PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 18, 2013
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
7:30 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: R Johnson, G. Clark, M. Bullard, P. Hollifield, C. Zuellig, M. Bullard, A. Bedogne

Absent: B. Lenart (excused) R. Murphy (excused)

Staff: Teresa Gillotti, Community Development Director
Bonnie Wessler, Planner I
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary

Chairman Johnson stated that going forward; board members should address the chair when they want to interact with other board members.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 21 and August 28, 2013

Commissioner Hollifield moved to approve the minutes of August 21, 2013 (Support: A. Bedogne) and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Bedogne moved to approve the minutes of August 28, 2013 (Support: C. Zuellig) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Heidi Jugenitz introduced herself stating that she had been nominated to join the Planning Commission and looked forward to joining the group.

Mayor Paul Schreiber, 922 Pleasant – stated that he was pleased to nominate Ms. Jugenitz adding that she had recently moved to Ypsilanti and would bring an added dimension of someone living outside of the city. He also added that the City Council would like the Thompson Block to be successful and appreciates the help of the board in that process.

V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

None

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Family Dollar Rezoning & PUD Plan

Commissioner Clark moved to remove this item from the table (Support: M. Bullard) and carried unanimously.

Ms. Gillotti, Director of Community Development, went through the highlights of changes from the meeting held on August 28th. The board spent much time discussing the 10' sidewalk and she has ensured that it extends all the way from Park to Lincoln. Also, she discussed the interface between the street, sidewalk and parking area. We now have a 20'sidewalk with landscaping and knee wall between that and the parking spaces, which will be 29 spaces. Signage was discussed – they are looking at three signs, one being a pole sign and two wall signs. Three smaller windows will be clear glass with a tinted film will be added along the Lincoln Street frontage. She referred to street trees adding that there will be three on Lincoln side, six in front on Michigan Avenue and also two in the bump-out on Park Street.

All conditions have been met significantly and the building setbacks are now noted on the site plan. Lighting will be taken care of with photo metrics later on in the process. There are three parking lot lights, one of which, Ms. Gillotti would like to see relocated. She stated that staff recommends approval with various conditions and items being addressed administratively by Planning staff prior to review by City Council.

Some discussion was held by board members on the signage and it was the consensus to not allow either pole signs or the monument sign, maintaining B3 requirements.

Commissioner Clark moved that the Planning Commission approve the Planned Unit Development (PUD) plan and rezoning to PUD based on the following findings:

<u>Findings:</u>

1. The proposed use is consistent with the PUD concept of providing zoning flexibility in return for material community benefits.
2. The project will develop an acre of the 38 acre city-owned Water Street redevelopment area with retail more urban than suburban in form, and with careful consideration of vehicular and pedestrian access to help accommodate future adjacent development.
3. The proposed use will be consistent with all surrounding uses, in particular to the east.
4. The proposed use will not have an adverse impact on traffic or other public services and infrastructure.
5. The proposed redevelopment meets numerous Master Plan and DDA goals.
6. Two exemptions are recommended:
    - Provide exemption to zoning ordinance reducing parking spaces to a maximum of 29 based on zoning guidelines.

- Provide exemption to Entryway Overlay District requirements due to the Master Plan desire for a more urban form and treatment.

7. 10' sidewalk on Michigan Avenue should extend to Lincoln Street.

The approval of the PUD plan is conditioned on the following items being addressed and reviewed administratively by Planning and Development staff before review by City Council:

Conditions:

1. Provide dimensions for wall signage and elevation re-evaluating the presence of a monument sign with staff to confirm it meets zoning requirements.
2. Move "tags" on site plan to match relocation of barrier-free parking and ramp.
3. All items from engineering letter dated Sept 13, 2013.
4. Consider relocating proposed light pole on south side out of easement location.
5. Indicate locations for parking lot lighting along with photometric plan per Sec. 122-641 and Sec 122-834(9).
6. Final plans to be submitted to MDOT for approval.

The following waivers are requested under Sec 122-713:

Waivers:

1. Waiver from 3 foot berm requirement between Michigan Avenue and parking lot, to maintain urban form and/or request different treatment.
2. Waiver from foundation shrub and tree planting requirements along Michigan and foundation tree plantings on Lincoln Street due to street tree requirement. Relocate required 2 trees on Park street side elsewhere on the site.

The motion was supported by Commissioner Hollifield. A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

2. Thompson Block Rezoning & PUD Plan

Commissioner Bullard moved to remove this item from the table (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Gillotti provided the staff report stating that this item was reviewed for site plan approval and PUD zoning at the August 28, 2013 meeting and it was agreed that it should be postponed awaiting some revisions, which included changes to parking lot layout, pedestrian access, etc. to its adjacent neighbors.

She proceeded to review the various changes beginning on the River Street side. Their architect did some grade changes on the frontage, which was quite steep. They plan to extend out from the building to the outdoor café section and re-route the sidewalk going north with a ramp up to where the outdoor café will be. There will be street trees between the on-street parking and the sidewalk and then raised outdoor café with railing around the edges with stair entrance on south side and ramp entrance on north side. The loading zone will be on River St on the south end with 2 on-street parking

spaces. Going north, there will be a metal gate with walkway, which is the entrance for upper storey residents.

Commissioner Bedogne asked the width of sidewalk on north side and Mr. Beal responded approximately 6-8'. Commissioner Zuellig referred to landscape and grading plan on Cross St, which appears to be different than the architectural site plan. She noted there was no landscaping on east side and the west side has 3' plants. It is her opinion that these plants don't fit and wonder if they could be eliminated.

Stewart Beal, owner – stated that he had reviewed the 14 items listed on the on-line version of the report and reviewed all with his comments. Overall, he appreciated staff's feedback.

After further comments and questions by commissioners, Commissioner Bedogne moved that the Planning Commission approve the Planned Unit Development plan and rezoning to PUD based on the following findings:

Findings:

1. The application substantially complies with Sec 122-127 and Sec 122-576.
2. The proposed use is consistent with the PUD concept of providing zoning flexibility in return for material community benefit.
3. The project will restore a historically significant building to productive use and serve as a good example of redevelopment of existing structure. It will also provide improvements within the right of way that will enhance and complement the existing Depot Town streetscape.
3. The proposed use will be consistent with all surrounding uses
4. The proposed use will not have an adverse impact on traffic or other public services and infrastructure.
5. The proposed redevelopment meets numerous Master Plan and DDA goals including encouraging the rehabilitation of historic structures, rehabilitation of upper stories for loft housing, and revitalization efforts for Depot Town.
6. A single exemption is requested, from the requirements of Sec 122-394.

Conditions:

The approval of the PUD plan is conditioned on the following items being addressed and reviewed administratively by Planning and Development staff before review by City Council:

1. Install fencing in accordance with Sec 122-703 along north side of structure in cooperation with adjacent owners
2. Detailed grading plans shall demonstrate how ADA requirements are met on River and Cross intersection
3. Sidewalk on Cross Street shall continues through drive at 6 feet width
4. Update required percentage to reflect entire project area and confirm calculation
5. Add bicycle parking
6. Consider a metal gate on the east side of the pedestrian access on north side of the building
7. All items from engineering review letter dated 9-13-13

8. A list of plantings for the bioswales should be provided.
9. Provide a maintenance plan for bioswales,
10. Provide height for all pole lights
11. All fixtures on north side of building shall be down-directed and full cutoff.
12. Add one additional tree to parking area
13. Note all exemptions from zoning basis on the site plan.
14. HDC approval is required for all exterior work.
15. Applicant will work with staff on appropriate landscaping on south side of parking area.

The following waivers are requested under 122-713:

1. Waiver requested to permit installation of landscaping and wall for off-street parking landscaping in lieu of berm to satisfy the requirements of 122-704(c)(2).
2. Waiver from foundation plantings requirement of 122-706 due to lack of setbacks and need to integrate pedestrian access to all building frontages.
3. Request waiver from 122-712 to omit provision of a sprinkler system; applicant shall note alternate means of keeping landscaping watered.

The motion was supported by Commissioner Zuellig. A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

3. Reimagine Washtenaw Right-of-Way Update

Ms. Gillotti stated that this is a presentation by both Nathan Voght, Community & Economic Development at Washtenaw County and Commissioner Cheryl Zuellig (SmithGroupJJR).

Mr. Voght gave some background information stating that this effort was started by a planner in the County who reached out to different communities along the stretch between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti realizing that there was a lot of potential for developing the corridor of the 4-5 mile stretch of Washtenaw Avenue. A lot of interest developed, which has now turned into a large effort to transform this corridor; a realization of potential because of traffic volumes already there; potential because of high transit ridership and potential because of infrastructure already there. The four communities got together and formed the JTC in 2009 to get stakeholders together and in 2010 an actual strategic document was adopted to focus on sidewalks, bike lanes, transportation. We are now in the implementation stage. There are various active partners, i.e. MDOT, AATA, etc with subcommittees consisting of various people.

Commissioner Zuellig presented an overview highlighting the various cross sections for the corridor. Three public meetings have been held as well as an on-line survey noting issues that were important, i.e pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, add more street trees, better lighting. They came up with three scenarios along the corridor and although one cross section does not fit all, the current five lane cross section which includes bike lanes, landscape buffers and consistent sidewalks does fit but additional ROW would be needed.

This is a vision of how this corridor could be transformed in the next 15-20 years.

She showed the various renderings of how each cross section would look with the traffic lanes and wider boulevard to Hogback, and a slightly narrower boulevard from there to Ypsilanti,

which is a transition from 4 lanes of traffic to approximately three lanes that would continue to Cross Street. This whole vision is predicated on people using more buses and bikes as well as walking, which would be a considerable shift from vehicles towards transit.

Commissioner Zuellig stated that the next step is to finalize public access requirements, develop super stops for buses and mid-block crossing concepts, and develop phasing strategy and final community meeting.

Board members were very receptive of this presentation. Commissioner Clark asked if consideration could be made regarding the super stops, i.e. include information areas on various activities on art exhibits, messaging centers, etc.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. 615 E. Michigan

Ms. Wessler, Planner I, stated that this item had been presented at a previous meeting where they received a variance. They are proposing to expand connecting the two existing buildings in the corner and are now requesting site plan approval. Her initial concern with this site plan was the landscaping since this property is located in the Entryway Overlay District which has stringent landscaping requirements. They have included two bike spaces in the revised plan located at the far east of the lot; no photometric plan was included and site safety is a concern expressed by many members of the public as well as lack of clarity on signage. They have removed the shed from the site plan and they are no longer showing pedestrian access from the sidewalk. Engineering was able to review the plans and was confident that any concerns could be handled by the Building Department.

Some concerns were brought up by board members, regarding number of parking spaces, location of bike spaces, and addition of trees in front of office, as well as the photometric plan. The engineer representing the applicant agreed that they will make all the necessary changes as requested.

Commissioner Bullard moved to postpone action on the site plan for the Harmony House Expansion at 615 E. Michigan with the following conditions outlined in the staff report dated September 13, 2013:

1. Provide a complete landscape plan that conforms with the landscaping ordinance, in particular the minimum area requirements; greenbelt dimensions and layout, and parking layout. Ensure it addresses all other issues raised in this review.
2. Eliminate the three parallel and three perpendicular spaces adjacent to the frontage; meet the requirements of Sec 122-704, and ensure that garbage trucks have a clear path of entry and exit from the site.
3. Clarify signage type(s) and location(s). Note that all new or altered signage must conform to the ordinance.
4. Continue to restrict access to the rear of the buildings. Monitor those areas.
5. Show relocated shed on site plan, if shed is to remain.
6. Remove concrete post/footing in front of perpendicular building.
7. Ensure pedestrian access from public sidewalk is ADA compliant.

8. Submit photometric plan that conforms to the provisions of Sec 122-641.
9. Engineering conditions as outlined in forthcoming engineering letter.

The motion was supported by Commissioner Zuellig and carried unanimously.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Non-Motorized Committee

A copy of the minutes from the August 1, 2013 meeting was included in the packet.

VII. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

834 Railroad
333 S. Prospect
Master Plan
212/216 N. Huron
615 E. Michigan

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Bullard moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: A. Bedogne) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.