.

Dema Lincoln, 606 Maple, spoke in support of the project. She expressed concerns about possible traffic that would be entering and exiting to Deer St.

Greg Finkelstein, 693 Maple, asked if Saxton's is being used for anything currently. He does not believe that a walk-through of the structure will accomplish anything. He is in support of the project.

Debbie Neubecker, 647 Maple, spoke in support of the project. She showed pictures of what she feels is deterioration on the property.

Taylor Neubecker, 193 Pinewood Circle, spoke in support of the project.

Daniel Rosenbaum, 328 Adams, expressed dissatisfaction with the parking lot. He believes pedestrian vibrancy is key. He feels an amenity would be a better option for that space.

Rose Roose, 619 Maple, is in support of the project. She does not want the entire property to be a parking lot.

Jerry Norquist, 2161 Cleveland Way, Canton, wants this area to be a greenspace. He is in favor of a structural walk-through. He asked about the number of parking spaces.

Chair Sisolak explained that the Planning Commission is not discussing the parking lot as part of this PUD. Anne Davis, 560 Kellogg, spoke in favor of the project and feels strongly that Maple should remain residential. Mike Neubecker, 647 Maple, is in support of the project and likes the buffer to the downtown area. Kevin Roose, 619 Maple, spoke in support of the project. He thinks the development is beneficial to the neighborhood and to the City in terms of taxes.

Public Hearing was closed at 8:19 PM.

Board Discussion

Nick Moroz, City Commission Liaison, gave a history of the City's purchase of the property at this site. He explained that the bond sale has a covenant that requires the proceeds of any potential sale of the property must go towards parking or related projects; however, the parking doesn't necessarily have to be on that property. He clarified the parking lot is not part of the proposed PUD. He explained the parking lot will come before the Planning Commission for approval. He explained the City Commission happily approved the Master Plan which designates the future land use of this property as Mixed Use.

Comm. Hawthorne asked for clarification of the approval process.

Comm. Myslinski asked for clarification of the process, City's intentions, and sale of the property.

City Comm. Moroz explained that if the project gets through the Planning Commission development process it would then go to the City Commission for approval. He further explained that any significant changes to the parking lot would then go before the Planning Commission.

Ms. Elmiger stated that it is not relevant who the property owner is – the process for approval is the same.

Chair Sisolak suggested any other questions related to the sale of the property or the bonds should be directed toward the City Commission. She explained that City Commission approved the Master Plan which proposes the Maple Street properties as multi-family medium density in the future land use plan.

Comm. Kehoe asked if the long-term intention for the parking lot was to align with the Master Plan and suggested that the parking lot was not permanent and shouldn't be taken into consideration with the proposed townhomes.

City Comm. Moroz agreed and stated that was the intent of the current City Commission and current Master Plan.

Comm. Myslinski expressed concern that the proposed access to the property was from within the parking lot property.

The Board discussed the proposed easement and was concerned that public property would be used to access a private development.

Comm. Offerman asked if a sidewalk could be located on the east side of the development.

Mr. Gonzales responded that there is not a lot of clearance on that side of the building. He suggested a potential addition of striping that signals drivers to yielding to pedestrians.

Comm. Hawthorne spoke in favor of the project but wanted a condition of the PUD to be that the Jewell building must have a certificate of occupancy prior to the townhomes receiving certificates of occupancy.

Comm. Silvers and Comm. Kehoe agreed with the suggested condition.

Comm. Kehoe reiterated that the current parking lot is a short-term solution and the development should reflect that by ensuring the development is self-sufficient and appropriate parking spaces are taken care of. She suggested that trees should be planted on the property, rather than in the parking lot. She suggested front porches rather than back decks. She stated she would like to see elevations that are clearer with more details.

Ms. Elmiger clarified that the Historic District Commission dictates the building details.

Comm. Silvers asked how the developer could grant a perpetual access easement to the City when that land gives sole access to the development. He did not want the development to be landlocked.

Ms. Elmiger clarified that the Jewell Maple Development would deed the property that they own to the City and the easement would allow for access to the property.

The Board discussed the length of the easement and the potential long-term impact on future development.

Comm. Myslinski asked if there was a way for the easement be dedicated public right-of-way or alley.

Ms. Elmiger stated that the City Commission could make the decision to make a dedicated alley. She explained that they have not heard from the Fire Marshal yet, so permeant vehicular access could be an important safety issue that he addresses in his comments.

Comm. Saraswat expressed concerned with the price point of \$700,000 she did not believe that met the Master Plan goal of providing diverse housing for various income levels. She felt that this development did not give an option for residents to age-in-place.

Comm. Adams asked about the evergreen trees to be planted.

Mr. Polmear, Giffles Webster, explained the tree planting plan and landscaping plan. He explained the plan includes street trees along Maple Street that are deciduous and trees along east property line and Deer Street that are a combination of deciduous and evergreen.

Chair Sisolak asked that trash and snow removal be addressed. She suggested more green space to create some breathing room. She felt that more clarification and details were required for approval so there's no confusion.

Comm. Silvers believed that less greenspace is reasonable because of the proximity of downtown.

Comm. Saraswat stated the Commission can demand excellence to ensure the best possible development.

Comm. Myslinski asked what is proposed to separate these townhomes from the neighbor's property on Maple.

Ms. Elmiger responded that there is a 10-foot setback and landscaping.

Mr. Gonzalez stated they will bring back plan with more details in order to address the concerns. He addressed a few comments and concerns by stating that elevators were an option in the townhomes for those wanting to age-in-place. He also stated that they are open to options for related to the proposed easement.

Mr. Polmear clarified that the wall will be a 1' to 6' retaining wall with safety rail.

A motion was made by Comm. Kehoe, supported by Comm. Myslinski, to postpone the site plan PUD 19-01 until the applicant can review the CWA review and the comments made at the meeting discussion.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

7. OLD BUSINESS

a) Sign Ordinance Review: Section 78-227. Temporary Signs (Continued) & 78-228. Sign Permits.

Vikki Nicol, 337 Joy, expressed frustration with the process.

Comm. Myslinski made a motion, supported by Adams, to postpone the discussion of the sign ordinance to next month and in addition will change the start time of the meeting to 6:00pm.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, a motion was made by Comm. Silvers, supported by Comm. Adams to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 PM.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY