

MINUTES

ANN ARBOR CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

7:00 p.m. – June 19, 2007

Time: Chair Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: DiLeo, Foondle, Lloyd

INTRODUCTIONS

None.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

a. Minutes of May 1, 2007.

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

A vote on the motion showed:

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

Motion carried.

b. Minutes of May 15, 2007.

Moved by Carlberg, seconded by Bona, to approve the minutes as presented.

A vote on the motion showed:

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

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Potts, seconded by Carlberg, to approve the agenda.

A vote on the motion showed:

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

Motion carried.

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

None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

Enter Lipson.

Enter Emaus.

PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MEETING

Pratt announced the public hearings scheduled for the meeting of July 5, 2007.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing and Action on Ann Arbor Township Parcels Annexation and Zoning (nine sites), 7.85 acres total, 2012 Pontiac Trail, 344 Hilldale Drive, 2054 Newport Road and adjacent vacant parcel, 2120 Newport Road, 2814 Glazier Way, 237 Pineview Court, 3122 Geddes Avenue, 3550 East Huron River Drive and 3575 East Huron River Drive. A request to annex these parcels into the City and zone them for single-family residential use – Staff Recommendation: Approval

DiLeo explained the proposal.

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

Moved by Carlberg, seconded by Potts, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Ann Arbor Township Annexations (2120 Newport Road, 2054 Newport Road, 3550 East Huron River Drive, 3575 East Huron River Drive, and 3122 Geddes Avenue) and R1A (Single-Family Dwelling District) Zoning.

Pratt expressed appreciation for the clarification of those lots that currently had outside City services agreements.

Bona asked why the decision was made to zone the Geddes Road site to R1A.

DiLeo replied that the Geddes Road zoning study specifically recommended R1B zoning for the properties to the north. She said this particular property, on the south side of Geddes Road, was surrounded on three sides by R1A zoning and staff believed that zoning this property R1A would maintain the uniformity of the zoning in this immediate area.

Bona thought it was reasonable to zone this property R1A considering the zoning and the sizes of the properties surrounding it, even though it would be about 1,000 feet smaller than the minimum size for R1A zoning.

Pratt asked if the size shortage would cause any problems if this site were to ever be redeveloped.

DiLeo stated that this property would become a nonconforming lot and that any new house built on the property would have to be designed to comply with the setback regulations.

A vote on the motion showed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Carlberg, seconded by Potts, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Ann Arbor Township Annexations (237

**Pineview Court, 2814 Glazier Way and 344 Hilldale Drive) and R1B
(Single-Family Dwelling District) Zoning.**

A vote on the motion showed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**Moved by Carlberg, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City
Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City
Council approve the Ann Arbor Township Annexations (2012
Pontiac Trail) and R1D (Single-Family Dwelling District) Zoning.**

Potts stated that the parcels around this site were zoned R1D, so she could see the logic for R1D zoning for this property. However, she noted that it was a large site and that it may be one of those situations where the property was divided into individual parcels.

DiLeo stated that the property was approximately two acres in size and that the R1D zoning would allow about eight separate lots if the property were developed in its entirety. She said this would require site plan approval.

Pratt was curious about the area shaded for township property along the rear of the lots along Wickfield.

DiLeo stated that staff would look into this and report back to Commission.

A vote on the motion showed:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Public Hearing and Action on Zahn Medical Office Building Planned Project Site Plan, 0.42 acre, 2207 Jackson Road. A proposal to demolish the existing structure and construct a three-story, 7,308-square foot office building and 29 parking spaces – Staff Recommendation: Approval

DiLeo explained the proposal and showed photographs of the site.

Conrad Pawlowski, 106 Burwood, expressed concern about adequate buffering between his home and the cars parked on the south side of the parking lot. He was pleased to see this proposal and its new drainage plan, as water currently drained into his backyard. He expressed concern about snow in the winter being plowed into the landscape area and the effects on the vegetation from salt. He said he would like to see the area adjacent to his home landscaped with full vegetation to provide full privacy.

Kate Bond, of Washtenaw Engineering, representing the petitioner, showed elevations of the proposed building. She said this was a challenging project because it was a small site, adding that they went with the planned project approach to use the site to its fullest potential. Moving the building forward toward Jackson Road was the most appropriate location, she said, as it allowed them to collect drainage to the south without going off-site. With regard to the planned project criteria, she said their intent was to make

the building as energy efficient as possible and provide pedestrian access from all points of the building. She stated that windows surrounded the building on all four sides and would be shaded, tinted glass with a high shading co-efficient. The heat pumping system would be triggered by the sun, she said, and the indoor lighting system had dimmer switches to make use of natural sunlight. They were in the process of LEED certification, she said. She stated that more landscaping than what was required would be provided on the site and a bench along Jackson Road would be provided for pedestrians. She said the petitioner was open to discussing the buffer area with the property owner to the south.

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

Moved by Lipson, seconded by Borum, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Zahn Medical Office Building Planned Project Site Plan and Development Agreement.

Carlberg asked for an explanation of what would happen along the southern boundary of the site. She said there appeared to be fairly dense plantings.

Pratt also asked for an explanation of the contingency plan.

DiLeo stated that the requirements for a conflicting land use buffer were either a hedge, berm or wall. She said the petitioner chose to provide a hedgerow of arborvitae and juniper plantings. She said six trees were also required in the conflicting land use buffer area. The contingency plan involved the planting of six additional trees if something happened to the landmark tree on the site, she said.

Bond confirmed that arborvitae and viburnum, which would grow to six feet tall, would be planted along the south property line. She said the trees in the buffer area, which would be generally maple trees, were located in the strip between the edge of the curb at the parking lot and the shared property line.

Carlberg stated that this would be a significant hedge for the adjacent property owner.

Bond added that the hedge would be a minimum of 30 inches tall at the start. She also noted that the petitioner was willing to increase the landscaping to provide more buffering for the adjacent property owner if needed.

Woods asked who would monitor the landmark tree within three years from site plan approval. She also asked if this were a street tree.

DiLeo replied that staff would monitor this and that the tree was a private tree and subject to the natural features protection ordinance.

Woods asked about exterior lighting.

Bond said the photometric plan indicated that there would be no spillover lighting. The exterior lighting was to provide illumination for the parking area and the entrances to the building and that it would only be on during office hours.

Mark Zahn, petitioner, stated that he was generally finished with seeing patients by 5:00 p.m., except for two evenings a month when they were open until 8:00 p.m.

Woods asked how many offices would occupy the building.

Zahn stated that he would occupy the third (top) floor. He said the configuration of the second floor had not yet been finalized, but said it could be divided into space for more than one tenant. However, he could not imagine more than two tenants given the amount of square footage. He envisioned medical-related tenants that would complement his business.

Woods stated that with regard to pedestrian orientation, it did not appear that the design was very friendly, as someone walking to the building from Jackson Road would have to walk around the building to get to the entrance.

Dean Karamanos, architect representing the petitioner, showed the different entrance points for pedestrians. He said they considered a cut-through for pedestrians on the Jackson Road side of the building, but said the grade differential and safety concerns precluded this.

Woods stated that the building appeared to be very attractive, but if she were a pedestrian approaching the building from Jackson Road, she would not find the building very inviting. There was a sense of a barrier, she said, noting that the inviting part of the building was on the opposite side. She did not understand how this design was creating a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

Potts agreed, stating that the design seemed to be confusing for anyone not driving to the site. It appeared to be more vehicle oriented, she said.

Pratt asked that the petitioner and his representatives talk with the adjacent property owner to address the property owner's concerns, such as concentrating the evergreen plantings to provide a more effective buffer.

Potts referred to the slope of the site on the south side and asked how drainage on the site would be handled.

Bond stated that there was a natural slope to the south and their intent was to collect all storm water and treat it. The water would be collected in an underground storm water tank below the parking lot, she said, after which it would then be drained to the storm sewer in Burwood.

Potts wanted to make sure there was no drainage from this site onto the adjacent properties to the south. She appreciated that there would be no curb cut on Jackson, stating that the entrance on Burwood made it a workable site and more safe for everyone. She wanted to see a maximum buffer area to the south so the adjacent resident would not have to look at the parking lot.

Lipson said he liked the architecture, that it was a striking building. Improved pedestrian access did not necessarily mean that there had to be access from the street, he said, stating that moving the building ten feet closer to Jackson and Burwood made it more pedestrian friendly. He said the sidewalk coming from Jackson appeared to end and suggested that the paving of the sidewalk be continued to the entranceway across the asphalt, which would slow cars down and make it clearer to people that this was a pedestrian area and that people could access it from Jackson Road. He thought it would be helpful if one more tree were added along Jackson, which would provide more shade for pedestrians and work to slow traffic more. It would also give the pedestrian a more protected feel, he said. As to buffering along the south side of the site, he said, it sounded as though the petitioner and adjacent property owner would be able to come to agreement. He wanted to make sure that the vegetation chosen for the berm survived and that the right species were selected. He also wanted to be sure that any snow plowing during the winter did not cause problems for the neighbor.

Pratt stated that it was typical for snow to be stored at the furthest parking space and wondered if a note to that effect could be added to the site plan.

Lipson appreciated the energy-efficient features of this proposal. He asked if a green roof had been considered for this building. He stated that the greener a development could be on the outside, the more helpful it would be to the general environment.

Karamanos replied no, stating that the roof was not flat. However, he said, they were looking into green material to use on the building.

Emaus stated that while he generally liked buildings closer to the street, he was thinking it may be more appropriate to move this building further to the west and move the lobby of the building to the southeast corner. He asked if this had been considered.

Bond stated that one of the reasons they placed the building near Jackson and Burwood was to avoid the landmark tree. Another reason for locating the building at the northeast corner of the site, she said, was that it allowed for more efficient storm water collection.

Emaus stated that from a pedestrian point of view, he did not like to see cross traffic when coming in and out of building, and that he believed having the building lobby at the southeast corner of the site would be more appealing. In this situation though, he said, most people likely would come by car and use the central lobby. He thought it made sense for this particular use.

Bona stated that if she heard correctly, there was a street tree required on Burwood that was not shown on the plan. She said this would need to be added. She expressed appreciation for the extent of the landscaping proposed on this site, but asked if the petitioner would also be willing to fill the gap along Jackson with a tree that would be appropriate for a more continuous row of trees. She said street trees were important between the street and sidewalk, as they helped slow traffic. Anything to get people to naturally drive slower would be helpful, she said.

Bond replied that yes, a tree along Jackson could be added.

Bona reinforced the request for a more continuous sidewalk from Jackson. With regard to the drives into the covered parking, she said, the site plan showed them as one-way, but she heard two-way mentioned. Her concern was that this was a tight site and the petitioner had done a creative job of getting people in from two directions and connecting to the sidewalk, yet it still appeared to be a little awkward for pedestrians. She wondered about decreasing the width of the drives into single-width drives.

Bond stated that the wider drives allowed for a safer walking and driving experience and also allowed enough space for maneuvering when in an enclosed space. She said the sidewalk aprons would consist of stamped concrete, as well as the space leading to the door of the building, to differentiate these pedestrian areas from the driving area.

Bona said it would help if the stamped concrete portion could be as narrow as a single-width drive. She said the concept of pedestrian orientation was to put pedestrians first and not just accommodate them with a partial sidewalk. She said she could understand the perspective of wanting to screen cars along the Jackson and Burwood sides of the building, but she noted that the parking spaces at the corner of Jackson and Burwood were four feet below the wall. She questioned whether the screening there needed to be that high, as it may not be very inviting. She said it was one thing to block cars and another to enclose them so the space had no transparency. She was concerned about how high it was from the inside.

Karamanos stated that they would take a look at this to see if adjustments could be made. He said their original intent was to screen the cars from the pedestrians.

Bona asked what the motivation was for seeking LEED certification, stating that the process was sometimes more costly than the savings achieved in the long run.

Karamanos stated that this petitioner was not only interested in the building and its design from an investment standpoint, but also because he would be using this building for his practice and he wanted the building to be healthy for his patients and himself. He said the petitioner was willing to go the extra mile for this. He said they were aware that the gold and platinum levels of LEED certification were costly and that they likely would seek a lower level.

Westphal asked staff to explain the placement of trees and what the petitioner has agreed to plant between the sidewalk and both Burwood and Jackson.

DiLeo stated that three trees currently existed between the sidewalk and Jackson Road and that the petitioner had agreed to plant one more in that right-of-way space. Along Burwood, she said, two trees existed in the right-of-way and the petitioner was required to plant a third.

Westphal said he was interested in street trees and continuity of the block and asked if there were other spaces that were candidates for tree plantings.

Bond stated that the other spaces were too small to accommodate trees and that shrubs would be placed in those locations.

Woods was glad to see the sidewalk and indication of how one would access the building from Jackson, especially because it was related to the pedestrian orientation planned project standard.

Pratt asked the adjacent property owner if he understood what was proposed this evening and if he believed his comments and concerns had been addressed.

Pawlowski stated that he would like to discuss the possibility of a berm with the petitioner. Because of the way the property sloped to the south, he believed a berm would provide more privacy. He stated that the proposed building was attractive and that he supported its location.

Pratt asked that the berm issue be addressed prior to Council action. He believed the planned project request was appropriate in this case, stating that Commission generally supported buildings close to the right-of-way line. He agreed that the majority of people using this building would drive and said his view of pedestrian orientation was more for those walking past the site rather than those coming in and out by foot. He asked if the condition of the landmark oak tree had been assessed.

DiLeo replied yes. As evidenced by its crown, she said, the tree was in good condition and should not be in jeopardy as long as the construction was done well. She stated that it was clear that the roots were spread onto this site, which was why the building placement was to the east.

Pratt said he wanted to make sure that the tree was appropriately fenced so there was no impact during construction.

Woods asked about the exterior of the building.

Karamanos explained the façade of the building.

Zahn stated that the final texture and color had yet to be decided.

Pratt said it would be helpful if this decision were made prior to Council action.

A vote on the motion showed:

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

Woods stated that the issue of the Foxfire development was raised at the Council meeting. She said some of the homeowners were finding problems related to easements, in that some of their homes were encroaching on County storm water easements. There seemed to be an issue of construction of the homes and their lack of compliance with what was shown on the approved site plan, she said.

Lloyd stated that staff was actively engaged in a comprehensive enforcement endeavor at Foxfire. He said there also were some drainage and grading concerns that were being addressed with the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's office.

Carlberg asked what was causing the flooding.

Lloyd stated that there were some surface drainage issues regarding either individual site drainage or some of the common drainage. He said this has been addressed in a revised grading plan, but full implementation of the grading plan had not yet been completed.

Carlberg suggested that a working session be held to provide Commission with more detail on this. She said this could be beneficial to Commission when making decisions on future development proposals.

ADJOURNMENT

Pratt declared the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Mark Lloyd, Manager
Planning and Development Services

Bonnie Bona, Secretary

Prepared by Laurie Foondle
Management Assistant
Planning and Development Services