



City of Plymouth
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 9, 2019 - 6:00 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 6:04 P.M.
The Board said the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Shannon Adams, Joe Hawthorne, Tim Joy, Jennifer Kehoe, Chuck Myslinski, Adam Offerman, Hollie Saraswat (arrived at 7:01 PM), Scott Silvers, and Karen Sisolak

ABSENT: None.

Also present was John Buzuvis, Community Development Director; Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant; and Nick Moroz, City Commission Liaison.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Comm. Joy, supported by Comm. Adams, made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 11, 2019.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Comm. Myslinski, supported by Comm. Adams, made a motion to approve the agenda.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Comm. Joy spoke about the predetermined property splits for 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail, he would have liked to be able to look at it as a whole.

Comm. Myslinski asked if the Community mailboxes located in Starkweather Park could be removed and Mr. Buzuvis explained the removal is on the Department of Municipal Service work list. Comm. Myslinski also stated he felt uncomfortable in the way the Saxton's project is being presented to them.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

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

Ms. Elmiger went over the following changes made at the last review of the sign ordinance in July:

1. Revised the introductory paragraph of Sec. 78-225 to clarify that for signs in the Ann Arbor Road Corridor (ARC), conflicts between the ARC sign standards and this section shall be resolved by applying the ARC sign standards.
2. Adding the phrase “or movement” to the statement that signs shall not impede pedestrian, cyclist, or motorist vision or movement.
3. Researched if another ordinance exists that regulates the addressing of buildings. This requirement is included in the Residential Code and the Fire Code. Therefore, the paragraph was modified by simply stating that addresses will be visible and legible from the right-of-way.
4. Revising the setback for a temporary sign. The new standard is one (1) foot inside the property line.
5. Researched other community ordinances to determine if there are any established standards for “reasonable” size, height, number, etc. for temporary signs. Based on this research, the table was updated for maximum size, height, and number of temporary signs in the ordinance, using a “lineal foot of street frontage” calculation method. These are the following changes made:

- a. Categorize the size, height, and number of temporary signs on the zoning district (vs. use). All the other regulations are divided up per district, and therefore consider this to be more consistent with the rest of the ordinance.
- b. Allocate more temporary sign area to commercial/industrial districts, as it is likely they will be located on busy roads with higher traffic speeds. Therefore, larger signs are needed so that the message can be safely read from a vehicle. However, the size wasn’t made so large as to overwhelm business properties in the downtown or on north or south Main St.
- c. To avoid “content based” regulations, any unique dimensions for “For Sale” or “For Lease/Rent” signs, was not included. The temporary sign area allocated to the various districts should cover this type of sign.

The result of the changes made will allow the following amount of “general” temporary signage. (Note that the display time would be extended for signs advertising the property for sale/lease, and that the sign area would be doubled for temporary election signs.)

- a. On properties in residential districts, a typical 60-foot wide lot could display 4, 3-square-foot freestanding signs at any one time for up to 60 days. Then the freestanding signs would need to be removed for at least 30 days. The same property could display a 6 square-foot wall sign for 14 days at the same time.
- b. On properties in non-residential districts, a typical 60-foot wide lot could display 5, 3-square-foot freestanding signs at any one time for up to 60 days. Then the freestanding signs would need to be removed for at least 30 days. The same property could display a 20-square-foot wall sign for 14 days at the same time. This draft includes the next section of the Sign Ordinance, which covers administration of signs (Sign permits, removal of signs, non-conforming signs, etc.).

Political/Election Signs were looked at in other communities. In some communities it was not even mentioned within their ordinances. Ms. Elmiger spoke about Birmingham policy (not ordinance) that requests that residents abide by the following standards:

1. To refrain from displaying signs longer than forty-five days prior to the election/vote.
2. To remove political signs within three days after the election/vote.
3. The number of signs be limited to one sign per candidate or issue, for parcels with less than 100 feet of frontage and two signs per candidate or issue, for parcels with greater than 100 feet of frontage.

Public Comments

Vickie Nicol, 337 Joy, she thanked the board and appreciated their research. She preferred temporary sign sizes of 18 x 24 inches, and explained that she feels this size gets the message across without interrupting your life.

Ms. Elmiger went over her revisions of the table starting on page 23, signage area for residential.

Board Discussion

Comm. Myslinski was not supportive of the sign size based upon the frontage, He would like everyone to have the same requirement/standard.

There was discussion on political signage requirements and Ms. Elmiger stated these signs are protected above all other signage. Ms. Elmiger further explained signage is about land use, there are limitations, a residential property has a maximum of five signs regardless of how large the property is.

Comm. Silvers liked Birmingham's sign ordinance where 1 sign per street frontage & a maximum of 2 signs is allowed. Ms. Elmiger explained this particular one is for residential, their ordinance is by use. You could have a special event sign, a for sale sign, a construction sign, all at the same time.

Comm. Adams suggested signage per resident and there was discussion on multifamily would then be allowed 50 tenants, with 50 signs times however many are allowed. Mr. Buzuvis reminded them about the discussion of 25 s.f. for the signage area. Comm. Adams spoke about the condo/apartment association controlling the amount of signage. Ms. Elmiger stated some apartments and condominiums do not always allow signage.

Comm. Kehoe felt five signs allowed an adequate amount of freedom of expression.

Ms. Elmiger reminded the board that the Ordinance can be changed down the road if something isn't working the way it should.

Comm. Joy would like time restrictions added also.

Comm. Hawthorne suggested eliminating the 2.5 sign area per lineal foot.

Ms. Elmiger stated the maximum is 5 signs, that are just under 3 square feet.

Comm. Silvers would like the word "area" added to Page 27, D.1 (i)

Comm. Silvers spoke about possibly adding a sunset clause to the non-conforming existing signs.

Comm. Joy asked if an existing post for a sign, (*where the sign no longer exists*), can be reinstalled in this non-conforming situation and Mr. Buzuvis explained if the sign was taken down and repaired it could be done, but within a reasonable amount of time, if it has been in disrepair for more than six months, it would need to be brought up to the current sign standards.

Chair Sisolak, anticipates more discussion on A-frame signs

Comm. Silvers asked if under the electronic changeable copy signs, the words "light emitting displays" could be used instead of the LED, to cover all of the new emerging technologies.

Temporary Signs Regulated by Zoning:

Residential Signs: Eliminating the 2.5 lineal foot, allowing 18 total square feet, 6 sq. ft per sign is allowed, 5 free standing signs and/or one wall sign allowed, per lot; as long as they do not exceed the 18 sq. ft, with a maximum height of 4 feet.

Commercial Signs: Eliminating the 0.4 s.f of signage per linear foot frontage, temp signage maximum 40 sq. ft., 20 sq. ft per sign, 5 total signs maximum and/or one wall sign allowed, with a maximum height of 6 feet.

It was decided to merge the permitted types and have one type named freestanding & wall for residential & commercial both. Wall signs are 28 days per calendar year, but only up for 14 continuous days at a time.

Ms. Elmiger went over the proposed changes made:

- Changes to the table for temporary signs
- Page 27, Sign Permit applications, adding under D.1. (i) the word "area".
- Changing LED to light emitting displays

Ms. Elmiger to return with a final draft at the next Planning Commission meeting.

b) **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- the idea & concept of the project & how it fits in with the Master Plan & Community, and the second is the site plan review. She explained that the PUD and site plan should be evaluated separate. She explained her review of the changes made with the revised plans such as the townhomes being shorter, the turning radius movement, etc. and with these changes made Ms. Elmiger finds the project does meet the criteria for a PUD.

Ms. Elmiger recommends the following be noted on and/or amended on the final proposed site-plan:

1. In the Final Site Plan, the townhome units are shown at 30-feet tall, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance and confirmed by the Building Official.
2. Applicant receives HDC approval for the proposed changes to the Jewell-Blaich building, and the townhomes.
3. Jewell-Blaich building receives Certificate of Occupancy before any Certificates of Occupancy are issued for the townhomes.
4. Applicant contributes to the City's Tree Fund representing five (5) 2.5" caliper shade trees, as mitigation for removal of large Maple tree on site.
5. City Commission approves access easements from both Deer and Ann Arbor Trail to provide access to Jewell-Blaich parking spaces and townhome lower-level garages.

Ms. Elmiger recommends that any Preliminary Site Plan approval be conditioned upon the applicant returning with Final Site Plans that have been amended to meet the Final Site Plan requirements in the ordinance, address the comments listed below, address Planning Commissioner comments made at the meeting, and include approval of the City Engineer on the curbed driveway ramp design; located in the lower level garages.

- 1A. Plan Requirements: 1. Show proposed easement locations on site plan (Sheet C-4). 2. Show existing topography (spot elevations) on site plan (Sheet C-4).
2. Density Analysis: Planning Commission to consider if this project demonstrates design excellence and conformance to the standards in 78-313 for density bonus.
3. Schedule of Regulations: 1. Proposed building height lowered by 6-inches. 2. Planning Commission to consider 2.5-foot side setback deviation along east property line. 3. Planning Commission to consider deviation of amount of open space.
4. Parking/Loading: 1. Planning Commission to consider deviation of landscape strip width on north side of building. 2. Add access easements to plans to accommodate loading/unloading area for Jewell-Blaich building. 3. Obtain City Engineer's opinion of clear vision deviation.
5. Circulation: 1. Include re-located driveway apron on Deer St. and new pavement to allow access to gated drive and Jewell-Blaich parking spaces on plans, showing this work accomplished as part of project. 2. Add mirrors to the plans to allow vehicles to safely use the vehicle ramp to the lower level garages, so that two vehicles can make the turn at the same time.
6. Sidewalks: Description of need for stormwater swale on eastern side of project based on Wayne County standards.
7. Develop PUD Agreement with performance guarantees for public benefits (i.e. Jewell-Blaich renovations completed before certificates of occupancy are issued for townhouse units).
8. Planning Commission to decide on usable front porches on Maple Street façade of townhouse building.
9. 1. Alternative to homeowners wheeling garbage carts up the ramp to the dumpster. 2. Recommend to City Commission that easement agreement address snow storage from this project (either allowed or prohibited). 3. Provide height of safety rail on Sheet C-4 detail.

John Buzuvis, explained as the final site plan details are worked out, the Fire Marshall and City Engineer will be making their recommendations.

Leo Gonzalez, introduced himself and Mike Ferrantino, Jewell/Maple development, Mark Abanatha, with Alexander Bogaert Associates and Mike Polmear of Giffels Webster. Mr. Gonzalez provided a brief history of the property starting when the City acquired the property about 4-5 years ago. His overview explained the RFP process accepting a number of proposals that were not supported by the market, nor really fit in. The restoration of the Jewell building will be a benefit to the Community for generations to come with the owner/developer intending to have his corporate offices located here and the townhomes built along Maple will enhance the streetscape, stabilizing and bringing value to the homes in the area. The townhomes will provide a new housing type for empty nesters and home buyers who wish to live within walking distance to Kellogg park & the downtown area. Mr. Gonzalez presented a power point presentation explaining an easement that will be donated to the city for the overall project's use.

Mr. Gonzalez addressed the 13 items noted in Ms. Elmiger's review:

1. ***Suggested a walkway on the east side of the project site to allow safe pedestrian access from Maple to Ann Arbor Trail.*** It is a very restricted area with a portion only 10 feet, the other portion is 14 feet, at the striped crosswalk along with a yield sign added.
2. ***PC will require the Jewell building to have Certificate of Occupancy first, before any of the Townhomes receive a Certificate of Occupancy.*** The applicant agreed to this, the owner will be moving his corporate offices there.
3. ***To see the rear access to the Townhomes on applicant's land (not easement over City's land). Commissioner concern over Townhome project being "land locked" with only access over another property owner's land. Another Commissioner thought a dedicated alley would be preferable to an easement.*** This will be covered with the agreements made with the City.
4. ***Don't agree with applicant providing trees in Parking Lot (since it's not clear how long the land will be used for a parking lot).*** The applicant said they would plant them wherever the City would like them or donate into the tree fund.
5. ***Townhomes should have a usable front porch.*** Mike Ferrantino asked what is considered usable porch space and Ms. Elmiger answered a recently approved porch proposal had porches that were 8-foot long by 5 or 6 feet wide, enough for a chair and table.
6. ***How will garbage collection work for the Townhomes?*** A dumpster will be onsite, the residents will put the garbage in their car and drive it to the dumpster or the condo association will take care of it. There was discussion on the location of the dumpster and the turning radius for trucks.
7. ***Where will the snow be stored for the Townhomes?*** There will be a private snow service, hired by the association, they will be taking care of the snow removal and if necessary accumulated snow will be removed from the site as necessary.
8. ***Concerns that these units will not be financially available to young families or empty-nesters, as described in the Master Plan ("Missing Middle" housing).*** The project is geared towards the empty-nesters, or those that want to live in town or the age-in-place seniors. The units are designed with an elevator shaft, for their discretion whether or not they want them installed now or down the road, which the applicant felt appeals to a broad base of customers, being uniquely different and within walking distance to downtown.
9. ***Would like to see more green space.*** The applicant spoke of the outdoor spaces such as the patios which are 180 sq. ft, and the 60-80 sq. ft patio/balconies. The applicant talked about the small amount of land they have to develop, a greenbelt would not be meaningful, the customer attracted to this project wants to get away from that they want to utilize the City. The applicant explained this is a townhouse development, the greenspace is more appropriate with the zoning of a parcel with a larger plot of land that can provide greenspace that is more useable and appropriate.

10. Townhomes are too tall, but the height would be more acceptable if there was more green space. The townhomes were lowered to 30 feet with current grade & this can be addressed in final site plan review.

11. Some concern about proposed density, but another Commissioner thought density was okay. The townhomes are at 13 units per acre, the master plan calls for 12-18 per acre. Ms. Elmiger explained that a 25% density “bonus” can be allowed by the Planning Commission (above what is allowed per the base zoning district) for a PUD that exhibits design excellence. The Planning Commission could, at their discretion, consider usable/larger front-porches as design excellence.

12. Update the plans so they are consistent across all sheets and the proposal is clearly communicated.

This was addressed.

13. More clarification on fencing/wall/screens along east property line and fall protection of retaining walls.

Within the newly submitted plans there are wall details, the type of fencing has not yet been determined. The retaining wall will have a safety fence at the top, to deter the skateboarders.

Citizen Comments

Bill Lincoln, 606 Maple, spoke in support of this project. He believed that it is rare to have so many in support of a project that will be well done & 1,000 times better than what is there now. He looks forward to having neighbors again and the Jewell building preserved.

Rose Roose, 619 Maple, was appreciative and in support for the project to move forward and looks forward to the new neighborhood.

Debbie Neubecker, was appreciative of all the time involved for this project. She felt with all the nearby parks available including Kellogg park there is enough green space.

Mike Ferrantino, 48000 W. Ann Arbor Road, is part of the development team, he spoke about the past history of previous project proposals for this site that included a wraparound building with restaurants and retail. He also described his last project, the Starkweather apartments completed on time with no problems or complaints. He purchased the blue home on Maples street and will be donating an easement to the project and stated he will resolve the garbage/dumpster issue.

Board Discussion

Comm. Myslinski, commented that the development is beautiful with an outstanding proposal and will become a viable part of the Community. Comm. Myslinski stated the applicant has had opportunities to address the site issues differently, but proposed this submission, which is what this Commission is evaluating. Comm. Myslinski further explained the townhomes could be constructed with above grade garages with access that does not require public easements or property, etc. The commission has worked very hard to create a walkable Community based upon porches (that include incentives that if detached garages were built it gave the homeowner the chance to increase square footage on the property & maintain the historical character), this site could accommodate that type of development. The board is evaluating the entire site and has suggested solutions to the developer that would be a better fit.

Comm. Silvers, spoke about the preservation of a historical building and the architectural townhome design fitting the PUD & Urban Development requirements, but he has reservations regarding the site plan proportions which requires the City to provide an easement.

Comm. Kehoe, spoke about her concerns. The property is not land locked, there is no necessity to go thru another property to access yours, which limits the possibility of what could be developed down the road, after the parking lot. A parking lot is not in the master plan, to have a building on this property is what is in the master plan. Comm. Kehoe would like the access to the townhomes be on their own property.

Nick Moroz, City Commission Liaison, clarified there is an access agreement that will be finalized within the purchase agreement.

Discussion was had on the presented design and Ms. Elmiger suggested that one of the conditions for preliminary approval of this project be that the City Commission approves access easements from both Deer and Ann Arbor Trail to provide access for both Jewell-Blaich parking and the townhome lower level garages. If the City Commission cannot negotiate an agreement then the PUD agreement will be void. Mr. Buzuvis spoke about previous 2016 concept proposals that had similar access dynamics and anything built on that corner will need rear access to parking. Mr. Buzuvis explained that other similar access dynamics exist around town such as the Mayflower building which uses the alleyway (Fleet St.) for parking.

Comm. Myslinski stated that he does support in general terms the overall concept and development of the vacant property. He stated the developer choose to depress the garages that created a height issue, is creating an access issue and he could propose something else to eliminate some of the boards concerns of unknowns.

Comm. Kehoe, spoke about the 16-foot garage doors with 18-foot garages, which are not usable garages, you cannot open the vehicle doors when two cars are parked side-by-side.

Mike Ferrantino, explained there are two parking spaces also in front of the garages. He explained why the lots were shrunk to obtain more parking

Comm. Myslinski spoke about the decks not being elevated and are now patios which opens up the turning radius. He explained the board see solutions to site that do not require asking for an easement and does not commit the City residents to the cost of maintaining the facilities, we just want the best deal for the residents.

Comm. Hawthorne preferred this plan then the back/rear of detached, at-grade, garages being visible from Ann Arbor Tr./Kellogg Park area

Chair Sisolak, commented the concept is great & saving the Jewell building is a gem, but spoke about some of her concerns. There is not enough green space, there is a concrete 50-foot ramp between the parking lot and the townhomes with a small nine-foot space for some trees, but a lack of green space exists. The turning radius that does not work; that may be a safety issue and one of the Planning Commission's role is to protect the citizens.

Comm. Myslinski asked about emergency situations and their vehicles access and Mr. Buzuvis responded after speaking with the Fire Marshal and generally speaking of medical emergencies, regardless if it's on the Maple side or the Ann Arbor Trail side, the emergency vehicle apparatus will have access on Deer Street, Maple Street or will park in the parking lot.

There was discussion of the access points & greenspace issues along with the motion options. Mr. Gonzalez assured the Planning Commission that these issues will be resolved at final approvals & with the City Commission

A motion was made by Comm. Joy, supported by Comm. Offerman, to approve PUD 19-01, 587 W. Ann Arbor Trail, 686 Maple & 674 Maple, for Preliminary PUD Eligibility & Preliminary Site Plan, conditioned upon all of the CWA review comments are met, to mitigate the rear parking area, and all of the comments/issues discussed tonight.

Roll Call Vote Taken :

Ayes: Adams, Hawthorne, Joy, Myslinski, Offerman, Saraswat, Silvers, Sisolak

Nays: Kehoe

Motion Passes

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Comm. Silvers spoke about the form-based codes sub-committee meeting and prototyping their first example of Form-Based Code to be presented to John Buzuvis and Nick Moroz once the draft is completed. Then discussion at the Planning Commission level. Commissioner Silvers commented that form-based codes will bring the ordinances into the 21st Century, and are very simple and precise and prescribe what we do want as opposed to not allowing what we don't want.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, a motion was made by Comm. Myslinski, supported by Comm. Joy to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 PM.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY