

[2021-0004](#) December 15, 2020 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Kaltsounis, seconded by Dettloff, that this matter be Approved as Presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Brnabic, Dettloff, Gaber, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Reece, Bowyer, Weaver and Neubauer

COMMUNICATIONS

Planning & Zoning News dated December 2020

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Brnabic opened Public Comment at 7:03 p.m. Seeing no one wishing to speak online or in the Auditorium and seeing no email communications received, she closed Public Comment.

NEW BUSINESS

[2020-0585](#) Public Hearing and request for Revised Conditional Use Recommendation - City File No. 20-011 - to construct a 1,205 s.f. addition to the existing 1,221 s.f. auto repair facility for Action One Auto, located at the southwest corner of Auburn and John R Roads, zoned B-5 Automotive Service Business with an FB-2 Flexible Business Overlay, Parcel No. 15-35-226-006, Vito Pampalona, Pampalona Companies, Applicant

(Reference: Staff Report prepared by Kristen Kapelanski, dated January 12, 2021, Site Plans and Elevations had been placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof).

Present for the applicant were Vito Pampalona, Pampalona Companies, 850 W. University, Suite D, Rochester, MI 48307 and Bashar Iwas, 110 South St., Rochester, MI 48307, Owner.

Ms. Kapelanski advised that the applicant was proposing to add approximately 1,200 s.f. to the existing Action One Auto facility at Auburn and John R. The property was zoned B-5, and the development would continue under that district. She noted that auto repair facilities were a conditional use in B-5, which would require approval by the City Council after a recommendation by the Planning Commission. The plans were generally in compliance with the Ordinance, and the applicant had requested a modification to allow a reduced rear yard setback and a lesser amount of right-of-way and parking lot plantings due to the required corner clearances. The Planning Commission was being asked to review the plans, but an approval or denial could not be granted due to an inadequate public notice. While the required 300-foot mailing and notice

in the paper was done, the onsite signage, which had been recently posted, was outside of the 15-day notice requirement. The Planning Commission could provide comments, but there would be another public hearing in February. She said that all staff had recommended approval, and that she was available for any questions.

Mr. Pampalona pointed out the location of Action One, a mechanical repair shop which he said had a considerable amount of cars in the parking lot. They wanted to get rid of some of the cars, as Mr. Iwas' business had increased, and that was what prompted adding more bays to the building. They also thought that modernizing the building would bring in more business and provide a better building for the community, especially on that corner. They would also widen the sidewalk along Auburn to eight feet wide to match the abutting walkways. He commented that they would be bringing the building from the 1950's to 2021. He said that they were looking for any comments so that when they came back next month everything would be in place to move forward.

Mr. Gaber said that he generally had no problems with the proposal. He knew that it was a pretty run down corner, and the improvement and new landscaping would spruce it up. He asked how many cars were in the lot and what affect the extra three bays would have on that.

Mr. Pampalona stated that about ten cars would be eliminated from the lot. Mr. Gaber asked if there would be more mechanics to work in the bays at the same time as opposed to them being just storage space for the cars. Mr. Pampalona said that it depended on how many mechanics were working, but just because there was not one working, it did not mean that the bay would be filled with a car. The extra bays were for more simple fixes, and it would alleviate cars sitting for hours. Mr. Gaber asked if cars would still be parked all over rather than just in the spaces, which would be his concern. Mr. Pampalona claimed that cars would only be parked in the appropriate spaces. They did not want vehicles scattered around the parking lot. It would be a lot more orderly and efficient, and the bays would make a huge difference.

Mr. Gaber asked if there was a rendering of the north side of the building. Mr. Pampalona said that one of the renderings showed the rear and west sides, which would be the same architecture as the rest of the building. Mr. Gaber asked if it would be two-tone all the way around. Mr. Pampalona was not sure if it would be, but he indicated that it would be

similar to the renderings.

Ms. Kapelanski said that the rendering did not show a masonry belt on the rear of the building. Mr. Pampalona explained that there would be brick on the bottom and fiber cement board to the top of the building on the front which wrapped around; however, the rear of the building just had fiber cement board painted to match. Mr. Gaber asked if the rendering was representative of the color scheme for the building. Mr. Pampalona agreed that it would be gray and white-toned. Mr. Gaber thanked them and reiterated that the proposal would really spruce up the corner and be an improvement over how it looked currently.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if they planned to re-do the parking lot. Mr. Pampalona said that they would cut the pavement according to the site plan. He said that they did not need to replace the entire parking lot - only the catch basins and the storm sewer piping. They would tar and restripe the entire lot, so it would look new. Chairperson Brnabic asked if they would only stripe for ten spaces, which Mr. Pampalona confirmed.

Mr. Kaltsounis thanked the applicant for his investment in the City, and said that he was looking forward to seeing the business grow. He noticed that the building appeared to be under the drip line of the trees in the rear. Mr. Pampalona said that those trees were actually dead and had been growing under the foundation of the building. They were or would be taken down. Mr. Kaltsounis asked if that was stated on the plans. Ms. Kapelanski advised that Parks had approved the plan. It was her understanding that Elms with Dutch Elm disease were not counted for tree preservation. Mr. Kaltsounis had just wanted to make sure everything was accounted.

Mr. Kaltsounis wondered if there could be something done with the doors in front. He stated that there had to be something done with the back of the building. When Auto Zone came for approval, the Planning Commission asked them to add some type of architectural element to their rear elevation. They added some pillars and inlays. He asked if there was a way to break up the elevation with a different paint color or some type of features. He would like to see that when they came back. Mr. Pampalona agreed that they could do a two-tone paint scheme on the back of the building. However, they could not add dimension, because they would have to encroach into the rear yard setback. He said that they could put together another option, such as a brick belt, but they had to

keep the construction costs affordable. Mr. Kaltsounis said that would be great, because the Commissioners would be the ones driving by, and he would not want to regret going through the Sherwin Williams parking lot and seeing a blank wall. Mr. Pampalona did not think that it made much sense to spend a lot of money on the back of the building, and he indicated that they would rather spend money on upgrading the entry doors to the bays.

Mr. Iwas said that he lived a half a mile down the road, and Rochester Hills had been his home since 1997. He wanted his business to match what had been happening on Auburn Rd. He appreciated the Commissioners considering the proposal. He claimed that he had to keep the cost down because he was a small business during Covid. They were concerned about customers in the waiting room. He agreed that adding bays would alleviate having too many cars in the lot, and people would not have to leave cars overnight.

Mr. Reece thanked him for his investment in the community, particularly under the tough times with Covid. To Mr. Kaltsounis' comment, he suggested continuing the paint band around the sides and back of the building. He felt that adding a two-tone to the bottom and sides would be fine. He thought that it would be nice to see the garage doors with one band of windows, which he felt would be very appreciated in the wintertime by the mechanics to get some natural daylight inside. He considered that it would be like a cave when the doors were closed.

Mr. Pampalona advised that the doors would have plexiglas, so people could see in and out. Mr. Reece said that made sense, but the rendering did not support that. Having windows would help break up the front façade as well. He supported what the applicant was proposing. He asked if there would be exit lights at the side and back doors. He thought that a light was required at an exit door. Other than that, he felt that it was a great investment for the area, and he thanked the applicants.

Mr. Dettloff agreed about extending the paint band. He thought that the proposal would be a great improvement to the Auburn Rd. corridor and compliment what was going on there. He noted that the EIS stated that there would be three employees, and he asked if those existed or would be new.

Mr. Pampalona responded that they were current employees. One

gentleman worked the main counter and might help out with some of the mechanical, and there would be two full time mechanics. Mr. Iwas would have to determine how much business the new bays brought in and then figure out if he needed more people. Mr. Dettloff said that he supported the project, and he also thanked them for their investment in Rochester Hills.

Mr. Hooper said that he echoed the other comments. He referred to the parking plan showing ten spots. He considered that if three were needed for employees and one for the owner, there would only be six spots for future vehicles, besides the five bays. He thought that they should just stripe the southern edge of the parking lot for another six spots, as it was originally. He maintained that cars would be parked there. He had observed a dozen cars in the lot at any one time. He said that realistically, they would need more than six spaces for on deck cars.

Mr. Pampalona mentioned that there would be five vehicles in the bays. He added that Mr. Iwas did not work there full time; there was a manager included in the three employees. Mr. Hooper commented that he just knew what would happen. He drove by and always saw at least a dozen cars. Mr. Pampalona said that if Rochester Hills would allow it, they would be happy to stripe more spaces. Their plan followed the Ordinance, and Ms. Kapelanski added that it would require a parking modification. Mr. Hooper brought up a Google map, and he counted 21 cars. He stated that he was not opposed to the plan, he just knew the reality, and that there would always be more than ten cars in the lot to support the business.

Chairperson Brnabic asked Ms. Kapelanski if the bays were counted towards parking, and she said that they were not. Chairperson Brnabic felt that the current situation with 20 cars parked all over was rather an unsightly look. She looked forward to seeing a more organized look with cars parked in actual striped spaces. She also agreed that it would be a very nice improvement to the corner, and she looked forward to the upgrade.

Dr. Bowyer thanked Mr. Iwas for proposing a very nice building for the corner, as it had looked pretty run down for so many years. She thanked him for taking on all her auto projects. She could bring him the parts, and he would do the job, which she said was great. She really supported the project, especially now that they were improving the whole corridor.

Mr. Weaver agreed that it was a great project that was needed. He asked if the renderings could be updated for the next meeting to show the windows in the overhead doors. He agreed that the rear elevation needed to be broken up a little, and he said that he was fine with two-tone paint. He suggested added several ornamental trees in the back which could help shield the flat façade of the building. He felt that because of the number of cars that requesting a parking waiver should be successful, and he would not mind revisiting it. He echoed the other Commissioners' comments and thanked them for their investment.

Mr. Pampalona said that they could move the evergreen trees proposed and add a tree. Mr. Weaver suggesting adding two or three crabapples in between the gaps of the evergreens to help with relief of the building. Mr. Pampalona stated that it would be no problem.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she liked the look of the building with the clean, straight lines and the natural coloring. She thanked them for what they were doing, and said that it was a huge upgrade. She also appreciated them doing it in such difficult times for a lot of small businesses. As her fellow Commissioners said, she would like to see 360 views of the building when they came back, with the added glass, trees and façade upgrade.

Chairperson Brnabic summarized what the Commissioners had requested for the next meeting. Mr. Pampalona agreed that they would add a two-tone band to the back of the building and add trees in back and glass to the doors. He mentioned that it was somewhat difficult for his guys to draw up the trees which would be so close to the building.

Chairperson Brnabic opened the Public Hearing at 7:36 p.m. Seeing no one wishing to speak online or in the Auditorium and seeing no email communications received, she closed the Public Hearing.

Chairperson Brnabic said that they looked forward to seeing the applicants back at the February 16th meeting with the few improvements requested. She thanked them for the nice improvement to the corner.

Discussed

1,205 s.f. addition to the existing 1,221 s.f. Action One Auto building located at the southwest corner of Auburn and John R Roads, zoned B-5 Automotive Service Business with an FB-2 Flexible Business Overlay, Parcel No. 15-35-226-006, Vito Pampalona, Pampalona Companies, Applicant

Discussed

2021-0001

Public Hearing and request for Conditional Use Recommendation - City File No. 20-022 - for a three-story mixed-use building called Zeenat Plaza on .49 acre located at the southwest corner of Auburn and Gerald Ave., zoned BD Brooklands District, Parcel No. 15-36-226-068, Hisham Turk, Applicant

(Reference: Staff Report prepared by Kristen Kapelanski, dated January 12, 2021, Site Plans and Elevations had been placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof).

Present for the applicant were Iftequar Fazal, 620 Robinson Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48307 and Hisham Turk, 1412 E. 11 Mile Rd., #2, Madison Heights, MI 48071.

Ms. Kapelanski summarized that the applicant was proposing a three-story, mixed-use building in the new BD Brooklands District at the southwest corner of Auburn and Gerald Ave. She added that the first floor was retail, and the second and third stories were planned for multi-family residential. She advised that a third story required a conditional use in the Brooklands District, and that it had to be stepped back. The third floor was stepped back appropriately, and the applicant had provided the required sight lines. The dedicated parking for residential had been provided, but the applicant was asking for a space width reduction to allow for nine-foot spaces in the lower turnover parking areas. She noted that all of the required right-of-way plantings along Gerald could not be accommodated because of the infrastructure. The Planning Commission was being asked to review the information, but, as with Action Auto, approval or denial could not be granted due to inadequate noticing. A 300-foot mailing was done, and the notice was placed in the paper, but the onsite sign, which was now up, had not been posted for the required 15 days prior to the meeting. She stated that all staff reviews had recommended approval, and she was available for any questions.

Mr. Turk, Architect, announced that it was the first project for the new BD District. He noted that the first floor retail would total approximately 8,387 s.f., and there would be ten residential units, six on the second floor and four on the third, five with two-bedrooms and five with three-bedrooms. He showed an elevation with the materials and color schemes, and said that he would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairperson Brnabic asked how many ground floor retail units were proposed. Mr. Hisham said that it was open, but there could be a maximum of six. Chairperson Brnabic noted six doors in the rear, and she asked if they were all for retail or if any were for the residential units. Mr. Turk said that there were six entrances for the retail, and there were three additional entrances to the stairways and elevator for the residential units. Chairperson Brnabic said that