



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

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Chairperson Deborah Brnabic, Vice Chairperson Greg Hooper
Members: Ed Anzek, Gerard Dettloff, Nicholas O. Kaltsounis,
Stephanie Morita, David A. Reece, C. Neall Schroeder, Ryan Schultz

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Brnabic called the Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 8 - Ed Anzek, Deborah Brnabic, Gerard Dettloff, Greg Hooper, Nicholas Kaltsounis, Stephanie Morita, David Reece and C. Neall Schroeder

Excused 1 - Ryan Schultz

Quorum present.

Also present: Sara Roediger, Director of Planning and Economic Dev.
Kristen Kapelanski, Manager of Planning
Maureen Gentry, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2018-0234](#) Work Session of May 15, 2018

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

Aye 8 - Anzek, Brnabic, Dettloff, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Morita, Reece and Schroeder

Excused 1 - Schultz

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no Communications presented. Mr. Schultz entered at 6:15 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[2018-0095](#) Master Plan Work Session - Giffels Webster

(Reference: Master Plan documents, prepared by Giffels Webster, had

been placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof.)

Present for the discussion were Rod Arroyo, Jill Bahm and Eric Fazzini of Giffels Webster, 1025 E. Maple, Suite 100, Birmingham, MI 48009.

Ms. Bahm stated that they would move the Goals and Objectives to the end, because they wanted to focus on the proposed Future Land Use Map (future map) changes as well as redevelopment site concepts. Mr. Fazzini would describe the process they used to present the information, with aeriels and excerpts from the current future and zoning maps and based on field observations and conversations with staff. They also had some recommendations to discuss.

Mr. Fazzini started in the southeast corner of the City with East South Boulevard west of Dequindre. The first site recommended for change was a single-family home occupation that was designated as office on the future map. They believed it should be shifted into the residential area to the west. It looked as if it was designated office because of a section line. They felt that Michelson was a better barrier for the office area, and it would line up with the residentially-zoned area to the west.

Mr. Reece asked if they would propose a rezoning to residential. Mr. Fazzini advised that the existing zoning was residential; it would just change the proposed future land use recommendation. If the site came in for an office rezoning, the current Future Land Use Plan (future plan) would support it, and they did not feel that was appropriate given the existing zoning and use. Mr. Anzek asked if canine boarding kennels were permitted in residential, as the aerial showed a Canine Country Club. Mr. Fazzini said that they did not verify whether there was actually a kennel there.

The next site was at South Boulevard and Rochester. The area was currently recommended strictly for office, which they did not feel accurately matched what was there. There was a viable lumber yard and a Big Boy. The only office was along South Boulevard with two buildings on the west side, and an animal hospital on the northeast corner. The remainder of the east side of Rochester was retail with one residence. The zoning map showed an FB-3 Overlay on the west side and FB-2 on the east side. They were recommending that the future plan aligned with the FB districts, so the west side would become Flex 3 and the east side would be Flex 2. Mr. Reece noted that it was an area where the Commissioners had recently approved a major development. Ms. Roediger agreed, and said that there was a lot of potential for

redevelopment on the east side as well.

Mr. Kaltsounis observed that they wanted to go from Flex 2 to Flex 3. One of his concerns was if a Fairfield Inn at several stories wanted to come in on the east side. Ms. Roediger stated that it would not be increasing the density at all. Flex 3 allowed three stories, and that would only be on the west side of Rochester, and the Flex 2 only allowed two stories on the east. The future map would match the zoning map, and it would not increase the height in either location.

Mr. Fazzini explained that most of the changes were just tweaks to match zoning and uses, and it would not increase or decrease development rights generally. Ms. Bahm added that it was typically done the opposite way. They would not necessarily make a future land use designation based on what a property was currently zoned. Typically, the zoning would follow the Master Plan. In this case, the City had changes that included the FB Overlay zoning on many of the parcels, and it made sense to better align them. With road developments and the current land use pattern, it made sense to put things back to the way they were zoned originally. It was envisioned that there could be office development at the subject location, but it never happened, so it was a good time to see if it made sense to keep it that way or if they should change it back.

Mr. Fazzini noted South Boulevard and Livernois. Near the northeast corner there was a senior housing development under construction, which aligned with the Flex 1 Overlay zoning that existed. The change would extend Flex 1 east to account for that development. Next was South Boulevard and Crooks where there was a Chase Bank on the northeast corner. To the north of the bank was a parcel that had been Conditionally Rezoned. They were recommending to pull the Flex 1 designation to that parcel to account for the new zoning. When they met with staff, there was a discussion about whether mixed residential was appropriate for the area. They wanted to discuss that further with the Planning Commission. East of the bank were some narrow lots that had an MR Overlay, and he wondered if there were any thoughts.

Mr. Kaltsounis said that for the properties to the south, Troy was looking at townhouses. He questioned how far they should encroach into a pre-platted subdivision. He would have a concern about adding large density homes in an area that was very sparse with big lots. He realized that it was by the intersection. Ms. Roediger said that going east into the neighborhood, there were about five single-family lots that had homes, and they did not see a need to encourage change. They thought the

single-family homes should stay without the MR Overlay to prevent them from being acquired for townhomes. Mr. Kaltsounis said that he agreed with that recommendation. He suggested adding CR Conditional Rezoning to the legend on the map.

Mr. Fazzini mentioned Auburn at Crooks, and said that there was an existing two-unit commercial building on the northwest corner of Alexander and Auburn that was currently a dentist's office. It was zoned office, and on the future map it showed residential. They were recommending that the future plan be updated to reflect the use and zoning, extending the FB-2 designation from the northeast corner to the dentist parcel.

On the north side of Auburn west of Livernois there was a stretch of small commercial uses, including a Dairy Treat, State Farm Insurance, auto use and a mirror and glass use. None of the parcels were currently recommended for non-residential, and they were proposing to extend the FB-2 from the northwest corner. They felt that the commercial uses were viable, and that there would be no reason to encourage downzoning. The second recommendation was for the southwest corner, to increase the development potential to FB-2 to match the rest of the intersection. South of that was the third recommendation to add mixed residential to increase development potential and match the mixed residential existing east of Livernois south of Auburn.

Mr. Anzek asked the zoning designation on the southeast corner. Mr. Fazzini said that it had the mixed residential overlay. Ms. Roediger pointed out that the Bebb Oak was on the southwest corner. The church owned the property, and they were looking at selling off the northern portion. They came and asked what the City wanted to see at the corner. The Planning Commission had seen plans for the northeast corner for a mixed retail and apartment development, and they had to think about what should be at the southwest corner. Staff thought it would be appropriate to have a retail intersection and mixed residential behind it down to the church, but they wanted to get the Commissioners' thoughts. She noted that the IAGD owned most of the southeast corner, and that the intersection could change quite a bit over the next ten years.

Mr. Kaltsounis said that he was fine with some of the changes to the intersection. Going west, he was not a fan of increasing density. He reminded that Auburn had businesses for a reason when it was a main trunk line. It was not a main trunk line any longer, and he thought the City would have a hard time filling it with businesses. They could get every

townhouse proposal available down that road. He would rather keep that between the intersection and M-59 instead of taking it west.

Ms. Roediger reminded that it was currently all zoned for businesses, and it was pretty much all occupied by businesses. There were not any single-family homes that fronted Auburn there. Low density residential seemed somewhat questionable, because it seemed unlikely that people would develop single-family homes facing Auburn. Their thought was to encourage the enhancement of the businesses that were there that were already zoned commercial. Mr. Kaltsounis said that he envisioned townhouses everywhere, and he did not know if it was a great spot for them. Ms. Roediger asked what he would like to see there. Mr. Kaltsounis related that he drove that road every day, and he would rather see small businesses or homes. He wanted to protect the area from townhouses, except from the intersection east. If there were townhouses going west, he would be concerned about that.

Mr. Hooper said that it made sense to him. There were all businesses there now, and FB-2 would be appropriate. He could not see it being downzoned to residential, and he thought there would always be some type of small business uses along there.

Ms. Morita asked if they were looking at mixed residential for the church property, where the Bebb Oak was. Ms. Roediger said that preservation of that tree would be number one, regardless of what use went there. Ms. Morita did not think it was realistic to expect the church to sell the property when they ran a school out of there. Ms. Roediger related that it was what they were looking at doing. The City wanted to encourage preservation of the tree by allowing attached units. If it stayed single-family detached, it would not cover the cost while preserving the tree. Ms. Morita said that it was in the right-of-way, and Ms. Roediger said that she would be concerned about the underground root structure and how far away development should be.

Mr. Anzek said that immediately west of the southwest corner, there was an old, historic house, and he asked if it would remain FB-1. He asked if it could serve as an access to the mixed residential. Ms. Roediger said that it could, provided there was approval by the Historic Districts Commission.

Mr. Fazzini moved to Auburn and Rochester. There was a townhome development (Barrington Park). The future plan showed office, and they were recommending a change to multiple-family because of the

townhomes. Mr. Fazzini advised that the rest of Barclay Circle would remain office.

Mr. Fazzini mentioned Auburn and John R where there were four parcels zoned B-2 General Business with an FB-2 Overlay. The future plan did not account for that zoning. They were recommending to extend the FB-2 designation to those four parcels. Mr. Reece pointed out that was another area they had discussions about. Ms. Roediger said that it was another example where the zoning was more lenient than in the future plan. It would bring the future plan up to what the zoning allowed. Mr. Reece asked if the proposed change would impact the applicants who brought the concept forward. Ms. Roediger said that it would not, because the zoning was not being changed, and the current zoning had allowed for that.

Mr. Fazzini pointed to the Brooklands area. He showed Briarwood Heating and Cooling on Dequindre south of Auburn. FB-2 did not currently extend to that parcel, and they were recommending that to account for the existing commercial use and zoning.

The Avon Prairie House at Walton and Livernois was being recommended to have an FB-1 designation. It was an historic house used for non-residential purposes. The site also had access through a commercial area to Livernois. Mr. Anzek recalled that the City had granted a Use Variance in 2001 for the site after a long, drawn out battle. The Use Variance was very specific as to what could go there. FB-1 would allow for more uses than what the Use Variance permitted. He asked what ruled the property.

Mr. Arroyo advised that the way it was currently zoned, the Use Variance ruled the property. If the future plan designation was changed, an applicant could potentially ask for a change in zoning, and it would open the door for other uses. Mr. Anzek did not think that the house was conducive to large office or high intensity developments. The ZBA was specific about what could and could not happen there. The applicants got a revised Use Variance about six years ago that permitted a one-chair beauty shop.

The next site, Waltonwood at Main, was near Rochester and Tienken. They were recommending updating the future plan by taking the FB designation south from the intersection. It would line up the use with the future plan, which recommended multiple-family.

Next was Rochester north of Avon at Cloverport, where they were recommending FB-2 where there were retail uses, and it was zoned commercial. There was a Mobil gas station on the west side that was shown as residential on the future map. On Rochester closer to Avon was a Tim Horton's which they proposed to integrate with the FB-2 area to the north as opposed to the FB-1 area to the south, which had redevelopment potential. The last recommendation on the slide was near the southwest corner of Rochester and Avon. The area had three uses - parking for the shopping center on the corner; a Kindercare on Meadowfield Dr. and Wellbridge east of that. They were all recommended for multiple-family, which did not align with the uses or the zoning. They were proposing to extend the FB-3 from the corner and square-off the commercial in the area.

Mr. Roediger clarified that it was the area behind Home Depot and Dick's Sporting Goods. Mr. Hooper wondered if it should be FB-2. Mr. Fazzini said that the corner was FB-3, so they recommended that because of the shopping center, and it included parking for the center. Mr. Hooper considered that the parking lot was not being used, so it could be open for redevelopment. He asked how many stories were allowed in FB-3, and he was advised three.

Mr. Kaltsounis recalled that when they did the previous Master Plan, they designated areas that they wanted to give a kick start. He gave an example of the offices across South Boulevard, between M-59 and Dequindre. One area that did not do much was Hamlin between Livernois and Rochester. They added mixed residential, but not much came of it. He saw that they were doing a lot of cleanup of the plan, which was fine, but he wondered what they could do to kick start other areas. He gave the landfill areas, the Cardinal and those in section 24, as examples. There were opportunities to remove landfills and perhaps put in houses, as other Cities had done. He thought that might be the next topic. He indicated that they had added the REC (Regional Employment Center) area previously, and nothing had happened.

Ms. Roediger said that the whole FB Overlay created opportunities and flexibility throughout the City as the market needed. The main corridors were being set up for where the City wanted redevelopment, and staff and Giffels had come up with some redevelopment sites, which would be the focus of the next discussion: Bordine's, Suburban Softball and the landfill properties.

Ms. Bahm noted that they looked at the M-59 and Auburn Rd. corridor

plans. The current Master Plan suggested to look at them for more information. They (Giffels) thought it was important to pull the information together into one spot. There was a lot of new language about future land use designations and their definitions that came from the other planning documents. It was not recreating things, but rather, re-affirming that they were good strategies for redevelopment. They also thought that some clarification would be helpful for the flex districts. In her memo, she had suggested renaming districts. There was FB-1, FB-2 and FB-3. It seemed that because FB-1 was residential and office that it should be called residential and office flex. That would make it easier for people to understand. There was a mobile home park community on Auburn in the middle of the REC district. That was in the current plan as REC. When the last future plan was done, there had been some concern that the park was not a sustainable development, and that it might go away. The City was anticipating redevelopment, but since that time, the park had become a really nice place. They found that it hit a lot of the City's planning goals about affordable housing and smaller homes that were easier to maintain. She maintained that it was a good place for that. Rather than calling it out as a mobile home park, they were recommending creating a new land use designation of Residential 5 that would accommodate small homes on small lots in a more dense development pattern. It would be in the four to six per-acre range and could apply in other locations. They wished to hear the Commissioners' thoughts.

Ms. Morita stated that from a City Council perspective, they had been noticing the struggle in the City for affordable housing. It was one of Council's prime concerns. That topic had made its way into the Strategic Plan to explore ways to increase affordable housing options in the City. She felt that most of Council would support the new district. She knew that a lot of people who wanted to move to Rochester Hills felt that they could not afford to move into the City.

Ms. Roediger said that they talked about putting Residential 5 on the two existing manufactured home sites. They also wanted to create an area where someone could build new smaller lots, so it was expanded on the northeast corner of John R and Avon, just south of Bloomer Woods. There was some vacant land in that corner that might be appropriate for some smaller, more affordable housing options. Mr. Arroyo added that there was an area east of the park on Auburn, as well. The density of four to six per-acre was roughly what was found in a typical mobile home park. Ms. Bahm said that would be for newer developments; existing parks tended to be denser than that.

Mr. Kaltsounis asked if the REC district was too broad and if they needed to define it further. In other districts, they allowed certain things, but with REC nothing had happened in ten years. Ms. Roediger reminded that ARaymond headquarters was big. Mr. Anzek said that the REC Regional Employment Center title was also chosen to help market the area. The area had been very successful, and it was full except for the landfill area. He reminded that the JENOPTIK building was recently done.

Mr. Anzek explained that the manufactured housing park was intentionally made REC because three or four years before they did the REC and M-59 Corridor study, the park changed hands, and everyone was put on a monthly basis. The owners had been willing to sell the property for manufacturing. Staff determined that the Austin Rd. extension could go through the property, and they initially designed it that way. It was not just to get rid of the manufactured housing park. The park had come back over the years. He thought that the affordable housing designation was a good way to meet that goal. Affordable housing was tied directly to the price of land, not the price of the structure. As long as land was going for \$100k per-acre, it would be tough to see affordable housing in the City.

Mr. Anzek brought up properties that had dual zoning. There were several, mostly in the north, where the future plan and the zoning split the zoning. When a bank tried to appraise it, they had a difficult time trying to determine which zoning to use. There was a relatively big parcel on Auburn just west of Crooks where the front half was commercial and the back was residential. The line was drawn through the middle of nowhere. He asked what they could do with those and if they could fix those in the future plan.

Mr. Arroyo said that it was a good time to look at that, but sometimes it was appropriate to split. It might not make sense to push the commercial zoning deep into a residential area. Mr. Anzek said that it made a parcel virtually impossible to develop. Mr. Arroyo said that when doing a draft future map, they preferred not to show parcel lines. That was because it was not intended to have the zoning drive the land use. Mr. Arroyo added that a future plan was a long range plan, and they had to look at how a boundary needed to move when they looked at changes in zoning. Mr. Anzek agreed that it gave flexibility. Mr. Hooper said that he would keep the Auburn Rd. park as REC and make the one on Avon Residential 5 zoning. From a global perspective, he felt that the whole area off of Auburn should be REC.

Mr. Arroyo said that the issue was the manufactured housing community. It was a viable type of affordable housing, and the City had a responsibility to plan for all legitimate land uses. It seemed to be sited in a reasonable location, and they felt that it was a good idea to call it out as an area that was appropriate for residential at that density. It did not seem to be totally incompatible with what was happening around it. It was not that unusual to have higher density detached housing in proximity to work places. Given some of the issues they had talked about with affordable housing, and the fact that the park had turned around, and it did not appear that the owner was looking to offer it for an alternative use, maintaining it was appropriate. He stated that it was a significant area that housed a lot of people.

Ms. Bahm pointed out that there would be another review period in five years. The next time they did the update, they would evaluate that parcel again to see if it was still serving what they needed for residential housing and if it was still appropriate for the area. Mr. Hooper said that it had been a few years since he walked it, and when he was on Council, it was perhaps half full. Ms. Roediger advised that the owners had done some significant investment in the last couple of years, and it was mostly full. Mr. Arroyo said that they were very surprised at how well it had been maintained.

Mr. Kaltsounis said that he agreed with Mr. Anzek that there were certain areas within REC that had done well. One area he had a concern with was Avon Industrial, which did not look so nice. There was an asphalt plant and landscaping companies and old industrial places to the west of the bowling alley. He would like that area addressed to see what they could do with it. Mr. Arroyo said that there were potential things they could do. Some communities did not want asphalt plants, and they tried to work with the owner to find alternative locations so a property could be redeveloped. He acknowledged that could be hard to do. Mr. Anzek stated that the amount of industrial was tied to the M-59 Corridor Study, and Avon Industrial was an important access road to the landfill to the north. It was still anticipated that the LDFA might pay for an extension of Avon Industrial into that site, and it would trigger a lot of redevelopment along Avon Industrial. Another concern with that property was that there was not good soil, and the buildings were settling badly. He agreed that it was an obsolete area that needed help, and he believed that REC created flexibility within a certain framework. He considered that there was M-59 frontage, and it would be redeveloped at some point. Mr. Arroyo said that sometimes, they just had to be patient and wait. As better sites developed and redeveloped, it would put pressure on the less desirable

sites to also develop. In the last ten years, they had the great recession. That was not a good time for redevelopment, but that was changing, and they were seeing an increased demand for industrial property. There were a lot of trends that could lead to this site becoming more desirable than in the past.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that there was a possibility that the discussion could be continued after the regular meeting. She needed to wrap up the work session so people waiting in the hall for the regular meeting could get settled.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to come before the Planning Commission.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairperson Brnabic announced that the next meeting date was to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Mr. Reece, seconded by Mr. Schroeder, Chairperson Brnabic adjourned the Work Session at 6:57 p.m.

Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission

Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, Secretary