

**Aye** 9 - Brnabic, Dettloff, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Morita, Reece, Schroeder, Schultz and Gaber

*Chairperson Brnabic stated for the record that the motion had passed unanimously, and she congratulated the applicants. Ms. Roediger advised that the matter would go to City Council on December 2nd.*

## DISCUSSION

### 2019-0497

The Barns Senior Living, a 12-resident senior living facility proposed at 1841 Crooks Rd., south of Avon

*(Reference: Memo prepared by Kristen Kapelanski, dated February 16, 2018 and site condo plans and elevations had been placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof.)*

*Present for the applicant were Lijo Antony and Heather McKay, Walnut Creek Living, LLC, 49228 Walnut Creek Dr., Macomb, MI 48044.*

*Ms. Kapelanski noted that it was a discussion item, so the proposal had not been reviewed at the staff level. The applicants wanted to come forward and get the Commission's initial thoughts. They were proposing a 12-bed senior living facility, which would be a conditional use in the district. 1841 Crooks used to have a house on it, and it was demolished a little less than a year ago, because it fell into disrepair and could not be salvaged. The site was a designated historic district, so the barn had to stay. It was staff's understanding that the barn was salvageable and had been maintained structurally. The matter would also have to go before the Historic Districts Commission for consideration and approval as well.*

*Mr. Antony stated that he was a nurse by profession, and he was a Rochester Hills resident. Most of his other senior living facilities had six beds and were in the Macomb Township area. He had five facilities. He realized that senior living was popping up all over the place, from low to high end (\$10,000 per month), and a lot of families had asked him why he did not do something in Rochester Hills. He had driven by the subject location every day, and he had looked at the property for a long time and finally made a decision to call the realtor. He found that there were a lot of problems associated with it, but he did not give up. He decided to move forward, noting that there was also vacant property adjacent owned by the same owners, and he wished to purchase both properties. He would like to offer affordable level, senior living for 12 residents. He introduced his partner, Heather, who had a Masters in Social Work and*

*had been in the industry a long time.*

*Ms. McKay said that she had primarily worked in hospice. She had been to many nursing and senior living facilities, and she saw the need for a smaller, home like senior living community. She felt that the property was ideal for that, because it would be a peaceful environment and be more affordable, as opposed to a nursing facility that could be \$8-10,000 per month.*

*Mr. Antony said that he wanted to propose a yearly budget to maintain the barn and open it to the public. He had lived in Rochester Hills for about 12 years, and he did not even know about the barn until recently. He wanted to include it in the proposal and open it to school children also. The barn would be a location for the seniors to do some daytime activities.*

*Chairperson Brnabic asked if they were talking about assisted living or independent living. Mr. Antony said that it would be assisted living. People would not drive, and they would be supervised 24/7. They could do all levels of care, however. Chairperson Brnabic clarified that they would not be considered a nursing facility, to which Mr. Antony agreed. Chairperson Brnabic thought that the price points at \$8-10k seemed high. Her mom was in one, and she was not paying that much. She asked if there would be a lot of employees. Mr. Antony said that there should be three employees at all times and two at night. There would be a cook and someone to do maintenance and landscaping. Chairperson Brnabic asked if there would be someone else to do laundry, and Mr. Antony said that the employees would do the laundry.*

*Mr. Schultz noted that it was in an historic district, and he asked if the architecture on the proposed structure would have to meet a set of established criteria. Ms. Kapelanski said that they mainly relied on the City's historic consultant for that determination. The applicant would have to get a Certificate of Appropriateness, and the architecture would be reviewed by the HDC. In the past, they had generally looked for traditional architecture, but as long as it was not overly modern and it harmonized with the barn, it should be fine.*

*Mr. Gaber asked if it was only the subject parcel that was noncontiguous, which was confirmed. He asked if they were proposing a one-story structure. Mr. Antony agreed, and said that State licensure required one-story. Mr. Gaber asked if they had spoken with any of the neighbors. Mr. Antony said that it was on his agenda. Mr. Gaber said that it was*

*always something the Planning Commission liked to see, and he would appreciate it. He thought that the project had potential, given the site and the size. If the HDC approved it as being compatible with the barn, he could see the merit in the project.*

*Mr. Reece wondered if the kitchen would have to be a commercial grade or residential grade, based on the number of occupants. He would be concerned about that. He pointed out that there were similar facilities on Rochester Rd. by Hamlin. He had no objection to what Mr. Antony was proposing, and he felt that it was strongly needed. Preserving the barn and making it a viable structure was great. The facilities on Rochester put out a tremendous amount of trash. He would like to see something to take care of that, such as having a structure for the trash, because he assumed that there would be medical waste in addition to household waste. He suggested that it would be a good idea to take care of the trash well. Otherwise, he felt the challenge would be the HDC more than anyone else.*

*Mr. Antony responded that he believed that the kitchen would be residential grade. The State guidelines said that seven to twelve still fell under that. Mr. Reece said that a commercial grade would be significantly more expensive, and there would have to be extra fire protection. He noted the floor plan, and wondered if the laundry was adequately sized for 12 residents. He asked if there could be a couple residents in the larger bedrooms. Mr. Antony agreed, and said that there could be a husband and wife or two men, for example. Most were private bedrooms, however.*

*Mr. Antony said that regarding the trash issue, the homes on Rochester were for special needs people, and there was a lot more medical waste. They had a nurse on staff 24/7. His facilities were technically non-skilled, assisted living. They would eliminate the waste every day, and they would probably have to get a few more garbage cans in a designated location, which would be screened.*

*Mr. Dettloff referred to Mr. Schultz's comment about the HDC, and he asked Ms. Kapelanski if the Secretary of Interior guidelines would have to be followed for new construction. Ms. Kapelanski said that they would, and that was what the HDC considered when they reviewed projects. Mr. Dettloff said that as others had said, he agreed that it was a good use for the parcel, and there was a definite need for what they were proposing. He thanked them for bringing it forward.*

*Mr. Kaltsounis remarked that he would be the Negative Nancy of the bunch. He agreed that they would have to work through the HDC. One of his concerns was that he did not want the barn to go into disrepair. There was a certain amount of responsibility. It was a quiet area, and what they were proposing was really a business. There was nothing like it in the surrounding area. When he looked at whether it would be harmonious with the environment, it sort of threw that off. They would be sticking a business in the middle of a subdivision, even though it was off of Crooks. He said that he would wait to see how things evolved.*

*Mr. Antony said that his goal was to make the building as homelike as possible. Keeping up the appearance was the goal. He would like to have a park-like setting with benches so families could walk around. The proposed building would be about 4,600 s.f. The remaining property would be landscaped to look its best visually. Mr. Kaltsounis asked how many parking spots there would be. Mr. Antony said that he would have to talk with the engineer about what was required and what was provided, but they had enough room. He believed that the pathway in front of the road was not completed.*

*Ms. Kapelanski said that the City did have an easement from the property owner for that, and the new owner would be responsible for constructing the pathway. Regarding the parking, three spaces were required. She knew that when they had looked at similar facilities in the past, the Planning Commission had expressed some dismay that it was probably not enough with visitors coming. The applicant was proposing a little more, and they would have room to add more than six if the Planning Commission desired that as part of the conditional use. As far as the look of the house, there was the extra layer with the HDC. Part of the Secretary of Interior Standards looked at whether or not something fit in with the surrounding community and what would have been typical to have been constructed at the time, so it would have to have a residential character.*

*Mr. Kaltsounis knew that for a lot of developments, sidewalks were required all the way around. He helped out an 85-year old in a similar community, and there was a sidewalk all the way around, and people walked it all the time. He did not know if Mr. Antony's residents would need that or if the City required it, but they required it of businesses, and he would not want to have older people out in the back if there was a situation and they had to walk on uneven ground.*

*Mr. Antony said that the licensing board stated that they had to have two*

entrances. They also had to have a paved walkway towards the house. He had not seen it for both sides, but if it was required, they would do it. Mr. Kaltsounis wished him good luck.

Mr. Gaber stated that it would be designed for 12 residents, but he asked Mr. Antony if he would be amenable to conditioning the approval to prevent any type of future expansion. They had room, and he would be concerned that Mr. Antony could come back down the road and ask for an expansion.

Mr. Antony said that he was not interested in a bigger facility. He had a 40-bed in Mt. Clemens, and it was very tough to manage. There were staffing issues, and he made the biggest mistake going into a bigger building. He stated that he would never do that again. The maximum he would do was 12 residents. Mr. Gaber asked if he would be willing to restrict with that condition, and Mr. Antony agreed.

Ms. Morita asked if they expected to have trash pickup every day. Mr. Antony said that it would be weekly, regular residential trash pickup.

Mr. Hooper said that in regards to the barn, they said that it would be maintained, but he asked Mr. Antony if he had any thoughts about the use. Mr. Antony said that he walked into the barn, and it was very nice and spacious. They would paint and clean it. The current owner had a lot of personal stuff to be removed. The base of the barn was in bad shape, and there was no gas or electricity hooked up currently. He wanted to allow visitors. It would be open during business hours, and they would monitor who went in. He did not know what type of repairs would be needed on an annual basis, but they would designate a budget towards it. Mr. Hooper asked if it would just be a gathering place. Mr. Antony said that they could have activities within the building. If people wanted to have coffee there or have table activities, they could offer that. People with dementia might do better in that surrounding. Mr. Hooper asked if it would be used only in the summer, and Mr. Antony agreed, and he said that people would not go out in the winter. Mr. Hooper clarified that it would not be open to the public. Mr. Antony said that it would be up to the HDC as to what was allowed. Mr. Hooper said that as Mr. Reece mentioned about the homes on Rochester, there were easily five cars per house every day. If it was going to be a similar clientele, he was not sure where the workers would park. Mr. Antony maintained that it would not be a similar clientele. The others were traumatic brain injury homes, which meant they had different security and a nurse and a minimum of four caregivers and other professionals. He would not have that; there would

*be family visitors which might come daily or just on the weekends. A doctor would come once a month, and someone might come to do physical therapy. He could not see there being more than four cars at a time. Mr. Hooper pointed out that the Rochester homes were smaller. He was okay with the concept.*

*Chairperson Brnabic asked the monthly price point. Mr. Antony said that his private rates started at \$3,000 and maxed at \$4,000. Private rooms started at \$4,500 and maxed at \$6,000. There were people who needed more care, but they had a cap. Chairperson Brnabic asked what was considered full care for assisted living. Mr. Antony said that it involved helping people with feeding. Because he was a nurse, the State allowed him to take more critical patients. The price went up a little for tube feeding and oxygen monitoring. Incontinent people required more care. Chairperson Brnabic said that Mr. Antony had stated that there would be walkways and a couple of entrances, but she wondered if the plan was to have pathways around the entire facility. Mr. Antony said that the building would have walkways. There would be a ramp and steps in the back that went to a paved walkway that went to the front. There would be different walkways throughout the property to walk in the summertime. He was not sure if they would be paved or mulch.*

*Chairperson Brnabic summarized that it sounded positive to move forward. Mr. Antony had given his word that it would not go beyond 12 residents, which would be a condition as it moved forward. She thought that he had answered a lot of their questions, and she recommended that he should take note of their comments. She congratulated Mr. Antony on moving forward.*

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

*Ms. Roediger noted that along with Chairperson Brnabic and Ms. Morita, there had been discussions about the length of meetings. They had been talking about ways to provide good customer service to applicants with a fair process while not overburdening staff. They had talked about how best to accommodate people's evenings and about potentially scheduling second meetings a month. The last iteration was to propose continuing having one meeting a month on the third Tuesday, but having a hold on the first Tuesday of the month for special meetings if deemed necessary. That way, they would not formally schedule and cancel second meetings. The last thing they would want was to have a lot of really short meetings, which would not be an efficient use of anyone's*