

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS  
23600 Liberty Street  
Farmington, Michigan  
August 10, 2020

Chairperson Crutcher called the Meeting to order via Zoom remote technology at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 10, 2020.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Crutcher, Kmetzo, Majoros, Mantey, Perrot, Westendorf  
Absent: Waun  
A quorum of the Commission was present.

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Director Christiansen, Building Inspector Bowdell (arrived 7:08 p.m.), Recording Secretary Murphy, Brian Golden, Director of Media Services.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Westendorf, supported by Majoros, to approve the Agenda.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

A. July 13, 2020 minutes

MOTION by Perrot, seconded by Majoros, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

At the direction of the Chair, Agenda Item 5 was moved up to Agenda Item 4 to allow the Petitioner an opportunity to appear at the meeting.

**APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER TO PARKING COMMITTEE**

Chairperson Crutcher introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Director Christiansen stated as everyone is aware, the Planning Commission has members that serve in other capacities. For example, Mr. Crutcher, who is our Chair, does serve as the member from the Planning Commission on the Zoning Board of Appeals. We also have had various committees like the Capital Improvement Committee and that committee has had representatives of the City's various boards and commissions and Commissioner Majoros has served in that capacity as representative of the Planning Commission. And there are other committees and groups throughout the City that others get involved in which is a really good thing. There is also as

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structured through City Administration through the City Manager's office, a Planning Commission member, an appointed member that serves on the Downtown Farmington Parking Advisory Committee and Chairman Crutcher has served in that capacity as the liaison from the Planning Commission for the last three years and maybe even before that. In any event the term is a three-year term and Mr. Crutcher serving as Planning Commission liaison to the Downtown Farmington Parking Advisory Committee, his term just ended on June 30<sup>th</sup>. So this item is a consideration for reappointment, appointment for the next three-year term ending June 30, 2023 of a representative serving as a liaison from the Planning Commission to the downtown Farmington Parking Advisory Committee.

Crutcher stated in his experience on that committee, just to fill in, we are not making reports to the Planning Commission but we have been making recommendations to City Council pertaining to some of the requirements and rules and regulations for parking in the downtown area specifically and if you notice the timed parking that went from two to three hours and some of the additional parking spaces that were identified and marked around town around the downtown area, those are all things that came from recommendations from the Parking Advisory Committee. As moving forward, I've been on it for a few years, I'm also involved with some other things so if anyone would be interested in sitting in and taking my spot on that, I'd be okay with that if you have any interest. If not, I wouldn't have a problem continuing on with the Committee. So I guess our action now is if there are any volunteers who would like to come forward.

Commissioner Westendorf asked how often the committee meets and Christiansen replied that the Committee meets once a month as scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 o'clock in the City Hall Conference Room. They have not met though in the conference room since City Hall was closed as the COVID-19 restrictions came into place. And as we're still having virtual meetings, they would have virtual meetings as well if they are having meetings. They haven't had a meeting for a bit but I anticipate that they will but their scheduled meeting is the third Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Crutcher said he doesn't remember the make-up of the meeting but there's also opportunity for residents to sit on our committee meetings as well, not only to attend the meeting but I think there was a position for a community member as well.

Christiansen stated all meetings are open to the public and that meeting is as well.

Perrot asked Crutcher if he was interested in taking another tour of duty by all means, but I'll volunteer just to represent the Planning Commission.

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Crutcher said he's happy to continue if you'd like to not volunteer to take over, if you want to maybe co-participate so that we don't have to actually go to every meeting, we can alternate meetings if that's something that's of benefit.

Christiansen replied that's up to the Commission, whatever you choose to do. I did mention the other boards and commissions and other service that some of the Commission members are on but it's fully up to the Commission of what you want to do. The only thing I would say about a co-participant, you might not be meeting every month. I think that's nice sometimes and this is just my comment to the Commission: it's nice to get involved and maybe get kind of a rhythm going where you're involved and you're involved on a routine basis and so you stay engaged and then you're able to represent and then report back or whatever you do serving in that capacity.

Crutcher said then it probably would be better if somebody stepped in and do it. I've been involved I think from the beginning and I think I may be one of two members that have been on it since the beginning since there has been some turnover of the members.

Majoros said that he knows that we all have a lot of responsibility but with parking, this is one of those things that having a little bit of history and experience probably matters because as you mentioned there's a lot of work there, especially if there's turnover and new people having someone with some experience seems appropriate if you're willing to maintain that responsibility. But then we have a capable member in the bullpen there so if we need someone that Geoff can kind of stay close if he needs to step in and participate in any meeting you can't make, that seems appropriate.

Crutcher agreed to continue in the liaison position and Perrot said as long as the language in the City Charter allows, I'm guessing it's pretty broad when it comes to participation. Crutcher told Perrot he can always attend the meetings whenever he wants just as a resident and I do believe there is a position on the Committee as a resident, it's mostly business owners that are part of it but I think there is a resident member as well.

Christiansen replied he thinks that's right but he would have to confirm that with the City Manager to see what the current membership is in terms of whose sitting in which particular seat and whom they represent. But at least for tonight what you're being asked to do is confirm a Planning Commission liaison, one member, for the next three years, but I can certainly follow-up and get you a response to that resident seat.

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MOTION by Majoros, supported by Perrot, to move to approve the reappointment of Ken Crutcher as liaison from the Planning Commission to the Parking Advisory Committee, for a three-year term ending June 30, 2023.

Motion carried, all ayes.

### **SITE PLAN REVIEW – WORLD WIDE CENTER – 34701-34801 GRAND RIVER**

Chairperson Crutcher asked if the Applicant had appeared and Christiansen replied he has not but it's appropriate to move forward with this item.

Christiansen said this is an application that has been formalized and plans then accompany a staff report so you are in a position to move forward with item if you so choose.

Christiansen stated this item is a site plan review for the installation and use of exterior building façade lighting at the World Wide Center located at 34701-34801 Grand River Avenue. The Applicant has submitted a site plan and support materials in order to install an illuminated LED light band which is accent lighting along portions of the top of the existing perimeter of the existing commercial building at World Wide Center. The existing commercial site is zoned C-2, Community Commercial. Exterior lighting for nonresidential uses is subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission in accordance with the requirements of Section 35-48 of the Zoning Ordinance. What you have attached with your staff packet and staff report tonight is a copy of Section 35-48 of the Zoning Ordinance, and again, those are the requirements for exterior lighting for nonresidential uses and also some support materials, the application, there's an aerial photograph and there are some graphics related to the center. He asked Mr. Golden to put the packet on the screen.

Christiansen stated this is exterior lighting, Section 35-48, and this talks about various elements of exterior lighting on properties, intensity, types of fixtures for nonresidential, nonsingle family uses, and it goes on, it talks about lighting in the CBD, it talks about pole height, location of poles, etc. Subsection (f) talks about luminous tube, neon exposed bulb lighting for nonsingle family residential uses. And what it indicates that anything that is proposed on the exterior intended is prohibited, however the Planning Commission may approve illuminated architectural bands when the bands will enhance the appearance of the building. That is what is being requested this evening of you. So if we move forward, this is the aerial photo for the World Wide Center, and as we move it around a little bit, that's a good orientation there, Grand River Avenue is to the top of this graphic, you then see the World Wide Center outlined in red, you see the parking lot

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for the World Wide Center and you see the building which spans east to west along the south side of the center site. If you go to the next graphic, this is actually the application and we can go through this, it's just what's required, it's been submitted so we'll move forward from here. This is that same orientation as you just saw, the aerial photo. So what this is, this is the site plan for the World Wide Center that the Planning Commission considered back in October of 2018 for the Word Wide Center's existing building façade modifications, site improvements and for the new Tropical Smoothie. So this is the site plan that was approved by the Planning Commission in October of 2018 used for reference this evening that is current. It shows the existing building, it shows the proposed Tropical Smoothie, it shows Grand River, the parking lot, you'll see the landscaped areas, you'll see new light poles that are going to be on the island, you'll even see a note on the building which is existing building to the left, remove existing lighting on the front poles and the flood lighting on the front façade. So that existing lighting, and it's been there for quite a long period of time, is all being removed. Those existing poles are being replaced with new ones. Those flood lights that were on the building are removed. The façade improvements as approved by the Planning Commission and now is approved through the building permit process, has been implemented. If you've had an opportunity to look at the center recently, those improvements are nearing completion. And in nearing completion, what the Applicant is requesting is in order for them then to enhance the façade of the building and also because this other lighting is being removed and I just referenced that note in the plan that you approved, they're asking for your consideration and approval of accent lighting in place of what they removed to highlight the building and also the architecture that you've reviewed and approved and has been permitted and constructed and nearing completion. So, in light of that, if we could move on to the next graphic. This is the façade improvement remodeling plan that was part of the October 2018 site plan that you approved. And what you'll see and you'll recall and it's represented today, there are various elevations on the building to the façade, so it's not a straight across façade. There are some high points or peaks that have various materials, trim materials, metal flashing up on the roof parapet, if you will, that goes from east to west. And on those portions and we're going to see the façade as we go forward to the next graphic, the final version that then has the permit on the façade and that's this here, and these yellow highlighted areas which are the high points on the property. So in knowing the center as you do, if we go from east to west the first use is the existing Chinese Mercantile, that has a high roofline and they're proposing the illuminated band behind and underneath, it's a shadow effect lighting. So it's not an exposed neon tubing, it's a shadow effect lighting and we'll see an example here, and that's across this unit's upper roofline. If you west, the next unit and next tenant space is Tweeny's and you see that represented here in yellow. So that's the next one that will have the light band up underneath the peak of the roof. Then we move along the second line here to the salon and the laundry and Namaste' Flavors and across that entire grouping of units there, and that's really about the middle of the center. It's proposed, going down to the bottom

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of the next one, you'll see that continues and goes along and then finally the last tenant space is the O'Reilly Auto Parts tenant space. So, five locations, it's not the entire length, it's on the high points, it's intended to illuminate the architecture, accent the architecture.

For reference, you might recall that the Commission considered somewhat of a similar proposal back in October of 2018 and that was for Flagstar Bank on the northeast corner of Grand River and Orchard Lake Road. And you may recall that the Commission was requested via site plan application to consider and to approve illuminated sign bands or an illuminated sign band, a shadow sign band, so behind that band, for Flagstar Bank. You approved it and it was constructed and it exists today. And so if you get a chance, if you've looked at it, I would say that your approval and the plans, the permits issued and the construction resulted in a very attractive highlight element to Flagstar Bank. Again, that is exactly what's being requested here.

So if we move on, these additional graphics, the Petitioner is not necessarily here tonight to get into these, these are all part of the plan package. This deals with illumination on the entire site and what this is here for is to show you what's going to be in the parking lot, and I think you can imagine where you see those circular elements on this illumination graphic, this photometric graphic, those are where the light poles are going to be. Those are where the light fixtures as part of the site. And then you can see kind of a wash on the building, that's a little bit like what eventually the wall illumination of the building is going to be, a little bit of sconces or down low elevation, and then will be on that building. There's a lot of calculations and metrics that are shown, particularly the previous graphic, that relate then to this photometric drawing.

In any event, all of this together represents a compliant illumination plan for the shopping center site and to include the elements that are being proposed for your consideration and action this evening and that is the architectural back lighting on the roofline of the building. So if we keep going, so again, that's the illumination plan, that shows the entire site. Most of the higher level illumination is concentrated to the building and less as you get out to Grand River. In any event you know through your experience that all lighting on nonresidential properties must be focused on the site and must be oriented towards the site and cannot spill over into the adjacent areas. That's one of the concerns with the center here. So you may recall there was some concern by some of the adjacent neighbors back in 2018, that the existing flood lighting and the center lighting really needed to be addressed and that's what's been done here, through this planning, through your action of this planning and it still continues with what's being proposed this evening.

So if we move to the next graphic then after this one, this really is what is reflected on representing what the final appearance, Planet Fitness is not a user in the center, but

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this is representative of what has been before by the I believe the property owner, Barbat Holdings, in other facilities and certainly by API, their engineers and contractors. And that's represented in these graphics. So what you really see is under the top of the roofline parapet illumination band that is focused on the building that washes the building and it highlights or accents the architectural features. And through their application and these materials, they're requesting your consideration, review and approval this evening, Mr. Chair.

Chairperson Crutcher asked if the out building would be requesting the same thing and Christiansen replied not at this stage, that's a separate plan, that's a separate element, and we have not been made aware that they're looking to do anything like that with that building at this point. And Mr. Bowdell is here this evening and I don't think he's seen anything through construction plans for that if I'm correct.

Majoros stated the first question he has is the photometric plan provides this, I think, but as you see in the Planet Fitness example, again, I know it's not our center, will there be that kind of sconce lighting that will kind of be used as demarcation for an individual business so the site will have that as well in addition to the light and Christiansen replied yes. The second question he has is the samples they're seeing of Planet Fitness are almost worm's eye view kind of looking up, is the intention that the light would be is it disguised by the flashing or if you were standing 15-feet out, would you ever see that neon bulb or that neon tube or you're really just seeing the effect of the light; in other words, is it exposed light or is concealed by a flashing or whatever.

Christiansen responded like the Flagstar Bank it is back lighting so if you were to pull back your 15-feet as you're referring to, no, and it's not neon and it's not exposed neon, it's actually under canopy or under parapet LED.

Majoros said his third question is because with LED, you can put any color in there, is this going to be the appropriate shade of light, like there's no all of a sudden it turns into a disco, we've got orange lights, what have you.

Christiansen replied it is his understanding it is this color scheme right here, it is intended again to highlight, to accent, it's this color scheme to the best of my knowledge. You might recall Flagstar Bank is actually behind a red band so it has that red look and that's what is intended here.

Perrot asked concerning the side of the Chinese Merchant, the side of that building that runs down Whitaker, does this lighting plan wrap around that east side of the complex, so would any of the lighting be parallel with Whitaker Road and Christiansen replied no. Perrot said we've talked this is the past, that there's concern about the residents that are right at that northern end of Whitaker.

Christiansen replied that's a great question and that you might recall that with the Flagstar you actually limited that illumination band on Flagstar to be oriented only on those sides of the building that were facing nonresidential property. So you didn't allow it to wrap around on the north side.

Crutcher then stated to the west of this building that's a residential development as well, isn't it, and Christiansen replied yes, that's Chatham Hill Apartments. Crutcher then said per this drawing it looks like this lighting does not extend all the way to the far west end of the building so it shouldn't wrap around on that corner either and Christiansen replied

that's correct. Christiansen went on to state that O'Reilly Auto Parts is the western most unit and it's façade and the roofline extends up, it doesn't run the full span, it ends before it gets to the west end of the building and that lighting terminates there as well, so you still have a building without lighting actually going to the west.

Perrot stated O'Reilly's covered their retail portion of it and then that western most chunk, one-third is basically their warehouse or backroom, so that's not illuminated.

Crutcher then asked so your intent is that you're not going to see the light source only the light on the face of the building and Christiansen replied that's correct.

Westendorf asked Golden to scroll down to the first sample image and stated he thinks the first sample image shows that the band is very visible right there in the middle of that overhang, that was his concern as well. From this it looks like that band will be very visible.

Christiansen replied it isn't, if you back off it and where they're going to drape it down, that's up underneath and their plans are for all that to be recessed and up underneath and not visible. And like Commissioner Majoros said, here we're standing down underneath it, if we were to back off from the roadway, from the perimeters, from the exterior, you wouldn't see it.

Crutcher said that may be their intent but he stated it would be nice to see what their actual detail looks like or take their word that it's not going to be.

Christiansen replied or you can condition it so that it's not exposed in any way.

Westendorf said that was his concern as well, this sample doesn't convey what you're describing and Christiansen said he thinks it does if you back off that twenty or thirty feet but when you're right up on it underneath, you're exactly correct but I think you can



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do this through the conditioning. And again, they're not here for me to tell that to you, so I can only tell you that can condition any action to achieve your desired issues or conditions based on your concerns for sure.

Crutcher stated he would feel more comfortable having a little better illustration of what they're planning, I understand what their intent is, but when you have the detail of the building itself because what they're showing right now is more of a soffit thing, not a hidden.

Christiansen replied if you go back to the other graphic, you can find that represented. Again, these are just examples that they gave. I think again you're backed off here, you

don't see the tubing as much as you see the illumination in this one but this is just the example they gave us. But let's go back up to the architectural drawing, again you'll find references and my suggestion would be if you're inclined to look favorably on this because where they're at in the project right now, this is really their finish element, you would look to achieve whatever your concerns are through conditions, making sure there is no exposure, if you were so inclined, and make that a condition of any action if you're supportive of this and allow staff then through the building permit process and the final plans to follow your condition.

Crutcher stated in this drawing it doesn't look like that cornice at the top is deep enough to recess the light appropriately so I think it would be exposed. So without getting that section detail, I don't see how they're going to do that. I think though that their finish work and how they're proposing to have that encapsulated, and again, you're looking at metal, you're looking at support, you're looking at their band, you know I can't answer that for you, if they're going to recess it and I don't have a detail more than what I have here or on plan to show but again, Mr. Bowdell is here and all of our dialogue with them was no exposure and it recessed so it was visible other than being backlit or accent light so it was not to be exposed, And again, my suggestion to you would be to make that a condition of any action.

Crutcher said his concern is when you say not exposed, the way this is presented it gives the option of saying, the argument, that it's not exposed beyond a certain number of feet away from the building or as opposed to not exposed at all, meaning if you stand like some of the photographs. Right now in the photograph if you get up close enough you're going to see the light or you get far enough away you won't see the light. So, do we want to be more explicit in our description or can they just be more explicit in their detail?

Christiansen replied he thinks that at this stage would be based upon your concerns is that you get specific with your conditions. Right now it's going to be underneath and

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behind, that's their plan, again, this is a representation, it is not specifically what their site finality is going to be, but that's up to you. If you don't feel you can do that without something else in front of you, you can certainly look to ask them for something more. But I think you can achieve the same thing by imposing conditions that we can make sure through the permit process that that's the case. If it wouldn't be, it wouldn't get approved and it wouldn't be activated.

Crutcher asked Building Inspector Bowdell if there's anything he'd like to add

Bowdell naturally he's been on the scaffold, he's seen this detail and there is very little room between the bottom of a fascia and what I'll call the soffit. There's just enough there to put this LED, I hate to call it a strip because it's not that, up there. I think the idea is that when you're out on Grand River you're not going to see this looking straight on. But if you get up close to that building and you look up, there's no other choice but to see it because in a worm's eye view you're going to see that thing. But the idea in the architect's mind was that when it would shine down on the façade and highlight the crowns of that building. But to be completely hidden from view from a worm's eye view at this stage I think would be impossible.

Crutcher said where we sit with the interpretation of not being visible, is that from Grand River or not being visible from the walk right in front of the building or somewhere in between? And I just put it out there if somebody wants to make a motion, we want to be clear that that's what our intent is and when we say not visible at all or not visible beyond a certain point.

Bowdell stated he believes their intent is to just wash the front of the building and not have light shining out toward Grand River but straight down on their façade is their intent and like I say if they had lights facing forward it would detract and I don't think that's their intent, they want it to wash the front of the building.

Christiansen said it's not a dissimilar look, like he said, that Flagstar has. Not completely exactly the same, it's a little bit of a different element because it's not a peak, it's a band, but it's the same thing. And again if you go up to Flagstar, too, you walk up to that building, I think you refer to it as a worm's eye view, you're going to see the lighting. But the intent

for the majority of the exposure is to have a wash and not a visible tube unless you're right on it. And the other thing about this, is that it doesn't span the whole building, it only is on the highlighted portions. The other lighting which used to be flood lighting on the building up at the top is totally gone and now it's just the wall sconces on the side of the building and the new parking lot pole lighting as well as their illuminated sign.

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MOTION by Majoros, supported by Perrot, that we approve the site plan review for the World Wide Center, 34701-34801 Grand River Avenue, for the installation and use of exterior building façade lighting pursuant to site plan approval by City staff as well as the Applicant's agreement to minimize the visibility of the lighting element from direct consumer access or foot traffic, with the conditions that the lighting is installed with the specifications in the site plan submitted and to the approved plans for the center that were approved by the Planning Commission in October of 2018 for the shopping center building façade improvements.

Motion carried, 5-1 (Westendorf)

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None heard.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Chairperson Crutcher asked for an update on the World Wide Center and how close to completion they were so they could move on to the outbuilding and Director Christiansen gave an update on their progress.

Director Christiansen gave a summary of the ongoing projects and anticipated projects in the City.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Majoros, supported by Perrot, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary