

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
Farmington Public Library, 23550 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
October 13, 2014

Chairperson Bowman called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Farmington Public Library, 23550 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Present: Bowman, Buyers, Chiara, Crutcher, Gronbach, Majoros

Absent: Babcock

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: City Manager Pastue, Director Christiansen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the agenda as submitted.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes of Regular Meeting – August 11, 2014

Gronbach noted at the bottom of page 3 there appears to be a sentence missing.
The recording secretary noted the correction and stated she would amend the minutes.

MOTION by Chiara, seconded by Buyers, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.
Motion carried, all ayes.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – EXXON MOBIL SERVICE STATION, 32410 GRAND RIVER AVENUE

Chairperson Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Director Christiansen indicated this was the second time this item was before the Planning Commission. He stated at the September 8th meeting the site plan was reviewed as well as the upgrades for 32410 Grand River and that after the presentation and review the request was tabled until the October meeting so the Applicant could provide the missing materials.

He stated that the agenda item is back before the Commission tonight with a revised site plan showing the parking lot and landscape improvements and that the Applicant has submitted color renderings of façade improvements.

Christiansen went over the plans on the overhead showing the revised site plan. He stated the dumpster has a new location with an enclosure for accessibility and also screening. He indicated that he and Building Inspector Koncsol had visited the site and that there will be eleven parking spaces provided, not eighteen as originally planned. He stated that there are changes in the landscape plan along Grand River off of Power Road to the north, the asphalt there is going to be removed and that will be re-sodded.

He went over the interior modifications indicating the Applicant wants to expand the small vestibule and take two of the bays and convert that area to a C-store, leaving the two west bays for service. The exterior façade will be renovated as well as the existing canopy and a picture of the proposed canopy was presented and a new ground sign will be located on the corner at the landscaped area which was shown to the Commission.

The Commissioners were provided with a picture of the stone that will be utilized along the base of the façade.

Chairperson Bowman thanked the Applicant for addressing the issues brought up at the prior Planning Commission Meeting and opened the floor up for questions from the Commissioners.

Majoros raised questions about the existence of oil on the site and if the dumpster would be utilized for its removal and Christiansen responded that it is all self-contained and dealt with environmentally.

Majoros also inquired about the existence of underground storage tanks and if anything being proposed on this site is inconsistent with the station across the street and Christiansen responded in the negative.

Crutcher asked the Applicant how many overhead doors there would be and Mr. El-Baba stated three at the end and one bay for the store and further discussion was held.

Buyers stated on the modified floor plan it indicates a window at the cooler there the third bay door was and El-Baba responded in the affirmative.

Gronbach inquired about the color of the stone and El-Baba responded that the cultured stone has a purple line in it and the upper colors would be light beige and light brown.

Gronbach commented that he felt the red brick face for the monument sign would look a lot better if cultured stone was used and El-Baba responded that he can ask the sign contractor to match the color and Gronbach indicated he should match material, too.

Buyers stated that the initial floor plan had two bay doors and El-Baba responded that after the first meeting, the Applicant reduced it to one bay door instead.

Buyers asked staff in light of issues raised about parking of vehicles and duration of same, if the Petitioner had proposed anything to alleviate those concerns and Christiansen responded that that is an operational issue and that the Codes and Ordinances of the City would deal with that aspect.

Buyers then inquired about the sod on the eastern part of the site and how far it would extend and Christiansen referred him to the aerial photo of the site.

Motion by Majoros, supported by Crutcher, to approve the site plan proposed at the Exxon Mobil Service Station, 32410 Grand River Avenue, with the condition that the revised floor plan represent the three doors as opposed to the two depicted, and to have cultured stone on the monument sign match the building.

Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC HEARING – PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PRELIMINARY PLAN AND PUD AGREEMENT – RIVEWALK II

Chairperson Bowman introduced this agenda item and stated it had been before the Planning Commission before and turned it over to staff. She explained the process of the Public Hearing.

Christiansen stated this is the time for the Public Hearing scheduled for the proposed redevelopment of the Flanders School site. He stated at the June 9th Planning Commission Meeting, the Commission held a Pre-application Conference, discussion and review with the Applicant on the proposed PUD concept plan for the Flanders site. The Public Hearing that was scheduled for July 14th was postponed and the Applicant is now before the Commission with a new site plan, utility plan, a parallel site plan, a boundary and topographic survey of the site and a landscape planting plan and landscape notes and details. An aerial photo of the site was also shown on the screen.

Brad Strader, from LSL Planning, was present to go over his report of October 7, 2014 which he was asked to prepare in response to the Riverwalk II PUD Agreement. He stated the PUD is a provision in the Zoning Ordinance that says there can be some flexibility in terms of setbacks and other items if the proposed project brings three or more benefits to the City, i.e. better architecture, removing nuisances, etc., in exchange for that flexibility.

He stated the proposal is for 33 single family lots and one of the key provisions that the City was looking for ways to preserve open space for parkland, seeing that the former school site had a playground which was utilized by the neighborhood, so the Petitioner is proposing a 2.26 acre park on the southeast corner.

He indicated that the project has met two of the three criterion; that is the redevelopment of a gray field or brownfield or former obsolete site, another criterion met is they are providing open space.

He went over other criterion that may be looked at as a benefit, including higher quality architecture, over and above what the City requires, extensive landscaping, sustainable design of the building or the site, i.e., low impact storm water design along the park that is more natural, and the fourth one being to make the site very walkable, by including a pathway from Clark Street to provide access so park can be used by neighborhood.

He discussed that in looking at the plan in detail, the placement of buildings and setbacks imply a better quality architecture being utilized. He summarized it by saying that it is a fairly straightforward project.

Chairperson Bowman opened the floor up for questions by the Commissioners.

Chiara inquired if the water level is still an issue and asked what material the walk-throughs would be as far as maintenance was concerned.

The Applicants were invited to come forward. Stuart Michaelson, partner Sam Harb and Evan Friess, engineer were present.

Michaelson gave a history of the Riverwalk project and now continuing on with Riverwalk II. He stated the homes will feature high end architecture and that they have a good relationship with all communities they have built in, having done four in Farmington Hills.

Harb addressed the issue of the walkway and architecture.

Michaelson responded to the issue of the high water table by indicating that the houses will be built in areas where there is not a high water table.

Majoros asked if they will be fundamentally modifying topography, or raising grade level of new houses higher than surrounding and Harb responded there will be minor modifications, maybe a foot or so.

Christiansen pointed out that the utility plan provided calls for rear yard storm water management system and has to go through the approval and permit process from the City.

Gronbach asked Administration if City was satisfied with the revised park layout plan and comfortable with being able to maintain the larger park area.

Christiansen responded by stating the four step process the project must go through and stated that Council will address that issue when it gets there.

Crutcher asked if there would be samples provided of the architectural character and Christiansen responded that they are included in the project portfolio.

Chiara inquired if parking was required for a park of this size and Christiansen responded that is up to the City, and seeing that this is a neighborhood park, parking would be in front of homes and on street parking.

Buyers stated for full disclosure that his property is proximate to this property and that he had discussed it with Attorney Schultz as far as conflict of interest and they concurred that it did not pose a prohibitive conflict of interest problem.

He then asked the Applicants if the modified plan for the park that was done due to high water conditions and water table problems prohibited the placement of the park towards the southwest and Harb replied in the affirmative. He expressed concern with the location of Lots 32 and 33 as the park has been sort of a magnet for bad activities since the school closed down, with graffiti and large fireworks being lit off and police having been called to the site, and felt it would prohibit access to the park and suggested those lots be moved to the southeast portion of the site and provide a more open park like setting.

Bowman explained the rules of the Public Hearing to the audience.

PUBLIC HEARING

Tim Wardle, who lives on Meadowlark and Flanders, asked why the residents in Farmington received Notice of Public Hearing and those that live on Whitlock bordering the property did not. He then inquired as to the completion time of the Riverwalk I project.

Michael Schantz, 21326 Whitlock, asked Strader what some of the minuses might be on the project since he discussed the pluses and he indicated they had asked for shorter front yard setbacks which the City is considering changing the requirement to 15, so that could be considered a modification. He then raised a question about the water issue and further discussion was held. He also discussed the details of the sidewalk.

Strader explained that on the final site plan, engineering details will be incorporated into it.

Garrett Easter, 21265 Whitlock, raised questions about the park area and what it is intended to be. He then inquired if a ball diamond was being considered and Michaelson responded that the park will be donated to the City and they will make that determination. He then asked for price range of the homes in the Riverwalk II and the Applicants responded from the low 200's to the high end of \$250,000.

Steve Bombeck, 21144 Robinwood Street, expressed his appreciation to the developers for proportioning the area for the park. He then asked when construction would start and Harb responded if things go well, they would start this winter and perhaps put up a

model. He then asked if the park will be accessible during construction and Michaelson responded the new park area will be accessible during construction.

Michael Dunnan, 21193 Whitlock, inquired if the trees would be left on the property and Harb responded there is one in poor condition that will come down. He stated he liked the plans.

Christiansen pointed out on the landscape plan that there is a tree inventory list which identifies the trees, their size, their condition, and whether they are going to be removed.

Susan Prism, 21210 Robinwood, raised a question on the run off. She asked if the proposed homes were single family and Bowman responded in the affirmative. The different types of proposed homes were detailed by Michaelson. Strader indicated a booklet with the different elevations is available to look at.

Bowman thanked the audience for their participation.

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Majoros, to close the Public Hearing.
Motion carried, all ayes.

(PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED)

Chiara asked the Applicants about the projects they developed in Farmington Hills and he welcomed them to Farmington.

Majoros inquired about the landscaping between the existing homes and new homes and Michaelson responded it would be up to each individual homeowner.

MOTION by Gronbach, seconded by Chiara, that the Planning Commission forward the PUD Plan for the Riverwalk II Development to City Council for their review, incorporating the review letters by LSL and OHM and the Draft Development Agreement that was provided by the City Attorney.
Motion carried 5 – 1 (Buyers).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

None heard.

STAFF COMMENTS

Christiansen updated the many projects going on in the City and reminded the Commissioners that they will be back before the Planning Commission after they move through City Council.

Buyers inquired about the opening of the Farmington Brewery and further discussion was held.

Discussion was held on Commissioner Babcock's absence.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Majoros, seconded by Buyers, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary