



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

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Chairperson Deborah Brnabic, Vice Chairperson Greg Hooper
Members: Susan Bowyer, Gerard Dettloff, John Gaber, Marvie Neubauer,
Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, David A. Reece, and Ben Weaver

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Deborah Brnabic called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She outlined the procedure for the virtual meeting, stating that "In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, as amended, the Planning Commission will continue to move forward and carry out our Planning and Development meeting agendas using Zoom video conferencing to limit the potential exposure to the Covid-19 virus. Any member of the public who would like to speak on a particular agenda item or during Public Comment, which is for non-agenda commentary, will be recognized by calling into the Zoom meeting and using the I.D. number. Once you are on the call, press 9 to speak on the phone or raise your hand in the Zoom application. All comments and questions will be audio only and limited to three minutes per person. All questions will be answered together after every person has had the opportunity to speak on the same agenda item. Each member of the public that wishes to speak will be asked to state and spell their name and give their address for the record. Members of the public may also comment on an item by sending an email to Planning@rochesterhills.org prior to discussion on the agenda item."

ROLL CALL

Present 9 - Deborah Brnabic, Gerard Dettloff, John Gaber, Greg Hooper, Nicholas Kaltsounis, David Reece, Susan M. Bowyer, Ben Weaver and Marvie Neubauer

Quorum present.

Also present: Sara Roediger, Director of Planning & Economic Dev.
Kristen Kapelanski, Manager of Planning
Jason Boughton, DPS/Engineering Services Utilities Mgr.
Maureen Gentry, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[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

she did not see nine entrances on the rendering. Mr. Turk said that it was shown on Sheet A-01, the Floor Plan, and on Sheet A-05. Chairperson Brnabic stated that it was important to be shown on the colored rendering, and Mr. Turk offered to do another rendering from the southwest side. Chairperson Brnabic asked if the six entrances would be used by employees and customers, and Mr. Turk agreed that they could be used by both.

Regarding the parking, Chairperson Brnabic noticed ten spaces in the back of the building that were 9 x 16 with a two-foot overhang, with the exception of the two handicap spaces. There were nine spaces to the east and west that were 9 x 18, and all of the spaces were dedicated for residential and visitor parking. She asked if that was correct, which was confirmed. She asked if the eight 10 x 18 spaces to the south were for employees or customers and was advised for both. She did not think, even with five spaces on Auburn, that it would be enough parking. She considered that if each of the six retail units had two employees, there would be a need for 12 spaces alone, and she thought that could be a low estimate. She stated that she definitely saw an issue with parking.

Mr. Turk said that it was his understanding that the Ordinance encouraged pedestrian and bicyclist means of transportation to have a walkable, downtown feel. They provided the minimum requirements according to the new Ordinance. Chairperson Brnabic agreed that they were encouraging walkability, but to her, the building seemed overbuilt for the parking provided. She was glad to see spaces dedicated for the residential, but she did not think that there was enough for the retail employees and customers, and she was concerned that they would use the dedicated residential spaces. Mr. Turk reminded that there was a public parking lot nearby.

Ms. Kapelanski advised that the development was allowed a reduction in the number of required non-residential parking spaces because it was within so many feet of a public lot. Chairperson Brnabic asked how far the lot was. Ms. Kapelanski noted that they were allowed to reduce spaces by three, but she had to check how far the lot was.

Ms. Roediger said that she realized it was a little different "animal" for the Planning Commission. The district was very unique, because it had public parking in the lots and on the streets. She indicated that it was a shift in how site plans were viewed in the corridor. Chairperson Brnabic considered employees parking in the lot or on the street, but she felt that those options would be better suited for people traveling to the area, because the main business would not just be from walkers. She pointed out that customers and employees using the rear entrances could park in the eight spaces in the back, which she thought could be a problem with so few. She cautioned that customers could encroach into the residential spaces, and she stated that there was not enough employee parking.

Ms. Roediger clarified with the applicant that no tenants had been identified for the spaces, and that they were still spec. One person could come in and want two or three spaces. Mr. Turk confirmed that they had not spoken with any potential tenants. He suggested that the rear entrances could be exit only. He

suggested that employees could park in the public lot, and then they would have 13 spaces for customers.

Ms. Kapelanski advised that the public lot was about 250-275 feet from the proposed site, which was well within the distance to allow a reduction of parking onsite.

Chairperson Brnabic was not sure that she cared for the third floor balconies. She realized that there was the required site distance, but she thought that it would be an invasion of privacy. People on their balconies could look into the adjacent yards, and she did not think the trees would deter the views much.

Mr. Kaltsounis brought up parking. He knew that there were a lot of strip malls in the area, and many times, the parking did not serve more than one business. He stated that he would not allow lesser parking anywhere else in the City. He understood Chairperson Brnabic's concern, but he reminded that it was the Brooklands District, and he looked at the parking a little differently because of the public spaces.

Mr. Kaltsounis said that when he opened the plans, and he saw that they had the first project for the Brooklands District, he was excited. He thought that the proposal was just what they were hoping to see in the area. He looked forward to it driving other developments in the area. Regarding the balconies, he suggested that they could perhaps add some quick growing trees, such as Maples, to obscure the views into the homes and yards. The applicants could talk with the neighbors and potentially offer to plant something on their properties. He recommended that they did that before the next meeting.

Mr. Kaltsounis asked if the applicants could provide a picture of a material board or the materials for the next meeting. He thought that they were using vinyl siding, so he asked what materials they would use.

Mr. Turk responded that he did not think there needed to be a concern about the third floor balconies. Mr. Kaltsounis indicated that it was an intangible issue between the applicants and the neighbors. He would like them to talk to the neighbor(s). He stressed that they liked all applicants to meet with the neighbors, and he hoped that they would do that before the next meeting. Mr. Turk said that Mr. Fazal had already sent letters to neighbors with pictures of the development, and they heard no objections. He offered that they could plant trees to mitigate any privacy issues.

Regarding the materials, Mr. Turk explained that they were using stone on the first floor topped with limestone, and above that were the storefront windows with brick on the sides. The second and third floors would have a different color brick and between those bricks would be composite panel systems, not siding. Mr. Kaltsounis asked again if they could take a picture of the material samples for the packet.

Mr. Weaver said that he was also very excited to see the project come through. He had been looking at the corridor for about three years, and it was very exciting to see something finally happen. He asked if the residential units would

be condos or apartments. Mr. Turk said that some would be sold and some rented. Mr. Weaver agreed with Mr. Kaltsounis that if the development were anywhere else, parking would be an issue, but because of the vision for the corridor, he did not have a problem with the number of spaces onsite. He liked the idea of putting signs up specifying resident versus retail parking. The vision for the corridor was to make it more walkable and to have more of a downtown feel, and for that, parking would be reduced at buildings. He was a little concerned about the parking behind the building with the two-foot overhang. That would make the sidewalk about five feet, which seemed a little narrow to him, and he wondered if something could be done. He said that he really liked the look of the building, but he would also like to see a material board. He suggested that the tree grates and bike racks should match those in the corridor. There were three tree grates to the west and bike racks across the street, and he recommended matching those. He noted the Fire Dept. memo which disallowed certain landscaping in the island, and he suggested adding a planter bed about two-and-a-half feet deep to help screen or even adding fake plants, which he had seen. He concluded that he really liked the development, and he was excited for them to come back.

Mr. Gaber thanked the applicants for presenting the project. He said that he generally liked it, in terms of the layout and configuration of the building. He thought that it made sense for the corridor, and he appreciated it. He agreed that seeing the materials would be very helpful. He asked if signage would go over the doors on the first floor, which was confirmed. He thought that the first floor façade looked pretty basic, but with signage and window dress-ups, it would look much more alive than the rendering showed. He said that he was not really a fan of the overhangs on the second and third floors. He thought that it made the building look dated, and that it would look more dated in a couple of years. It was not a classic architectural style and was very aggressive. He asked if the overhangs would be occupied space within the residential units allowed under the Ordinance. Ms. Kapelanski agreed that it was allowed. Mr. Gaber thought that it looked like pods someone would see in the 1960's or 1970's dressed up a little, which would have a dated look. He would rather see more of a flush façade, particularly on the second floor. He did not think that other future development in the corridor would have that type of look. He realized that buildings should not all look alike, but he thought that they would want some type of coordination within the corridor. He did not believe that the proposed look would accomplish that, so he had some issues with the second floor overhangs and the way the balconies were configured on the third floor. It did not look like a clean finish to him and looked disjointed. He thought that a more standard façade depth would look better. He agreed with Mr. Weaver about parking. He felt that they had met the intent of the requirements with respect to parking, and he did not have any issues with it. He would also like to see the materials and to understand why they did the bump outs, particularly on the second floor, but somewhat on the third floor as well. He was not sure if it was to maximize rental space or what the purpose was. That was his biggest issue with respect to the building. He said that he would like to see a little more uniformity in terms of the depth of the second and third floor. He did like the size of the residential units at 1,700 to 1,800 s.f., which he claimed were very livable. They were nice floor plans as opposed to what they had been seeing. They had been seeing 800 to 900 s.f. spaces, so he appreciated the larger

units. He did not really have an issue with the third floor balconies, as long as they could show that there was screening. The site lines showed that people would not be looking into the neighbors' windows, so he was okay with that. If there was anything different they could do with the second and third floor facades, he would like to see that, but otherwise, he liked the project.

Mr. Turk felt that the building was more modern than classic. He believed that the Ordinance encouraged projections to give a building a nicer look, but he supposed that it depended on a person's taste. Mr. Gaber agreed that it modernized the building, but he still felt that ten years down the road it would look dated, and that was his concern for a building in a prominent location in the district.

Chairperson Brnabic asked Ms. Kapelanski what could be done to identify the residential parking. Ms. Kapelanski suggested that signage could be posted stating that it was for residential use only or something similar. That would be up to the owner to enforce; the Sheriff's Department would not go onto a property to enforce it. They could identify it as parking for Unit 1 or Unit 2, for example, if they wished. Chairperson Brnabic asked if the Planning Commission could require that as a condition of approval, and Ms. Kapelanski said that it could be required as part of the conditional use.

Mr. Dettloff said that he really liked the project. He felt that it would spur more development in the area. He agreed with some of the parking issues raised, but if he were a business owner in the area, he would welcome the development with open arms. It solidified the fact that the City made the right move when it invested time, effort and dollars into improving the corridor. He asked the applicant if he had done that type of project before and if so, in what other communities.

Mr. Turk said that it was the owner's first project, but he had done several in Texas and one in Michigan. Mr. Fazal agreed that it was his first project. He was a Pharmacist and owned a pharmacy, and he bought the subject property in 2013 with the intention of doing some type of retail. About two years ago, he met with Planning about first floor retail and perhaps having one story above. He was told that things were changing, and a new district was being formed, so he waited for it to be completed. He took the opportunity to have a third floor. He advised that he went to about 75 homes to hand out flyers. He met with some of the neighbors. The flyer listed Mr. Turk's email, and they got a couple of emails from people concerned about traffic. He felt that people were happy with the investment. He offered to forward the emails.

Mr. Dettloff thanked the applicants for their investment in Rochester Hills. He felt that the project would really encourage some investment in the corridor, and he wish them good luck with everything.

Chairperson Brnabic knew that they had posted a rendering on the Proud to be from Brooklands website, and she asked if that was about six months ago. Mr. Fazal agreed, and said that he posted it on one more site. Chairperson Brnabic felt that was great to have sent that in advance. She asked if he had spoken specifically with the neighbor right behind the proposed development. Mr. Fazal

said that he left him a flyer only about three months ago.

Ms. Neubauer agreed with Mr. Gaber that although the pop outs might look modern now, she did not think that they would last the test of time very well. She suggested that maybe they could not be such an extreme color, but something more complimentary, which she felt would be very helpful. She heard that some units would be rented, and she asked what the rental amount would be.

Mr. Fazal said that would be determined in the next phase after site plan approval. He would sit down with his real estate agent and builder. They would figure out the marketing and how to sell. He knew that the improvement to the corridor would increase the values, but he had no numbers yet. Ms. Neubauer said that she would like to see a little more specificity for things before she could make a decision. She would like to see whether the rear doors would be used as entrances or exits only. She would like to see a different color scheme. Although the building looked very unique and artistic, she did not think that it should be so drastically different. With respect to the balconies, she suggested a compromise by removing those in the rear facing the subdivision and keeping those in the front. Even though the neighbors had seen a rendering, it was just an idea, and they might not fully grasp what it would be like having a building so high and close to their homes until someone was looking into them from the balconies. She lived at the bottom of a hill, and her neighbor was at the top, and she had to add several trees because their access was directly into her home. For the sake of pre-emptively solving a problem, and she believed that Chairperson Brnabic was correct, perhaps the rear balconies could be removed. She also asked the applicants to get more details before the next meeting about the pricing.

Mr. Fazal said that he would get some approximate values for the homes and the apartments. He asked if she wished to see all the balconies removed from the back or just from the third floor. Ms. Neubauer did not think that the second floor would be a problem, but the third floor might be more problematic. She did not want them to think they were "beating up" on them, indicating that it was hard to be the first one, and she stated that they really appreciated what they were doing. The Commissioners were glad that it was being developed, and their comments were just some things to think about.

Mr. Fazal said that he would get more information. He asked how parking would work for the residential units. Ms. Kapelanski said that it would be up to him. If the Planning Commission wanted to place a condition, and Council accepted it, they would have to add signage, but there was nothing specified in the Zoning Ordinance requiring that.

Mr. Reece thanked Mr. Fazal for his investment in the community and Mr. Turk for preparing the plans. He said that he would be candid in stating that he was not a fan of the new Ordinance. He was one of the few Commissioners who had been very vocal against allowing a third floor. He pointed out that a person on the third floor balcony could look right into the windows of the homes behind. He thought that they would be doing a great disservice to the residents by putting up a 45-foot tall building essentially in their backyards. That was his own personal opinion as a Builder and Architect. He thought that Chairperson Brnabic was

correct that there would be an issue with parking, walkable community or not. He asked staff to have developers show the public parking lots on plans for the area in the future, so they had a better feel of where they sat relative to a building.

Mr. Reece asked Mr. Turk how tall the parapet wall was. He had observed a combination of 16 condensing and HVAC units which would probably be above the top of the parapet wall. Mr. Turk advised that it was three feet. Mr. Reece asked if the units would be below the parapet wall. Mr. Turk said that the units would not be seen from the street. Mr. Reece signified that he was not worried about them being seen from the street; he was worried about the residents seeing them in their backyards. He was also concerned about people with their windows open hearing the noise from the units. Mr. Turk claimed that even from their second floors, they would not see the units. Mr. Reece was still concerned about the noise. He asked Mr. Fazal if he had talked with the owners at 2976 Gerald Ave. He stated that those people would be the most affected by the new residents looking into their back yard.

Mr. Turk did get an email from Mr. Peterson (owner) that said it would be literally right next door to his house. Mr. Peterson asked what the prices of the units would be, so Mr. Turk thought he might want to rent a unit. Mr. Reece stated that was not why he was asking - he wanted to know how it would affect his property value. Mr. Turk said that he also asked how long it would take the project to be completed and what type of businesses would be on the first floor, and he thanked them for their time.

Chairperson Brnabic confirmed with Mr. Fazal that he would contact that neighbor personally. She did not know if the neighbors really thought about the back of the building. When she saw the rendering on the Proud to be from Brooklands site, it was of the front of the building. She did not know if the neighbor had realized that there would be third floor balconies. She was glad that Mr. Fazal would make an attempt to meet with those neighbors, because she agreed that it would be especially important for them. Mr. Turk noted that the flyers handed out showed both the front and the rear of the building.

Mr. Reece stated that with all respect, the neighbors were not Architects or Builders. He indicated that he and Mr. Turk might think that the plans made perfectly good sense, but 99% of the general public who did not do what they did would not understand the implications of the plans.

Dr. Bowyer stated that the project was beautiful, and she loved seeing it. She felt that it was exactly what the Auburn Rd. corridor was developed for. She liked the way the second floor was brought out so there could be extra parking underneath. Regarding the parking, she hoped that people who went there did not use a car. She said that she would not like to see signs go up. She hoped that during the day, people who worked or shopped there could use all the spaces. At night, when people came home from work, they could use all the spots. She did not think signs were needed unless and if they really figured out that they were. She would not bother with the signs, because she thought that the parking would be fine. There was a lot of parking across the street and over one block, which was not far to walk. She said that she loved the balconies.

She liked the sides, so that there would be privacy from next door neighbors. She observed that they did look a little small, but each unit had at least two balconies. As far as the style of the building, she felt that it was innovative and different, and she reminded that the City was based on innovation. If it became dated in a few years, it could be changed, but she liked the design. Regarding views from the balconies, she said that there was nothing stopping the applicants from installing trees on the neighbors' side of the fence. She liked the three stories, and she thought that the whole corridor would become three-story buildings. She felt that the project would be a perfect fit for what they wanted to do in the corridor, and she thanked the applicants for bringing a great design to them. She also looked forward to seeing the actual materials.

Mr. Weaver thought that the planting bed on the east side of the parking lot that split the parking lot and sidewalk had too many trees proposed. He suggested doing something a little differently there. He agreed with Mr. Reece, and said that it would be a great idea to add dimensions from a development to the public parking lots to help gauge the parking situation in the future.

Mr. Hooper said that he really supported the project. He felt that it was the whole reason the City made a multi-million dollar investment, including the Commissioners' tax dollars, on the area. He recalled that a third story had generated a lot of comments when the Brooklands District was created, but he supported it, looking at each case individually. He agreed with Mr. Reece that they needed to know how the neighbors at 2976 Gerald felt exactly and what the true impact would be to them. They were really the people who would immediately be impacted by the third story. That would be flushed out when Mr. Fazal met with them. Regarding the balconies, he felt that they were a needed amenity to help sell the units and for the look of the units. As far as the look and style, it was "to each his own." He would strongly discourage just a flush look. He liked the multi-faceted look, and he would hate to see a flat, cylinder box. He liked relief elements on building structures to give dimension. He had noticed that the EIS listed a sale price point of \$299,000. He thought that the units would go for more than that, depending on the finishes in the units. He mentioned that his sister-in-law had just purchased from DM Homes, and they were quality builders. He said that he was okay with the parking. They created the shared public lots, and he felt that there would be more down the road. He felt that it would be the wave to encourage similar development, whether the City acquired more property or someone else built them. He noted that the neighbor to the south had a picket fence, but the rendering showed a masonry wall. He asked if the applicants were putting up a masonry wall to replace that picket fence.

Ms. Roediger advised that the fence had been replaced along the whole alley with a solid, brown screening wall. Mr. Hooper just wanted to make sure that it was consistent. He commented that they wanted to make sure they got the first one out of the gate right, and he looked forward to seeing how the comments were addressed at the next meeting.

Chairperson Brnabic agreed with Ms. Neubauer when she said that the Commissioners were not being hard on the applicants. Chairperson Brnabic had concerns about parking, but she really was excited about the start of a project in the BD area. She was supportive, but as a Planning Commissioner,

she pointed out that it was her job to review plans and express any concerns she had. She realized that it was the first project for the area, and there were public parking lots, but they might identify problems as time went on. If the City did build more public lots, she felt that it would be great. She did not see employees using the public lots as a problem. She would be concerned for the customers if those spots were being used. She maintained that they would have to monitor the public parking in the future. She still had a concern, as others had expressed, about the third floor balconies. People could say that it helped make the units saleable, but she did not think that anyone sitting in on the meeting would want to live in a situation where there were people in balconies looking into their homes and yards. It was a big concern and an invasion of privacy. A 45-foot high building was new to the area, and it would be an adjustment. To have people looking into someone's home or yard was very concerning, and she recommended removing the third floor balconies. Also, as part of their review, the Commissioners had to consider the residents in the area and how they might be affected. She said that she did like what she saw, but she just had some concerns.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if the Commissioners would be interested in seeing signage for residential parking. Several members had stated that they would, but she felt that they should give the applicant more clarity before coming back. She said that she would like to see an updated rendering that showed the nine entrances. She confirmed that they would talk to the neighbor directly behind the building. She noted that there had been some questions about the color scheme. She asked how many Commissioners would like to see the color scheme changed (with a raise of hands) before the applicant came back. She saw two hands raised, so she concluded that the majority were not as concerned. She suggested that the applicant could present an alternative if he so chose, but it would not be mandatory.

Chairperson Brnabic opened the Public Hearing at 9:02 p.m.

Scott Struzik, 2735 Stonebury Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48307. Mr. Struzik said that he greatly appreciated the efforts that the Planning Commission went through to guide development in the City. His family lived within walking distance of the proposed development. He felt that it was an exceptionally good use for the vacant parcel. When the City invested \$12 million in the Auburn Rd. corridor, he hoped that it would attract exactly the kind of investment proposed. He felt that the height was appropriate for a parcel on Auburn Rd. He was excited at the prospect of a vacant field being turned into a new commercial space and for ten more opportunities for families to call Rochester Hills home. He was not concerned about the parking, as there was ample on-street parking. As a potential customer for the businesses, he would prefer to utilize the on-street parking on either side of Auburn Rd. There was a gas station across the street that would not utilize the on-street parking. The parking arrangement was exactly how he envisioned the Auburn Rd. corridor to function. The district was designed so that people could park nearby on either side of the street and be able to safely walk across the street throughout the district. There were many opportunities to safely cross the street. He hoped that the Planning Commission and the applicant could resolve any outstanding issues and move forward with the project. He thanked them very much for their time and service.

to the community.

Shaun Llewellyn, 442 Willow Grove Lane, Rochester Hills, MI 48307. Mr. Llewellyn noted that he was a business owner on Auburn Rd. He had worked with the steering committee to get the Auburn Rd. corridor moving along, and he had been involved with the project from the beginning. He said that he was super excited for the new development. He was very happy to see that a plan had been submitted for three stories. He liked the design. Regarding the bump out in front for the balconies, his thought was that it would bring the residential people out onto the street. It would be a walkable development for work and play. People would walk down the street, which he saw more and more of every day, and he visualized that balconies opened to the sidewalk would bring the residential, which would be excellent for the neighborhood. His concern was about parking, which had been his concern since the beginning for the whole corridor. The City had been able to obtain property on the north side of Auburn Rd. to add parking. He encouraged the Commission and City Council to seek opportunities on the south side of Auburn Rd. for the same thing. He was really happy to see the new project, and he was glad that it came so soon. He was surprised that it happened so quickly, and he was very happy that Mr. Fazal was moving forward with the project. He acknowledged that it was a great job by everyone, and he looked forward to the future of the whole corridor.

Tom Yazbeck, 1707 Devonwood Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48306. Mr. Yazbeck said that he lived on the north side of town. He echoed a lot of the same things the last two callers said. He felt that it was a great development. He thought that it would make it more likely for him to come and visit the corridor. He agreed with Mr. Struzik about the parking, which he did not think was an issue. He was just in downtown Rochester, where there was on-street parking, and most of the businesses there relied on foot traffic. While it might seem like parking might be an issue, he thought that for down the road, with the public parking available, parking was good. He noted that the facility would be accessible by bike. He said that the development made him feel a little better about the direction the corridor was going, and it would make him more likely to visit the area. He looked forward to seeing what else came in there.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak or any email communications received, Chairperson Brnabic closed the Public Hearing at 9:10 p.m. She thanked everyone who commented about the development. Regarding parking in downtown Rochester, she reminded that they had a major problem with parking for a long time and had to construct parking structures.

Chairperson Brnabic asked the applicants if they had any further questions for the Commissioners. Mr. Fazal asked when he had to submit the financial information and if it was after Site Plan approval or before the next meeting. Chairperson Brnabic suggested updating the EIS to show the new numbers prior to going to City Council, but it would be appreciated if he had the information by the February meeting. Mr. Fazal asked if his real estate agent could join the next meeting. He felt that he could answer things much better. Chairperson Brnabic said that would be no problem.

Mr. Fazal said that he had received an email from the neighbor, but he would meet with him in person. He said that it would be up to the Commissioners to decide something about the balconies. He stated that he was excited about the project, and that the Auburn corridor looked beautiful. He asked if there would be any lights for the roundabouts. Ms. Roediger said that there were lights that shined up from the middle of the artistic trees in the roundabouts. Mr. Weaver believed that they had been installed back in October or November. Ms. Roediger added that the trees had been decorated for the holidays, and they were up-lit from the bottom, and there were streetlights as well. Mr. Fazal said that he felt lucky to have a project in the corridor, and that they would fulfill the recommendations.

Chairperson Brnabic said that the Commissioners looked forward to seeing them at the February 16th meeting.

2021-0002 Request for Site Plan Approval - City File No. 20-022 - Zeenat Plaza, a proposed 29,808 s.f. mixed-use facility (8,387 s.f. retail, ten dwelling units) 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

Discussed

DISCUSSION

2021-0003 Development of 3.4 acres at the northwest corner of Auburn and Grant, zoned R-4 One Family Residential, Mukesh Mangla, Applicant

Chairperson Brnabic explained that the applicant had withdrawn and was unable to attend the meeting.

Withdrawn

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Roediger noted that was asked to mention that the annual CIP process had begun. She advised that the City prepared an annual Capital Improvement Plan that outlined capital investments for the future. As part of that, there was a request for projects. A project could be identified by anyone - a resident, staff, Commissioners - and if anyone had a project they would like the City to consider, they should let the staff in charge know. As part of the process, there was a steering committee that included two Planning Commission members. In the past, it had been Mr. Hooper and Mr. Schroeder. At the February meeting, they would appoint two people for this year's committee. The committee would meet and make recommendations about all the projects. There would be

a Public Hearing in April with a request for adoption. She advised that applications were under the Planning Dept. if someone wanted to make a request, and they would take projects until the end of February.

Ms. Roediger reminded everyone that the next meeting was the joint meeting with Planning Commission and City Council on February 1, 2021. The goal was to get the packets out as early as possible. The major agenda items were presentations of the Transportation Master Plan and the City's Economic Development Strategy.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairperson Brnabic reminded the Commissioners that the next Regular Meeting would be on February 16, 2021 but prior to that would be the Joint Planning Commission and City Council meeting scheduled for February 1, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Mr. Kaltsounis, seconded by Mr. Dettloff, Chairperson Brnabic adjourned the Regular Meeting at 9:21 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

All yes

Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission

Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, Secretary