

MINUTES

ANN ARBOR CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

7:00 p.m. – February 22, 2007

Time: Chair Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Second Floor, 100 North Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Bona, Borum, Emaus, Potts, Pratt, Westphal, Woods

Members Absent: Carlberg

Members Arriving: Lipson

Staff Present: Foondle, Marcarello, Vaughn

INTRODUCTIONS

None.

Enter Lipson.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

a. Minutes of January 18, 2007.

Moved by Potts, seconded by Woods, to approve the minutes as presented.

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Borum, Emaus, Lipson, Potts, Pratt, Westphal, Woods
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Carlberg

Motion carried.

b. Minutes of February 6, 2007.

Moved by Borum, seconded by Woods, to approve the minutes as presented.

Lipson asked that on page six, fourth paragraph, the word “courtyards” be added after the word “west.”

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Borum, Emaus, Lipson, Potts, Pratt, Westphal, Woods
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Carlberg

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Bona, seconded by Borum, to approve the agenda.

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Borum, Emaus, Lipson, Potts, Pratt, Westphal, Woods
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Carlberg

Motion carried.

REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION, CITY COUNCIL,
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, PLANNING COMMISSION
OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES, WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Woods reported that City Council, at its February 20 meeting, approved the McKinley Self Storage Site Plan, the Plymouth Road Plaza Site Plan, and the Capital Improvements Plan. She also noted that Council approved appropriations for an agreement with the Washtenaw County Road Commission for a project to resurface and widen part of Wagner Road.

Pratt stated that the public could visit the City’s website at www.a2gov.org and then go to Discovering Downtown for a status report on the various committees of the Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown work effort. He reported on the upcoming meetings: A2D2 Steering Committee on March 7, Design Guidelines Committee on March 1 and March 8, joint Design Guidelines with Historic District Committees on March 22, and Historic District Committee on March 5. He also stated that the executive committee of the Planning Commission met to discuss master planning and the floodplain information recently provided to Commission. He said the committee believed it would be appropriate to begin work on a floodplain ordinance, which was part of the requirement contained in the Flood Mitigation Study recently adopted by City Council.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Nancy Small, 1314 Broadway, asked the Planning Commission to oppose the lot division at 1300 Broadway. She said her foremost objection was based on self-interest, as she believed the proposed structures likely would be unattractive and would lower property values. She questioned why City planners would support such a proposal. She did not believe the type of structure planned for this site would stand the test of time, as it experienced high vacancy rates and was left in disrepair. She liked the diversity of this Broadway neighborhood and understood the need for housing and density, but said the balance of aesthetic appeal and community must be maintained. Affordable housing did not have to be an eyesore, she said. She found it difficult to believe that the Planning Commission was unable to do anything about this proposed land division, stating that just because something might be legal did not mean that it was wise. She did not think this land division was in the best interest of this neighborhood or the City of Ann Arbor.

David Blanchard, 1230 Broadway, stated that he has seen the erosion of this neighborhood and the rapid pace of development. He understood the limits of the Planning Commission as far as what could be done with this land division; however, he was concerned that there was a misperception either with the Planning Commission or staff as far as what could be done to make sure the land division at a minimum adhered to minimum standards, such as height, width and land area. He asked that Commission and staff take a very careful look at this proposal, stating that this was a situation where a developer was pushing every boundary.

Sabra Briere, 1408 Broadway, stated that this property, which was located about 100 feet from Traver Creek, was very steep. She stated that the land here would be significantly affected by any development, with impacts on water drainage and wildlife. She noted that this was a deer run that went all the way to the Huron River. She stated that this property was significantly sloped and any grading that was done on the site would severely impact the surface and ground water than ran to the creek. She asked that the Planning Commission keep these concerns in mind when considering its authority to affect what happened to the buildings that were developed on this land.

Pratt stated that the photographs provided to Commission members would be forwarded to staff to review in relation to permit application.

Resident of 1230 Broadway expressed concern about what was happening on Broadway. She said they purchased their first home a year ago and that they chose Broadway because of the sense of community. She said they have seen so much change in the year they've lived here. She stated that Broadway was full of numerous quick-build duplexes and this land division would present the possibility of two more duplexes right next to her home, where one already existed. She has seen the erosion of the community and the integrity of the neighborhood threatened, stating that these developments needed to be looked at very carefully. When there were violations involving City ordinances, such as over occupancy and easement issues, she stated that the City had to get involved.

Phil Stowe, 1314 Broadway, stated that staff and Commission received many emails that expressed the majority of his concerns. He stated that there were properties along Broadway that, although they had the number of required acreage for a land division, they contained 45-degree angles and were not buildable. Because of this, he did not see how these properties could be seen as having the required amount of acreage. He believe the owner of the property at 1300 Broadway was clearly interested in further developing this site as soon as possible without following ordinance requirements. He stated that

the trouble this property owner has caused for the City and the existing tenants would be tripled by allowing more rental units on this site.

PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MEETING

Pratt announced the public hearings scheduled for the March 6, 2007 Planning Commission meeting.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing and Action on England Annexation and Zoning, 0.28 acre, 3109 Cherry Tree Lane. A request to annex this site into the City and zone it for single-family residential use – Staff Recommendation: Approval

Marcarello explained the proposal.

Noting no further speakers, Pratt declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Bona, seconded by Woods, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommend that the Mayor and City Council approve the England Annexation and R1B (Single-Family Dwelling District) Zoning.

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Borum, Emaus, Lipson, Potts, Pratt, Westphal, Woods
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Carlberg

Motion carried.

b. Public Hearing and Action on Zaragon Place Site Plan, 0.35 acre, 619 East University Avenue. A proposal to demolish the existing structure and to construct a 99,982-square foot, ten-story mixed-use building (1,785 square feet of retail use, 4,477 square feet of accessory/common area and 93,720 square feet of residential use – 66 apartment units with a total of 248 bedrooms) and 40 below-grade parking spaces – Staff Recommendation: Approval

Marcarello explained the proposal and showed photographs of the property.

A letter from Ann Sneed Schriber, 2116 Dorsett Road, was read into the record. This letter contained objections to the proposed demolition of the existing Anberay building, the proposed development of the Zaragon Place building, and the public process involved (letter on file).

Randall Jacob, 1510 Jones Drive, believed the proposed development on this site would be out character and synchronization with the general architecture of this corner. He believed something like this was more appropriate at the corner of Washington and State Streets, where a tall building for housing had

already been constructed, as this was an area of taller buildings. This was not the case at this location, he said. He believed this proposal was a disservice to architects and planners at the University of Michigan who have tried to maintain a certain character in this area.

Susan Wineberg, 712 East Ann Street, gave a eulogy for the Anberay building and an era of Ann Arbor that was passing. She explained how she got involved in historic preservation in 1974. She said it was difficult to imagine today how animated everyone was in the era of researching and protecting historic buildings. She explained how historic districts and individual historic buildings were formed and provided background information on how the district of which the Anberay building was a part was determined to be invalid. Themed districts were then introduced, she said, but she did not know what became of that, as the Mayor did not appoint anyone to a committee to follow the procedure of designating a district. She stated that the City was slowly losing its historic buildings, adding that these buildings gave Ann Arbor its character. There was nothing else in this area worth saving, she said, and she found it ironic that the one historic building in this area was the one being removed, along with landmark trees.

Savannah Hiller, 128 West Hoover, stated that the Anberay building, with its gorgeous brickwork, overlapping balconies, and enticing courtyards, was important to her. She stated that someone obviously took great pains designing this art deco gem in Ann Arbor. She was concerned that Ann Arbor was losing its heritage and was being turned into a city that looked like every other city. Many of the new buildings were monolithic and charmless, she said, making pedestrians want to rush by them. She believed this new building would be much too dense for this area, with its 66 apartments and 40 parking spaces, noting that the existing building had 23 units and no parking. She did not think this area needed more residents without a place to park. She stated that the Anberay building was a bit of charm and grace from the jazz age that should be preserved and enjoyed, not exchanged for something like the proposed new building.

Lou Glorie, 827 Brooks Street, stated that the Anberay building was a beautiful building that has gracefully housed generations of Ann Arbor students, allowing comfort and conviviality. She said the building did its job without looming over pedestrians and residents, with its courtyard a perfect model of urban habitation. If goals of convivial housing were truly in the heart of planners, she said, there would be no question of destroying this building. She stated that historical often equaled affordable. The Anberay's main problem was that it did not maximize profit per square inch of land, she said. She did not believe that the Planning Commission had to recommend approval of this proposal, stating that there was no law forcing Ann Arbor to abandon its common sense of community.

Louisa Pieper, 408 Awixa, stated that she spent 24 years working for the Historic District Commission trying to protect Ann Arbor's heritage. Some of what she left protected did not stay protected, she said, noting that the City was the loser here if it lost the Anberay building. She opposed the new ten-story building and questioned how the Planning Commission could possibly allow something like this.

Peter Osler, 325 Catherine, stated that Ann Arbor was a city where the design of buildings took more into consideration than the return of the dollar, adding that the public demanded such buildings. He did not know the details of how the Anberay came to be constructed, but said the design of the building indicated a great deal of what life was like in the 1920s. While the need for profit was recognized, he said, the public realm at large was also recognized. He questioned why a developer would exchange guaranteed profit for an empty courtyard, stating that the existing courtyard was a true genius and may never be seen again in the downtown. It was a gift to passersby and tenants, he said. He believed a private health club in exchange for the courtyard was offensive. He stated that Phillip Johnson once said that architects were prostitutes because they gave up their integrity for their clients. He believed this proposal was an example of that. He stated that a good building could be any size and still make a contribution, but he did not think that was the case with this proposal.

Chris Crockett, president of the Old Fourth Ward Association and member of the A2D2 Design Review Committee, expressed concern about someone from out of town coming in and stealing Ann Arbor's treasures. She stated that Ann Arbor was supposed to be a "green" city and she was concerned that an energy guzzling, hard-to-heat and hard-to-cool building with inadequate parking would replace the historic building on this site. She questioned whether this was something Ann Arbor planned. She wondered where the public green space was for this project and how it made the City livable. She stated that she lived in an historic building and knew that it could be repaired. There was no celebration of Ann Arbor in this proposed building, she said, no acknowledgement of the community. She stated that this proposal would result in yet another building that could be included in the latest edition of "Lost Ann Arbor."

Ray Detter, chair of the DDA Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), stated that the Anberay apartment house opened in 1923, the same year that Ann Arbor's first zoning ordinance limited apartment blocks and rooming houses adjacent to campus. He stated that the Anberay building was an important part of Ann Arbor's history and it should be appropriately preserved. He stated that the Anberay should have been preserved as those that were reserved in the Old Fourth Ward historic district. He stated that he lived in the Anberay building for 28 years, noting that he was the first student who was allowed to live in this building, which had primarily been for faculty and University employees. He stated that the CAC was supportive of the recent Calthorpe recommendation to increase density in the South University area and of the recent rezoning of the South University area with the hope that taller buildings could improve the appeal and vitality of the area. Instead, he said, what the City was receiving was destruction of one of the best buildings on East University. He said the CAC did not intend to oppose a proposal that the CAC helped to bring about by supporting the changed zoning standards. However, he said, the CAC did not care for the design of the building, stating that amenities should be provided, such as benches, trees and a green roof. He did not believe the private gym satisfied the intent of the City's park contribution resolution. He stated that this would be a good opportunity to set a high standard for new architecture in the South University area.

Alice Ralph, 2600 Geddes, stated that she was new to Ann Arbor. She came from Dallas, Texas, she said, where they had so few historic buildings to save. It was her hope that Ann Arbor would not allow the destruction of any more historic buildings.

Scott Bonny, of Neuman Smith Architects, representing the petitioner, stated that he and the civil engineer for the project were present this evening with the petitioner to answer questions. He stated that this proposal met every letter of the law required under the zoning district recently applied to this property. He said they have worked very carefully with the City to make sure all standards and requirements were followed. He presented and site plan and renderings of the proposal and described its features. He said they believed this project would become a new landmark in this area. It was designed to fit in with the neighborhood, he said, and showed examples of the materials to be used. Using aerial photographs of the area, he showed how the building would fit in with the area. He stated that this was not a district of just one or two-story buildings; rather, there were many tall buildings in the area.

Maggie Ladd, director of the South University Area Association, referenced a letter from Dennis Tice, president of the association, which reflected the association's support for this project. She said the letter listed six or seven reasons why this project should be approved. She stated that she has been a business owner in the South University area for almost 22 years and was very familiar with the Anberay building. While she understood the fondness for this building, she was shocked to hear such sentimental rhetoric this evening. She stated that there was no lack of parking in the South University area if people were prepared to use the parking structure. She stated that the Anberay did not have a public courtyard, noting that its courtyard was not even visible from the street. She said the courtyard was gated because it had become a blight on the neighborhood with undesirable people using it as a place to drink alcohol. She questioned how anyone could stand here this evening and say that the Anberay would be an

ecological alternative to a new building. She stated that she participated in a charette a few months ago and, during a discussion of what was wonderful about Ann Arbor, she did not hear one person mention the South University area as being part of the downtown or how wonderful the Anberay was. She believed development was needed in the South University area and that the Planning Commission was well aware of the reasons why it was needed, as evidenced in its recent action to change the zoning of the area.

Teresa Canelli, 619 East University, stated that she has been a resident of the Anberay building for the past ten months, adding that the student community did not call it the “Anberay;” rather it was referred to as “Melrose Place.” She stated that the lack of student housing was a big problem and this proposed new building would significant for students. She stated that the charm and beauty of the Anberay was non-existent, noting that the courtyard was full of beer cans, four or five homeless people could be found living in the alleyway, and that she has also found homeless people sleeping in the building’s entranceway. She said the heating of the building was inefficient and the basement smelled extremely bad, and she did not think demolition of the building would be harmful. She was not sure if a ten-story building was appropriate for this site, but she said something needed to be done to create more affordable housing in Ann Arbor. She was pleased to see this proposal, as there was a need for more student housing.

Noting no further speakers, Pratt declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Bona, seconded by Emaus, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Zaragon Place Site Plan.

Bona stated that she had a conversation a few weeks ago with Maggie Ladd and the developer of the project and recalled that there were several things on the South University Area Association’s list that were not accommodated by C2A zoning, such as respecting the character of the two-story neighborhood. She asked Ms. Ladd if there were anything on the list related to the design of the building that the association found objectionable with respect to the association’s goals.

Ladd replied no. She stated that the petitioner, who has been very accommodating and has incorporated some of the association’s suggestions, has taken considerable care to make this proposal walkable and pedestrian friendly. She believed this proposal was a good example of what the association would like to see as far as new development in the area.

Bona said it was somewhat disappointing that there was not a more continuous storefront and asked why the side yards were not being used, particularly on the first floor.

Bonny stated that one of the reasons was because windows were proposed on all sides of the buildings and they believed it was important to provide adequate distance from adjacent neighbors. They thought wall-to-wall buildings here would be unattractive, he said.

Bona thought that at least the first, and possibly the second, floor could be designed to use the full width of the site. She believed this was a major aspect of the proposal and it was disappointing to her that there was not a more continuous storefront on this street. She also expressed concern about these open areas on the side of the building in relation to the undesirable activity experienced with the existing building. However, she understood that this could not be forced, as City ordinances did not contain a requirement for building to the lot line.

Woods expressed concern about the many comments Planning Commission received about the lack of nature and why the petitioner has declined to make a contribution for downtown parks. She asked the petitioner about the rationale for citing the private work-out center to satisfy the intent of the City's parkland contribution, noting that the work-out center would only be accessible to residents of the building.

Richard Perlman, petitioner, stated that the parks identified as recipients of a parkland contribution were a mile to two miles away from this site and would have no relationship to the residents of the building. He said a great deal of money was being spent on the fitness center for the residents and he would have no objection to spending the same amount on a street sculpture near this property that would benefit the community. He was not trying to evade making the contribution, he said, but he wanted it to be spent judiciously.

Woods confirmed that the parks identified by Parks and Recreation staff for improvements from a parkland contribution were Forsythe and Hanover Square.

Marcarello stated that this was correct, but she thought staff would be amenable to specifying a different park or parks as alternate recipients of a parkland contribution.

Woods stated that the parkland contribution was very important and she did not want the petitioner to think that the City was not interested in the contribution if the money could not be used for the two parks identified. While the fitness center for the residents was important, she said, it did not satisfy the intent of the parkland contribution.

Perlman stated that it was their preference to provide a street sculpture that would benefit the immediate area.

Bonny showed an area adjacent to the retail space on the north side of the building as a potential location for public art.

Woods asked if benches were proposed along the front of the building.

Bonny replied that no benches were proposed at this time; however, he said they would like to work with staff to identify standards, as they believed there was room for public amenities along the sidewalk.

Woods asked about security for the building, noting the occasional situations there have been inebriated people on the property, as well as the occurrence of vandalism, making the area less than desirable.

Bonny stated that a manager of the building would be present during the day. He said the vestibule would be open during the day and visitors would have to use the telecom system to call residents before being admitted to the apartments. There would be no 24-hour security, he said, but they did intend to have a video camera system in place.

Woods asked how the 40 parking spaces would be allocated.

Bonny stated that they would be available to tenants to rent on a first come, first serve basis.

Potts stated that this was an interesting situation because the motion was to recommend approval of the new building, but actually there were two buildings involved because of the existing building on the site. She thought the two buildings were in sharp contrast to each other. She said the City's goal, to some

degree, was to increase density, but she thought building more housing units in this particular location was moving this goal in a direction that resulted in less charm and livability in Ann Arbor. Whatever the developer wished to build was what the Commission was considering, she said, adding that in this case, the proposal was massive, graceless and nothing like the Anberay. She stated that the Anberay was a special building and, while she understood that the building had been neglected, she did not think it met the standards for demolition. She questioned whether this new building would ever be cited for excellence of any kind. It did not seem to be an appropriate replacement for this site, she said. She appreciated the history contained in the staff report and the comments of the Parks staff, but there were so many things that have been said that characterized how she felt about this situation. She did not think this proposal was ready. She said it might conform to City Code in general, but said there were no ordinance requirements for urban natural features, so there were no guidelines to follow on that. She was troubled about the lack of a park contribution and thought the parking was inadequate. She also noted that sanitary sewer capacity issue and the number of sewer disconnections had not yet been finalized.

Lipson asked how the proposed building met or exceeded energy efficiency requirements.

Bonny stated that this building would follow many of the strategies for sustainable building design. The building was located on a public bus line, he said, and underground parking was proposed. He said they would meet and attempt to exceed all energy requirements wherever possible.

Lipson asked how the noise level from the mechanical units on the rooftop would be handled.

Bonny said he was unable to respond to this without information from the mechanical engineer for the project. He said they would look into making sure that there was the least impact from rooftop noise.

Lipson state that small natural areas could improve downtown livability and said it would be helpful if this project had some amenities such as window boxes or planters and/or street trees to reduce the impact from all of the stone. He agreed that it was not in the best interest to make a parkland contribution for a park located miles away from the site and said he would like to see the money put toward landscaping in the immediate area, and not necessarily toward a park. He did not have a problem with the parking situation, pointing out that the Forest Street parking structure was nearby, and also noting that the University Towers building provided no parking for its residents. He stated that the tenants of this new development would rent their units with the understanding that they may or may not have a parking space. He stated that this was a perfect location to build housing because of its proximity to campus and because of the existing public transportation. He was not concerned with the height of the building in relation to shading nearby residences, but did say that he would like to see a green roof provided here. He would need to see the final comments from Systems Planning regarding sanitary sewer capacity improvements and sewer disconnections before he made a recommendation on this proposal.

Eric Wernette, of Midwestern Consulting, stated that a sanitary sewer analysis of the discharge was done and it was determined that 14 homes would need to be disconnected. He said this information was provided to Systems Planning.

Bonny said they were proposing to put a white roof on the building, which met the same criteria as a green roof. He said there would be a small portion of the roof over the parking garage that would be vegetated.

Lipson said he liked the proposed façade, as long as there was no issue with security. He stated that security cameras could go a long way to helping with security.

Westphal understood that the rezoning of this area was the result of a community process. He would be curious to see if the rezoning would have received as much support as it did if, during one of those discussions, someone had presented a photo similar to the building proposed this evening. However, he said, the zoning was designed for a higher floor area ratio. He enjoyed looking at the existing building and appreciated its historic value, but he understood that the existing zoning was a community goal. He thought it was a safe assumption that other buildings in the downtown would someday be removed for newer buildings with higher density. To that degree, he encouraged people to get involved to pursue preservation to the extent necessary. He noted that the City currently was working on design guidelines and said the public was encouraged to get involved with that. He suggested that green roof requirements, if deemed to be important, could be included in the City Code before another project was proposed. He stated that approval of the proposal was contingent upon it not having a detrimental effect on public health, safety or welfare. He asked how the sanitary sewer issue fit in with that.

Marcarello said it was the position of Systems Planning staff that if there were impacts to the sanitary sewer system, they could be mitigated as long as the mitigation did not impact health, safety and welfare.

Pratt asked if the petitioner had any objection to or concern about being responsible for sanitary sewer improvements downstream, depending on the impacts from this project.

Wernette stated that they were unable to respond to this until they received the comments from Systems Planning, as they did not yet know what problems there might be downstream. He said a decision as to what would be feasible would be made once they had the proper information.

Emaus stated that he also was concerned about the streetscape being more continuous. On the south side of the building, he said, there were windows that overlooked the driveway into the building, which seemed ridiculous to him. He thought the building should be extended to the side lot line, which would allow for more retail along the front. He stated that this open area along the side would invite undesirable activities.

Bonny stated that extending the building to the lot line, while increasing retail, would reduce the amount of residential space and it was their belief that it was important to provide a greater amount of residential. He said the building could not be build to the lot lines on both sides because access to the rear of the property was needed.

Emaus said he participated in the charette that discussed South University and one of the things he recalled his group being interested in was more family residential housing in the South University area. He stated that one of the desires of the South University Area Association was to relieve the surrounding neighborhood of the burden of providing student housing, with the hope that some of those buildings would be returned to single-family use. He said the association's belief was that attracting students to live here would somehow relieve the pressure of student housing to the south. He hoped this was true. It was his hope that the owner of this building, with its desire for it to be landmark building, would invest in long-term maintenance to avoid the problem of neglect that the current building has experienced. With regard to the parkland contribution, he would like to see the money go directly toward improving the streetscape in this area. There was no reason not to continue trees up and down the street, he said, which would benefit the residents and the whole community. He questioned why both the north and south facades of the building would be identical when they would experience different weather impacts.

Bonny stated that this project was driven by creating an efficient plan and that they were limited by the geography of the site in terms of providing efficient units. He said they would make sure they used the best glass for the windows to make the spaces as livable as possible.

Perlman stated that they had no problem designating the parkland contribution toward streetscape improvements.

Borum stated that he was in favor of increased housing density and mixed uses in urban areas, as well as underground parking. He could understand the argument for not placing the new building to the southern lot line because of the mechanical equipment, but not the explanation for not placing the building to the northern lot line. Another important issue to him was the quality of the existing space versus what was being proposed. He said he was torn because this proposal provided most of what he would like to see in terms of growth in Ann Arbor, but he thought there were things that could be lost relative to the existing building. He spoke to the relationship the existing building had between the public street, public space and private realm of the building, stating that there was a fine layering of gradations between the urbanism of the street and the privacy of the dwellings. This was probably something that would not be seen again, which was sad, he said. He did not think the intention of premiums in the City Code to increase density was intended to be used for the basis of demolishing an existing historic building. He believed the existing building represented an example of providing a rich experience between a building and the streetscape. He said urbanism was not based solely on retail along a street, it also was the combination of commerce, retail and residential. While the City could not protect the existing building, he said, he believed the City could ask that any new proposal understand the values of the building and learn from that. He said he could not support the proposal right now, but would support a proposal that tried to accomplish some of these goals.

Pratt stated that certain issues raised this evening did and did not fall under the purview of the Planning Commission. One that did was whether this proposal was consistent with the character and massing of other structures in the area, he said, and another was whether proposed parking was adequate. He noted that the parking proposed here did meet the requirements of the City Code. He said there has been discussion about the removal of public benefits in reference to the courtyard, stating that there was some discretion in the Zoning Ordinance for public benefits that could be applied in general, but he said the Planning Commission could not stray too far from practices of approvals for similar projects in the area or from the issue of public health, safety and welfare. Based on the discussion about the space on each side of the building, he thought it would be appropriate for Police Department staff to conduct a formal review and offer input to the petitioner. He wanted to make sure that any open space on the side, as well as at the rear of the building, was going to be safe. He asked about the anticipated use of the rear space, wondering if there would be anything like trees or benches provided for the residents.

Bonny stated that this had not yet been finalized, but he imagined there would be benches and some type of barbecuing facilities.

Pratt asked about the size of the units and the rental rates.

Bonny replied that a typical two-bedroom unit would be about 800 square feet and a four-bedroom unit would be about 1,200 square feet. He said the units would be a new type of loft-style housing, more urban and cosmopolitan. He stated that rental rates had not yet been established.

Pratt asked if any of the windows could be opened.

Bonny stated that only the windows in the living areas could be opened.

Pratt thought it would be helpful to have more information as to how much common area would be provided for residents and how it was intended to be used, as well as plans for maintaining it in good condition.

Bonny stated that the fitness center would be about 1,100 square feet. He said there was no other space proposed for residents to congregate.

Pratt stated that he envisioned that roof-mounted mechanical equipment would be enclosed with at least four walls and perhaps a roof. He asked if there would be any freestanding mechanical equipment on the roof and if there would be air conditioning in each unit.

Bonny stated that residents on floors 4-8 would have their own heating/cooling units and residents on floors 9 and 10 would have a furnace in their room and air conditioning from a condenser on the roof. Rooftop equipment would be located behind walls, he said.

Pratt asked that, if this were tabled this evening, a summary be provided of how the noise concern from mechanical equipment would be addressed. He agreed that information from Systems Planning regarding sewer capacity was necessary. He asked about the density increase for this proposal.

Marcarello stated that the existing building had 23 units and the new building proposed 66 units. Assuming the 23 units were two-bedroom units, she said, the site would go from 46 to 248 bedrooms.

Pratt said it would be beneficial if increased density could be achieved closer to the core area, regardless of whether it was student housing. He stated that the additional activity that would result from this project would be beneficial for the South University area. He asked what type of businesses were proposed for the retail space.

Bonny stated that they did not have specific tenants at this time, but they hoped to have some type of clothing retail in the space.

Pratt said he would rather see retail continued along the entire frontage of the site, but understood that there may be safety issues involved. However, he said, this was a high traffic area and he did not think that the extra retail space would have a significant impact on this street or on this area. He asked for information from the petitioner as to how the petitioner believed this proposal went over and above the minimum code requirements for energy efficiency. With regard to lighting, he did not want to see something that was not shielded at the top. He expressed concern about the white roof and any storage of water directly on the roof.

Bonny stated that water was not intended to stay on the roof. Only in a large storm situation would water remain on the roof for a short period, he said; otherwise, water would drain off the roof.

Pratt said he would like the development agreement to address some type of performance standards relative to maintenance to insure that the building did not experience the same fate as the Anberay building. He also said he would like security addressed in the development agreement. He asked the petitioner if he would consider provisions for this.

Perlman replied yes, he would consider these provisions.

Pratt asked that staff check with Parks and Recreation about having the South University Area Association involved in the decision for the parkland contribution.

Woods stated that since this proposal was located in the DDA area, perhaps there were some things that could be done through the DDA in terms of the streetscape. She said she would like to table action this evening in order to receive additional information prior to making a decision.

Pratt suggested that the petitioner propose language to add to the development agreement as to a general description of the fitness center. He was not interested in the specific equipment for the fitness center, but something that established the amenity for the residents.

Moved by Woods, seconded by Lipson, to table action.

A vote on the motion to table showed:

YEAS: Bona, Lipson, Potts, Pratt, Woods
NAYS: Borum, Emaus, Westphal
ABSENT: Carlberg

Motion carried.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Susan Wineberg stated that with regard to getting involved if concerned about local historic buildings, the Mayor and City Council would first have to establish a review committee. This was state law, she said. She stated that there were many who would be happy to serve on these committees, but first there needed to be a political will in order for the committees to be formed.

Peter Osler requested that the Planning Commission set a policy that jumbo brick could not be used in Ann Arbor.

Lou Glorie stated that she has been hearing for years that the City needed to have design standards to use in the review of development proposals. She asked that the Planning Commission not approve any new development proposals until design standards were put in place. She noted that the existing Anberay building had 23 bathrooms and 23 kitchens. The new Zaragon Place building would have 132 bathrooms and 66 laundries. She asked that this be taken into consideration when looking at sewer capacity.

Alice Ralph and Chris Crockett stated that they currently were on the A2D2 design review committee.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

Lipson stated that the City is going to be working on a floodplain ordinance and the public will need to be notified of this. He stated that this would be in conjunction with adoption of the new FEMA floodplain map. He said it was expected that the map would be made public in June, after which there would be a 90-day comment period, and then consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council. He said the adoption process of the floodplain ordinance would need to coincide with this.

Woods stated that the City Council had a discussion about criteria for planned projects. It was their hope that the Planning Commission would discuss this issue as well. She said there was not always agreement as to what constituted a public benefit, as required in the planned project standards, stating that it might be helpful for the Planning Commission to look into this to arrive at a better understanding.

ADJOURNMENT

Pratt declared the meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Mark Lloyd, Manager
Planning and Development Services

Bonnie Bona, Secretary

Prepared by Laurie Foondle
Management Assistant
Planning and Development Services