

*Break 8:36 to 8:46 p.m.*

2020-0039

Public Hearing and request for Preliminary Planned Unit Development Concept Plan Recommendation - City File No. 18-021 - Rochester Hills Research Park, a proposed campus addition (to five buildings) at the EEI Global site on 25 acres located at 1400 S. Livernois, south of Avon, zoned REC-W Regional Employment Center - Workplace, Parcel No. 15-21-276-013, Designhaus Architecture, Applicant.

*(Reference: Staff Report prepared by Kristen Kapelanski, dated February 13, 2020, PUD plans and associated documents had been placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof.)*

*Present for the applicant were Peter Stuhldreier and Joe Latozas, Designhaus Architecture, 301 Walnut, Rochester, MI 48307 and Derek Gentile, EEI Global, 1400 S. Livernois, Rochester Hills, MI 48307.*

*Ms. Roediger noted that similar to the last PUD, the applicants had come before the Commissioners a year ago to present an initial concept. The plan was to take existing buildings, add buildings and turn the site into a cohesive campus and repurpose underutilized property. The applicants chose the PUD route because of the campus setting; they did not want to carve it into individual parcels. It would be more of a shared, walking area with public amenities. As part of the PUD benefits, they talked about improving the access in the area. The plan proposed pedestrian accesses to the Clinton River Trail and additional vehicular access. At the north end of the site was a light at Drexelgate and one at Horizon Ct. Horizon Ct. was currently a cul-de-sac, and they would be connecting those streets with a loop, which would also connect to Rochester Industrial Dr. It would provide much better vehicular circulation for Livernois and Hamlin during peak hours. She indicated that it was a fairly easy site from a natural features setback standpoint. There were no wetlands or steep slopes, and a Tree Removal Permit would be required at Final. She indicated that the requested modifications were fairly minor and related primarily to parking and landscaping. All the reviews had recommended approval, and she said that she would be happy to answer any questions.*

*Mr. Stuhldreier felt that Ms. Roediger had summed it up well. Over the last few years, he had spent some time in the Carolinas at different office parks and had noticed how successful they were when they added amenities and walking paths. They realized that the location was ideal for such an office park. He felt that the zoning was meant for just what they were proposing, and the River and the Trail were great natural features. They had been involved for a little over a year master planning the site. They were adding about 50% square-footage to what was there, so it would not be too dense a configuration. There would be three new building pads, two of which would have a high bay and office component. One would have a high bay addition, and there would be a two-story office along Livernois. He agreed that there would be a road connection to Industrial Dr. and Horizon Ct. They gave a lot of thought to traffic flows. He advised that the architecture included brick and limestone buildings with wood accents. The high bays would have clear story windows. There would be walking paths, public art and a food truck court for employees. He showed an*

*aerial view of the campus, which he felt had a logical layout, and he explained that the buildings were set based on topography, traffic flow, parking and utilities. They needed to have something to be able to move forward and market the sites, for which they knew there was a demand. He said that they would be happy to answer any questions.*

*Chairperson Brnabic noted that there were no colored renderings of the buildings in the packet, just elevations and floor plans. Mr. Stuhldreier passed around a material board. He noted that there would be brick buildings with ribbon windows on the second floor, and the brick on the high bays would go all the way to the clear story windows.*

*Mr. Gaber stated that he would want to see some colored elevations consistent with the renderings Mr. Stuhldreier showed. Mr. Gaber felt that the proposal was a great idea. He agreed that it was an underutilized site, and by making it a campus and planning it up front, it gave the City a great indication of what was being planned. He suggested that there would obviously have to be adjustments as potential users came forward. Mr. Gentile could have done things in a piece meal fashion, which would be a worse situation, and he gave the G&V property on Rochester as an example of that. The proposed plan was somewhat consistent with Rochester College's PUD and Master Plan. When the proposal was approved, the City would know generally what to expect, and it would make it easier to market the site. He felt that the public benefit to the City was the connection of the roadways. He thought that was substantial, although it would benefit the subject site the most. He pointed out that the food truck court would just service the development, not the public. The connections to the Trail would serve the development as well. He noted that the only Ordinance deviations being requested were for parking and landscaping, although he was unclear about the one for landscaping. Ms. Roediger advised that the applicant would like to use existing vegetation in lieu of doing a formal streetscape. Mr. Gaber asked if the tree row on Livernois would be preserved, which Mr. Gentile confirmed. Mr. Gaber asked if new trees would be added where the new office building would be, and Mr. Stuhldreier said that there were existing trees.*

*Mr. Gentile said that they bought the building in late 2004 and moved in in 2005. His office was right in the middle, and he loved it. He loved being in the community, and he lived about six miles away in Oakland. He was proud of the employees and the atmosphere they had, and with anything he did, he wanted it to be an extension of that. A lot of their customers were advanced manufacturers that were supporting automotive with autonomous technology and electrification, and there was automation and robotics in the community. His was a marketing and services organization, and they had a little more eye on image and feel. He said that he would welcome the Commissioners coming by and looking at their facility inside. It was important that the campus be an extension of his current operation. He did not want to just sell property for the profit side; he wanted to build something that would be lasting and an important part of the community. Having nice green spaces and walkways were important. Mr. Gaber had said that the pathways to the Trail would not be a public benefit, and they had discussed whether they should allow people to access the Trail from their road. The downside would be for the businesses that operated there. When he first bought the building, twice a week in the evenings*

there was a cricket league that operated in his parking lot with literally 100 people. He asked what they were doing, and someone said that they had the owner's approval. Mr. Gentile stated that he was the owner, and for liability purposes, he had to ask them to politely leave. He had also been solicited many times by charitable organizations running events on the Trail who were looking for a place to stop during the races. He had been glad to offer the parking lot for those temporary activities, and he offered that there was ample space along the Trail if they needed to add something for public use.

Mr. Gaber assumed that it would be a phased development where the major infrastructure would be done first. As they found users for each building, it would be constructed, and the parking and landscaping around the building would be added at that time. He asked if that was the intention.

Mr. Gentile said that they would market it in total. If they had enough interest in the professional office building, that might be triggered faster. He said that he was really eager to get the road in, because that would allow the new businesses to access the site effectively. It would not be efficient to come in from behind their current building. The road would be done in the initial phase. He said that the commercial real estate industry was telling him that big box, high bay real estate was what people were scrambling for, and he could see one or both of those buildings going fairly quickly.

Mr. Gaber was not sure if the site plan reflected exactly what the power point showed, but he assumed that the improvements would not come any closer to the Trail than the current parking lot on the north side. Mr. Gentile felt that was pretty accurate. Mr. Gaber asked if the setback from the Trail would be the same as it currently was, which Mr. Stuhlreyer confirmed. Mr. Gaber assumed that all of the existing vegetation in the setback area between the development and the Trail would be preserved. He asked if there would be parking along the Trail. The site plan showed that, but he did not notice that on the renderings. It was pointed out. He asked if there would be a walking path closer to the Trail. Mr. Stuhlreyer agreed, and said that there would be two connection points to the Trail. Mr. Gaber noted the building closest to the Trail on the southwest side, and he asked how far from the Trail it would be, and if the natural vegetation would be preserved during construction. He asked if it would instead be replaced and what it would be replaced with. He said that one of the concerns of the Planning Commission and City Council was about what people would see from the Trail when a site was fully developed.

Mr. Gentile said that it would be a benefit for a business owner to have natural light coming in as well a view of the Trail. Mr. Stuhlreyer said that the building would be 100 feet from the Trail (40-foot setback and another 60 feet to the Trail, all wooded). Mr. Gaber asked how tall the building would be, and Mr. Stuhlreyer said that it would be about 30 feet tall. Mr. Gaber asked if people would mostly see the vegetation that was currently there or if the vegetation would be supplemented in the setback. Mr. Stuhlreyer did not think that there would be a lot of additional screening other than what was there. They had organized the building to make sure that the high bay space was not along the Trail. The occupants of the building could enjoy the view of the woods, and the people from the Trail would be able to see a much more inhabited structure rather than an

empty warehouse. Mr. Gaber noted the parking area where a lot of trailers were currently parked, and he asked if there would not be an objection to relegating those trailers somewhere out of sight from Livernois. Mr. Stuhlreyer agreed that they would be moved to the back of Building 1.

Mr. Gaber mentioned that they were deficient on parking, and given the needs of the users, he did not see a reason to over park the site to comply with the Ordinance. He would rather not see the parking built unless and until it was needed, so they could maintain as much green space as possible. He asked them to consider landbanked parking. Regarding traffic, he had looked through the study, which had not recommended any improvements on Livernois, and he questioned that. There were currently 150 employees and 150 parking spaces. They were proposing a development that could potentially have 600 spaces. There could conceivably be 600 cars, which was four times as many. He drove Livernois a lot, and he asked if Engineering had reviewed the traffic study. It seemed as if some of the turning movements and tapers and even left turn lanes should be extended on Livernois. In the morning, there would be a lot of people coming to work from the south and turning left into the site. At Drexelgate, there was not much of a stacking area, and then traffic got blocked. He felt that there should be some improvements on Livernois to facilitate the increase in intensity of the site.

Mr. Boughton said that the Traffic Engineer was in agreeance with the traffic study that no improvements were needed on Livernois. Horizon Ct. would turn into a circle, but there would still be a blinking light. There would be pedestrian upgrades at Drexelgate.

Mr. Gaber asked if staff could take a deeper look into that. He lived in that area, and intuitively, it did not make sense to him. He commended the applicants for coming forward with a thoughtful plan, and he felt that it would be a great success for Mr. Gentile and for the City.

Chairperson Brnabic agreed that she would not want to see an overabundance of parking if not needed. She asked, however, why the applicants were comfortable being 256 spaces short of the Ordinance requirement, which she indicated was quite a bit.

Mr. Stuhlreyer responded that they did not press as hard as they could to meet the Ordinance as written. He considered that one of the benefits of a PUD was to use a little experience and get the benefit of not having empty asphalt. They looked at it from the interpretation of the code, not by using the 80% rule for usable space. The existing use had 15% less than what the Ordinance required, and the parking was still quite empty. He did a lot of work in Auburn Hills with industrial space, and he saw an overbuilding of parking. He had his team look at what they would get if they were to push harder for more parking, and they felt that there would be more than 100 spaces left over. High bay space was utilized in such a way that there was little occupancy. There could be massive testing bays and magnetically shielded rooms with no manufacturing or lots of workers. There could be large vehicles in large high bays with one or two techs. They felt that they had the right ratios, and they knew that they could adapt. In the long run, the building pads and their marketability would have

*some flexibility in terms of their use. Although they had set the parameter for the minimum parking ratio, the City would still have another look. It was not reasonable to assume that all three buildings would come in as he designed, and there would be some modifications to the office and high bay proportions, which would change the parking needs. They were doing their best to make the best guess that they could without building a sea of asphalt.*

*Mr. Schroeder agreed with that philosophy. He recalled that when the applicants were previously before the Commissioners, they had talked about putting a different color on every building. He thought that was a great idea, so people could easily find the red or blue building. He wondered if they were following through with that. Mr. Gentile remembered that they were asked to come back with a plan showing more natural colors, but he agreed that they could still color code an entranceway.*

*Dr. Bowyer said that it was nice to be on the Trail and not see any houses. It seemed as if people on the Trail would see a two-story building. She knew that they would be planting trees, and she asked if they could plant an abundance along there so that eventually, someone would not be able to see the building. She acknowledged that people in the office would lose their view of the Trail, but people on the Trail would not have to look at the building. She said that Mr. Gaber had covered all of her other questions.*

*Mr. Reece felt that they had proposed a well thought-out plan. For them to move forward, however, they would need to see colored elevations of the buildings. As far as a concept and layout and with Mr. Stuhlreyer's thoughts on the parking, he thought that it was a great idea.*

*Chairperson Brnabic opened the Public Hearing at 9:25 p.m. Seeing no one come forward, she closed the Public Hearing. She took a straw vote and asked how many people would like to see colored renderings and have the matter come back. The majority wanted to see colored renderings.*

*Mr. Gaber asked if it would be possible to see what Building 5 would look like from the Trail. Mr. Stuhlreyer agreed he could include a photo.*

*Mr. Kaltsounis said that they had talked about the pathways being marked as public, and he asked if they were looking to do that. Mr. Gentile said that they talked about it, but they were reluctant, because it could create problems for the business owners. Mr. Kaltsounis said that he understood that. At his church, they shared access with a lot of different people. Sometimes, it was with Walsh, and sometimes with the City of Troy, and he would have to get a rider on the insurance. He said that Mr. Gentile was in a very special place that would help a lot of people. He did not think that they would use the property to the Trail during the week but rather on weekends. He thought that it was something for them to think about for the next meeting. Mr. Gentile considered that there was one area they might be able to designate for public use. Mr. Kaltsounis added that it would be a great benefit for the City. He read a potential condition about relocating the trailers behind Building 1, and he asked if they could show that. Regarding Livernois, he asked if there would be enough time for staff to look at the traffic study. Ms. Roediger agreed that it could be looked at. Mr. Kaltsounis*

felt that a decel lane would be needed at a minimum. Mr. Stuhreyer said that there were dedicated decel and left turn lanes already. Mr. Kaltsounis said that they would discuss it further during the review. He indicated that the Commission had to make sure the project was harmonious with the environment, and he felt that the proposed development would be good for the area, and he was looking forward to it.

Chairperson Brnabic asked the applicants if they agreed to a postponement, which they did.

**MOTION** by Kaltsounis, seconded by Reece, in the matter of 18-021 (Rochester Hills Research Park PUD), the Planning Commission **postpones the request for a recommendation to City Council of approval of the PUD Concept Plans** until colored renderings are provided and with consideration of the following conditions.

Conditions

1. There shall be no trailers in the front parking area visible from Livernois.
2. Ensure that the new development is no closer to the Trail than the current parking curves, and that the area between the Trail and the parking curves will be preserved in its current, natural form.
3. Trees and shrubs shall be installed in the 40-foot setback between Building 5 and the property line.
4. The applicant shall consider landbanked parking spaces, if possible, for each occupant buildout when it came to fruition under the PUD.
5. Ensure that the initial phase includes the road connections on Horizon Ct. and Rochester Industrial Dr. as well as the Livernois boulevarded entrance and the Livernois landscaping.
6. Consider improvements on Livernois Rd. and staff's recommendation.

**A motion was made by Kaltsounis, seconded by Reece, that this matter be Postponed. The motion PASSED by an unanimous vote.**

Chairperson Brnabic stated for the record that the motion had passed unanimously, and she said that she looked forward to seeing the applicants again.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2020-0053

Master Plan Implementation Progress Report

Ms. Roediger announced that staff had heard earlier in the day from the MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) that Rochester Hills had