

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
July 11, 2022

Chairperson Majoros called the meeting to order in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 11, 2022.

ROLL CALL

Present: Crutcher, Kmetzo, Majoros, Mantey, Perrot, Waun, Westendorf
Absent: None
A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Kevin Christiansen; Recording Secretary Bonnie Murphy, Brian Golden, Director of Media Services; Brian Belesky, Audiovisual Specialist.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Perrot, to approve the agenda.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

A. June 13, 2022 Minutes

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

SITE PLAN AMENDMENT/FAÇADE MODIFICATION – HEIGHTS BREWERY, 23621 FARMINGTON ROAD

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

Director Christiansen stated that the City has been working with a new business owner, Heights Brewery, They are intending to locate and repurpose in order to do so, the former Page's Restaurant property and they are proposing and are submitting a site plan application for proposed changes and improvements and upgrades to the existing building and to the existing site. The proposed changes and you have with your staff packet a copy of that site plan application as well as the site plan as proposed, include exterior changes to the existing building façade as well as outdoor seating. The building is located in the Central Business District and requires review and approval by the Planning Commission for the changes as proposed. No changes regarding building dimensions or other site improvements are proposed, so the existing building, the existing site, is intended to remain the same, the building is intended to remain, but what is being proposed are some façade modifications, upgrades, enhancements as well as outdoor

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seating. The Downtown Development Authority Design Committee reviewed and recommended approval of the submitted site plan the proposed changes and upgrade to the existing building and site as well as the outdoor seating at their June 30th meeting and there's a copy of those minutes attached with your staff packet. Also attached for your review and consideration as I indicated is a copy of the site plan application and the proposed site plan submitted by the Applicant, the modifications and improvements then are included with that plan packet and the Applicants are here this evening in order to present the site plan application to you. I'll go ahead and go to the next page and you have this in your packet and it will be up on screen, these are the draft minutes from the DDA Design Committee review of June 30th and if you've had a chance to go through these minutes, what was presented then was the changes and again you see these line by line they include some façade modifications, there's some new awnings, there's window changes, there's door changes, there's lighting, there's signage changes, there's also then the proposed outdoor seating area as shown and some other enhancements. I don't want to steal the thunder from the Applicant, so I'll let the Applicant present that and again we have other site plan materials here to be provided up on screen when they make their presentation. Again, this is a façade modification to the existing building, outdoor seating as proposed, the other elements that are really impacted here are the Farmington Road Streetscape is certainly taken into consideration with what's being proposed, for the outdoor seating they've had to take that into consideration, you'll hear about that in terms of the configuration, and where it's to be located, the types of tables and chairs, I believe the Applicant has the materials regarding the tables and chairs to share with you this evening. Also, too, with outdoor seating where there's table service and there is alcohol involved so that's what this will also include, so any area that services, table service where alcohol, food and beverage is provided in this case, requires the appropriate permits from the community and they're working through that right now, so that's required as well. And then as far as other items, the DDA is working with the Applicants on some façade resources, potentially a grant program, I know they're working through that right now and that's also in the minutes here. So you have all that provided to you and with that, Mr. Chairman, you did ask about next steps, again, this is site plan amendment to the existing building, so façade improvements and for outdoor seating, so it requires your review and consideration, your consideration of the recommendation from the DDA Design Committee and your action on the site plan application and material provided and submitted.

Chairperson Majoros invited the Applicant to the podium.

Shawn MacDonnell and Ryan Kavanagh came to the podium. She stated that Jacob from Design will go over everything in detail. She stated she and her husband have lived in the area for five years now and absolutely fell in love with downtown Farmington. My husband has been a home brewer for many years and he can tell you about that, but between the two of us, we both have 17 years of management at Costco and we got to

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the point where we decided we want to take all that knowledge and bring it to this community and leave something for our kids.

Ryan stated he has been a home brewer for 10 plus years and also have experience working at other breweries like Draft Horse and Dragon Weed, so I've worked at those and I've wanted to branch out and open my own brewery and no better place than this beautiful city here. We've lived here for five years now and my sister and her husband have lived here almost fifteen years and it's just an awesome community to be a part of and everything we do for the brewery we want to be local. So, we're trying to get local breads to go along with our menu that we have, we want to do certain things with the Farmer's Market to bring in specials for the weekend, and then we just want to include the Cheese Lady for mac and cheese and just make it a community based place where everyone can go hey, they tie everything together. Even our entertainment, we're trying to get with Dearborn Music to do record spin night, things like that, so we'll really try to get everything together. We talked to the Loft about working for tailgating events and so on and so forth because that's one of the thing they've always wanted to do as some kind of big tailgate events and we said Dennis Page used to be the king of tailgates so we'll continue that., so we're going to. Other than that our menu we want it to be completely gluten free because there's a lot of food allergies out there, Shawn has celiac so in order for her to eat at our establishment, it's all going to have to be gluten free. And we're also going to have gluten free beers that are variants of our beers on tap, beer, wine and cider, so a wide variety.

Jacob Bonacorsi, Architect, came to the podium. He stated when we first started working with Shawn and Ryan they challenged us with three adjectives they wanted us to keep in mind with this design, those being delicious, decadent and local. So our job was to translate those into the realm of architecture and the way that we did this is the delicious part is the foundation for this brewery because they're using new and old styles to find flavors that everybody is going to crave and bring them back. And decadent refers to architecture and design in specific, feeding the visual hunger with the design aspects that are included in this project. And as Ryan mentioned the local is with the changing menu and seasonal options going with the Farmer's Market and the Cheese Lady and those are opportunities in Farmington. Starting with the façade improvements, the existing fabric awnings are going to be replaced with metal perforated awnings that will be backlit, the existing brick will be able to shine through the details so you can see the details of both the brick and awning. And the new lighting and signage is to advertise the inviting nature of the project and also to make it known that they are open to everybody. The larger windows in the front façade are going to be able to see inside the brewery, see what's going on and also connect the interior with the exterior with the outdoor seating and with those taller awnings and taller windows it's going to potentially heighten the brewery. The outdoor seating is going to be able to sit twelve seats, six two tops and this is all due to the Farmington Road project, because it's going to allow for a 5-foot seating

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area, 5-foot sidewalk and 5-foot landscaping, so we allow them to do this as well. There are samples of material and the furniture proposed for the exterior. On the other side of the front façade, the brew house, there will be a glass overhead door to allow people to see inside the brew house and the process of the brewing from the exterior as well as from the large glass wall on the interior and then that is also going to allow for the loading that's going to occur every two to three weeks roughly. In addition to the front façade, the rear façade will be undergoing some improvements, there will be paint work on the awnings on the trim as well as new signage. The existing kitchen rear door will be extended for deliveries. On the interior there's going to be a lot of different changes, updates as they said before, nothing is going to be changed dimensionally, just a complete renovation to further connect the outside to the inside with new materials and lighting and bring in some different local aspects to that interior space. Samples of the actual awning material and seating material for the outdoor chairs from Grand Rapids Chairs were passed around. Rail details were also provided.

Majoros thanked the presenters and opened up the floor for comments from the Commissioners. He then asked Christiansen timing wise with the streetscape completion and Christiansen replied this is the first engagement the City has had with the Applicant and we're very pleased to have that opportunity but the site plan that has been submitted and what you're considering this evening is really the first step. The exterior elements that they're looking to achieve and that includes the outdoor seating. Separating them, if you look at the floor plan, the repurpose on the inside, that's all done through construction plans and permits and that's done administratively through our Economic and Community Development Department. It can commence at any time as plans are prepared and they are submitted and then we move forward with that process. As far as the exterior work, subsequent to action by the Planning Commission, if you are supportive of what is being presented to you in the site plan submitted, then that will move forward through a construction plan phase and could be together with the interior modifications and/or separate and is done as well whenever it is submitted and moved forward with. First the outdoor seating, you mentioned the Streetscape, the Streetscape construction has commenced recently, the road closure in order to achieve that is going to last throughout the fall time, it's hopeful that that project moves forward as quick as possible but it's necessary and gets completed so that it is then in place for next season in 2023. We would then look to see the outdoor seating for Heights Brewery if approved in place. They have a couple things they have to do again, with table service, with alcohol, they have to go through Public Safety, they have to go through City Council and put all that into place, coordinating with the DDA, Public Safety and Council, that then and also, too, there's a couple things that have to be done, the Liquor Control Commission is involved with that, and on the inside of the restaurant there's Oakland County and the Health Department and some of that, so all of these things mesh together and I'll turn it back over to you, Mr. Chair, and any questions you might have. I would say that if we're working with Heights and they're doing their interior modifications and all that's being done and then when

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Streetscape is done and all of the things that need to be achieved for operation inside and outdoor seating, it's probably a good winter, post winter, spring of 2023 with everything if all goes well. I'll turn it back over to you, that's how I see it right now.

Majoros stated that's what it sounds like, I just wanted to ensure if there' was any parallel work on Streetscape and exterior but it sounds like the Streetscape is going to be done perhaps and maybe some concurrent work, is that what you're thinking, you're proposing? I'm sure business-wise you look at it and say boy, it's tough to open in January, would be my guess, I don't know, I'm not a businessman.

Shawn MacDonnell replied if we open in January, we're fine, we have a following of employees from Costco so we'll be fine.

Chairperson Majoros opened the floor for comments and/or questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Kmetzo thanked the Petitioner for choosing the City of Farmington .

Majoros asked Christiansen when he referenced the old Page's Classic Car Show in years gone by that has moved down the way, Kevin, can you just speak of usage of the back lot, who owns that lot, that's one. And number two, with the Streetscape project and perhaps this isn't finalized yet but I don't know the name of the little one way street there or cut-thru is now, is there anything in the plans for that parking in that little side area because with Syndicate and the things that you've referenced there's a very natural, you're just that little office away from hanging out right there; can you speak to us about those two areas because you've got Heights Brewing proper and then you've got very near adjacent utilization for that.

Christiansen replied the parking lot that is adjacent to the west side of Page's and those uses in the attached building configuration there, that is a municipal parking lot. So, those businesses from Nina's Massage & Therapy all the way down to the former Joe's Headquarters which is now Jill's Pharmacy, they do not have their own parking, their parking is facilitated, provided by that municipal parking lot and other parking throughout the City but that is what we have in our downtown, you know, parking is something if you have an opportunity and do provide it privately, then that's in place as is. If not, then for a very long time these properties have had parking facilitated by the City owned parking lot, so that's a municipal lot, there are no changes proposed to that municipal lot proper. However, in the second question, the access that is to the north of the soon to be Heights Brewery property moving forward, that access north of Nina's there and south of Sips as you mentioned is the access to that parking lot, it's a one-way off of Farmington Road but with the Farmington Road Streetscape, the plans are to close that access and for that area to be eventually realized as a pocket park so that it would be a public park in public

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space and those existing parking spaces for Sips and also that serve Motown Philly Cheesesteak, by the same owner, those two businesses are located in the two-tenant building and those spaces private for that, they're going to be flipped around through a redesign. So, with all that being the case, those are the changes to parking. Other than that, there are no other changes to parking except for the Streetscape on street parking that's going to be added.

Majoros said with that potential repurpose of the access road or whatever it's called, is that Syndicate friendly in the Syndicate boundary and Christiansen replied it is in the Syndicate area and in fact what you're going to end up with is an expansion or reconfiguration and probably readjustment in light of the Streetscape and the business configuration and that will be coordinated through the Downtown Development Authority.

Majoros stated just being so close to Heights Brewing, I guess my question is can a Heights server walk twenty feet and sell alcohol there or does everyone have to go and get their own and treat is as a Syndicate and Christiansen replied that is correct, you cannot serve alcoholic beverages beyond your business boundaries which include your building and your outdoor seating area as then would be a condition of any approval by the City and through the Liquor Control Commission. But they certainly, and I'll speak for the DDA, I'm hopeful, become part of the Syndicate if that is facilitated and worked out that would be great.

Majoros stated you mentioned kind of a five foot by five foot by five foot, so it's as if it's the Streetscape today using another business as an example, kind of parallel seating, a fence, walkway, landscape, kind of a nice, kind of how we experience it today in the Streetscape where we see our businesses.

Harold Remlinger replied you can it right here, you'll have landscaping, a five foot walkway and roughly five and a half feet area inside the fenced in area for the seats.

Majoros said I see a new delivery door for supply and material, I'm assuming that truck traffic will probably be no different than perhaps what Page's would have encountered with delivery of supplies that would go to Page's, same thing here, so truck access, that sort of thing and Remlinger replied correct, that door that currently exists is 23-feet wide, so we're just going to make it a little bit wider, make it a little bit easier getting food or equipment or whatever in there, especially getting the kitchen equipment in and out, we've got a custom smoker coming in, so that's the main reason but it's not changing what's already currently. Majoros said it's probably a box truck delivery instead of an 18-wheeler juggling behind there. You talk about a smoker, sounds really good, all indoors and Remlinger replied all indoors, custom made and Majoros replied there are probably all sets of rules and Christiansen stated Code requirements, yes, we'll be working on those together. Remlinger stated this is our fourteenth brewery project so we're aware of that.

Majoros said the esthetics are really nice, the materials are nice, the look is nice, the lighting, etc., so that's all I have.

Commissioner Perrot stated I just have a couple questions for the Petitioners. The first item is you mentioned music a couple of times, obviously that's a huge part of the Farmington culture which is a huge thumbs-up from anybody in Farmington. So, when you say music, whether it's spin records or live music or acoustic, what are your thoughts for the application, are you talking inside, outside, both?

MacDonnell replied I think we actually want to do both, starting off inside with the records on spin nights and maybe possibly open mic nights or just hiring local artists and having them come in and through social media, promoting them that way. Perrot stated I'm sure you've seen the movie theater; they bring in high school kids and MacDonnell stated his niece performs there all the time so we're there often watching her.

Perrot said the other question I have and this comes up in front of us at least a couple of times is the fact that your food and beverage would it be something you're interested in like the Door Dash thing and MacDonnell replied we've discussed it and I think maybe not at first just to get rolling and possibly taking a look at that in the future.

Majoros asked Christiansen if the hours of operation need to be addressed now and he replied there's no restriction on that, it's just up to the entrepreneur, the business owner as long as they meet all City requirements in how they operate their business and how their business is conducted and anything associated with the business, again, they're providing that in their operating plan here which you have a copy of and which was up on screen for a bit, but there's no issue, there's no approval of that necessary, however some of that runs with their licenses with their food and beverage and that will be all dealt with through those processes.

Christiansen stated he is sharing a comment, that he had a call this afternoon from Mr. Jason Schloff and Mr. Schloff is one of the owners of the Farmington Brewing Company and he indicated to me that he was hopeful to be here this evening but he might not be able to make it based on business and other obligations and if he wasn't able to be here he wanted me to share with you and everyone his support, Farmington Brewing Company's support for the Heights Brewery and he welcomes them, so he wanted me to share that.

Chairperson Majoros opened the floor for a motion from the Commissioners.

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Waun, to move to approve the site plan amendment/façade modification for the Heights Brewery, 23621 Farmington Road, as

presented, supported by the recommendation of the Downtown Development Authority and for any other required permits or plan approvals that are required.
Motion carried, all ayes.

UPDATE – CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Director Christiansen updated the ongoing projects in the City, with the Streetscape work commencing on Farmington Road, plans from Savvy Sliders expected soon, the challenges of getting staffing for the new Amoco gas station, interest in the industrial area along 9 Mile Road, A & W being under new management, Liberty Hill with almost all basements in ground, properties on East Grand River being marketed and the Freedom Plaza Building being almost completely built out and occupied with a strong tenant base as well as other projects in the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT

Commissioner Westendorf inquired on the status of the Ordinance Amendment concerning DashMart.

Commissioner Perrot commented on the pocket park that Krazy Crab developed on their property and what a nice addition and donation to the City it is and thanked the business owners for their generosity.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Perrot, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary