

how much the developer participated in widening Adams Rd. and changing that intersection. The applicants might not be aware of the changes east on Auburn from Rochester Road to where Meijer's is and to what degree the applicants for Powerhouse Gym participated in widening the road. He is not saying the proposal before them will be recommended if they provide improvements, but whether they pay for them or the taxpayers pay for them, they need to provide a plan that shows a safe way to get in and out of the site. There will be some road widening, new acceleration and deceleration lanes and signal changes involved. They need to see where the ingress and egress should be and how the traffic would be directed, and then the traffic analysis itself. He surmised that the applicants probably want to know if they should keep working at this or not. No one on the Commission should say they would not listen to a presentation in the future and if the applicants want to move forward after hearing from the Commissioners tonight, he thinks they should. It may not be possible, as even their engineer said. He said they need to remove all incentives from opinions they receive. There is a real drive for Rochester Hills to make more money from taxes. When consultants and/or anyone else paid by the City gives an opinion, it is hard not to have a suspicious mind, and sometimes they say to do something because the City needs the money. The Planning Commission is not driven by that motive. Ultimately, even though they are not as expert as the applicants' engineers and planners, they do make the call. The Commissioners need to be convinced. The applicants are asking the Commissioners to override their Master Land Use Plan and current zoning to be able to do this project. His mind is open, but it will be a huge obstacle to sell. He thinks it is do-able, but he cannot tell them right now how to do it.

Ms. Brnabic thinks doing the study while school is in session is important, but the redistricting plan that was done will not take effect until next year. They have projected a low student population of about 900 students at Stony Creek High for this school year, because open enrollment was offered to high school students. Most of those students chose to go to Rochester High School, which will have a population of about 1,900 students. Mr. Kaiser advised that they could max the population numbers when they do the study.

Mr. Rosen indicated he agreed with Mr. Kaiser's comments in almost all ways, yet this is probably the first project where he has had serious concerns it could even be made to work. He thinks it is possible, but it will be a very high hurdle to overcome to demonstrate that it can. The problem occurs if they err and it does not work, and they then have created a monster for everyone. He has not seen anything that demonstrates the old problems - traffic, location and access - are not they same as they always were.

Mr. Boswell said his main concerns were about tie-ins to the Master Land Use Plan and traffic. He does not know if this project can be done. He thought the concept plan looked very nice. He would go there, but he does not know how he would get there. He is not saying the Commission cannot be convinced, but it will be an uphill battle.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Kaiser wrapped up the discussion and Mr. Galvin thanked the Commissioners for their candor.

Recess 8:20 for 15 minutes

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION – Gilbert & Vinnettelli Proposed PUD

Present for the applicant were Bill Gilbert, Gilbert & Vinnettelli, owner of the property, and Alexander Bogaerts, Senior partner, Alexander J. Bogaerts, Architects and Designers.

Mr. Kaiser stated that the proposed project is a mixed-use Planned Unit Development on 28 acres. He explained that prior to a formal application, the users of the property have an opportunity to meet with Commissioners or Council members, Staff and members of the public to discuss issues or concerns in a pre-application workshop format. He added that there could certainly be more than one workshop. He reminded everyone that no decisions would be made tonight regarding this proposal.

Mr. Gilbert advised that they have owned the property for about 16 years. They have developed all the property east of this and the property across the street, as well as many other projects in the community. He said that throughout the last 16 years, they have gone through many concept plans for this property. At one time or another, they looked at it as primarily office, commercial and also as multi-family. When the Master Plan was being addressed in 1999, mixed-use zoning was intended for this property. They are here tonight to show what they consider will be a very strong asset for the community. They have met with Staff several times and also with the City's consultants – wetland, engineering, and building – and tried to address as many concerns as they could prior to this workshop. They have a traffic study underway and will forward that soon. Their plan includes moving the historic home to another location on site and restoring it. It does not make economic sense to restore or move it but they realize it is a landmark and identifiable home. Through a suggestion from a member of the Historic Districts Commission, the home would be moved south on Rochester Road.

The impact of the development is 2,000 feet on Rochester Road. Comparing it with Rochester's downtown, it is comparable to the length from Starbucks at University to the bridge at the south end of town. The depth is about the same as from alley to alley of downtown Rochester – about 400 feet or from behind Mitzelfeld's to behind Starbucks. They went through many different Site Plans and determined that the mix should include very small neighborhood retail. The concept in some situations would be live/work. The original plan called for a main street running north and south down the middle of the property but because of the Honeywell Drain, that concept would not work as well. They met with the City's wetland consultant, and to achieve minimal disruption and filling of the wetlands, came up with the current plan. They decided to make the wetland more of a feature of the project, so people would be able to see greenery.

Mr. Bogaerts restated that this property is part of the City's Master Plan as mixed-use, and they are very excited about the opportunity for this development. This frontage is equivalent to what downtown Rochester has and there is an opportunity to create a downtown for Rochester Hills. It is an opportunity to bring residential, some office and a small amount of retail along Rochester Road. The first floor of the 8 buildings along Rochester Road will house small retail. There would only be about 2500 square feet of retail per building, enough for small, unique shops such as jewelry or other specialty shops. They are not trying to compete with large retail users. This would be second level retail service rather than primary retail shopping center use. The retail shops would be supported by the surrounding residents. They have several scenarios for the development. One study showed 330 units in total, with 19,000 square feet of retail and other options showed 60,000 square feet of office and 260 units. There are a variety of building types in the Site Plan and he brought drawings of the front buildings, having multi-family units which will be for sale, not lease. Most units in these buildings have two car garages and a few have one-car garages. The other buildings have two parking spaces for every unit. They have been working on this for a long time together and after many designs, they settled on a Site Plan they feel has the least impact to the residential to the east. There is an existing berm along the eastern side of the property they intend to leave. They may create some retaining walls on the applicant's side, but the height of the berm will be added to as part of the development. They are orienting their buildings adjacent to the residential on an east-west axis so they will have the least amount of dimension adjacent to the neighbors to the east. They have also created large open areas.

Mr. Gilbert said the several acres of uplands area to the south, which is buildable and accessible with utilities, have been left as open space. At one time they proposed units along the whole area. Mr. Kaiser asked if that would be part of the PUD plan. Mr. Gilbert answered that it would, and will be left in its natural state. He said he did not know what was going on with Bordine's and Mr. Kaiser asked what he meant by that. Mr. Gilbert replied he did not know if they planned to develop or redevelop it, or even sell it. Early on, he had conversations with Mr. Bordine about doing a joint effort, but they are happy with what they have.

Mr. Bogaerts pointed out that the retail is set out eight to ten feet from the next dimension of the building and the corners are stepped back further. The buildings do not have a straight, vertical plane across the front. They have flat roofed and sloped roof buildings, which, to be in scale, go lower towards the neighbors to the east.

Mr. Kaiser asked if he would show other examples of Site Plans that were considered. Mr. Bogaerts explained there were many generations of the drawings and they looked at bringing in a town center and restaurant, but it would require rerouting Eddington. In another scenario, they had all the buildings backed up to the residential neighbors to the east, but after discussion with Staff and potential builders, they felt it was a negative impact for many reasons. The interior road is now very pleasant to travel, but earlier plans had it too linear. On Rochester Road they propose an urban look for the buildings but behind, they want them to transition to the residential uses. As he mentioned, they ended up turning their buildings on an east/west axis, putting all the interest on Rochester Road to get the best urban looking image and to let the residential be transitional toward the eastern neighbors.

Mr. Kaiser said it was very daring that they would mention "urban" and that they are going for an urban look in Rochester Hills. What they will be faced with is people thinking this is a rural community. Mr. Bogaerts said a better representation would be "traditional neighborhood development." They have discussed street lighting, signage, park benches and tree guards, and if this becomes favorably considered by the community, they would like to have support from the City to perhaps do matched trees and lighting on the other side of Rochester Road.

Mr. Kaiser asked what percentage of this development would be for living, for conducting commercial business and for office use. Mr. Bogaerts responded their studies mention units and square footage. One scenario has 259 residential units, 16,000 square feet of retail and 60,000 square feet of office. Mr. Kaiser said they cannot put units on those numbers because people will want to customize their office setting. He asked if they know the square footage for residential. Mr. Bogaerts said those units would range from 1,200 square feet to 1,800 square feet.

Mr. Gilbert said the preferred plan is that the office would probably be a very small part of this development. It would be part of the small, first floor frontage. There would not be 20-40,000 square foot offices, so there would be less parking. They wanted to have some market driven flexibility built into the plan. They are willing, when they get down to the details, to have floors and ceilings on the numbers and will always make sure that the parking requirements are met, the setback requirements are met and the spirit of the plan is there. If they opted for the plan with 46,000 square feet of office and came back and said they were only going to have 15,000 square feet, if everyone agreed, they would make changes. The buildings would look the same, with the same architectural style and same footprint. Mr. Bogaerts wanted to make sure the members knew the buildings he was showing tonight are only the buildings along Rochester Road. The buildings off Rochester Road are different, with different architectural character. He advised they are shown in the packet that was passed out.

Mr. Kaiser asked if there was an elevation they could view for the east facing buildings but was told those had not been done in detail. Mr. Kaiser said he could see there are a number of trees and it would be impossible for the people there to see much, but he cautioned that the Commissioners would want to see that those eastern exposures look like an entry to a house. Mr. Gilbert added that by stepping the ends of the buildings down, it would afford the architect the ability to get creative. They have an opportunity with the berm to do major plantings and have always tried to be good neighbors. They would, in conjunction with their own landscape plan, let the residents who abut the property do some plantings at the company's expense, if they wish.

Mr. Kaiser thought that for the floor plan on the back buildings nothing would preclude there being an entry. Mr. Bogaerts said they would give special attention to those. They can have an option for a unit entry if the neighbors would rather not have people going in and out there. Regardless, it will be an excellent looking architectural statement on the end of the building.

Mr. Kaiser said the current percentage breakdown would be about 3½% retail, almost 13% office and 83% residential. Mr. Gilbert replied that sounded right. Mr. Kaiser said that ultimately in a PUD agreement, they would come up with finalized figures.

Ms. Myers asked what type of walkways or pathways they were planning. Mr. Gilbert responded that certainly all along Rochester Road they would have a pathway, which it does not now have. With agreement from Detroit Edison, they would pave the 80 feet or so they own along Rochester Road and take it to the office building to the north. The pedestrian circulation within the project has not been really looked at in detail, although they want to have park benches and uniform lighting. Mr. Bogaerts said there would be internal walkway patterns because the retailers will want the residents to walk to their shops. He commented that for new urbanism in other communities, they are planned with interconnection and they are using the same format here.

Mr. Kaltsounis said he would like to hear from the residents as to the screening they would like. He thinks what is proposed is better than having a brick wall or parking lot in the neighbors' backyards. He would be very much against that. He noticed they propose to have the sides of the buildings step down as the buildings get closer to the residents and he feels that is a good idea. He asked what materials they plan to have on the sides and backs of the buildings. Mr. Gilbert replied they would be full masonry buildings.

Mr. Rosen said that after seeing the renderings, he has a different impression than he did looking at the site drawings. He earlier thought the vision the Planning Commission had a few years ago was to focus the office and retail more to the south. They had thought maybe the applicants would do a joint project or redevelopment with Bordine's. This is much different that he had envisioned. The Planning Commission had always intended it to be flexible. He had always thought the difference in character between downtown Rochester and Rochester Hills was what made the two communities what they are. Downtown Rochester was quaint and Rochester Hills was the sprawling suburbia. There are now two projects underway which are representative of the new urbanism or new "feel" – Meadowbrook Village Mall and now this. He remarked he does not think it is bad, he is just startled by it. When someone drives up Rochester Road, this would seem out of character with everything else in the community. He asked if they decided on four stories after the Ordinance was changed. Mr. Gilbert said he did not know if that was the case, but with respect to driving up Rochester Road, he said he did not find much of it to be very quaint and attractive exiting north from M-59. Mr. Rosen said he agreed. Mr. Gilbert acknowledged that they may be the only property along that stretch still zoned single-family residential. He understands the Commissioners might have thought the project would have more office and retail, but they feel the project is more in keeping with Rochester Hills, and they also believe it is something the market wants – catering to the empty nester and convenient living. Everyone they have shown the plan has been very enthused about it. This has been a long process and since he has lived here a long time, he has a vested interest. He personally would not want to see more Hampton-variety garden apartments or a row of office buildings that may or may not be see through when the markets are going up and down. People can count on for-sale housing to be built and lived in, he added.

Mr. Bogaerts said the Commissioners have one of the greatest opportunities he has seen in a long time to bring about a central point that will be the downtown of Rochester Hills. His firm is currently doing about four of these communities across Michigan, and this is the only one that has this kind of frontage. He completely agrees that the character of Rochester Road now is not much to look at.

Mr. James Sardelli, 1638 Farnborough, Rochester Hills. He said he had no intentions of coming to this meeting, not having been notified of this very dense, mass use of property which, he added, will abut his. He did not come to look out the windows of the auditorium and view the scenic beauty. He came to impress upon the Commissioners the rationale to preserve some sense of sanity for how the remaining pieces of property in the City should be developed. This property is actually very small. It has a lot of unusable area. The concept of planned urban development and mixed-

use development is very legally ambiguous. There are not specifications such as R-2 or C-1. He did a few calculations, and putting 330 units on 26 acres of land will require about 200 parking places. It appears to him to look like a 19th century urban tenement that some people find attractive and some do not. There is a reasonable expectation on the part of the citizens that live around there, also impressed upon him by the Master Land Use Plan dated 1999, that this property should be single-family residential at three units per acre. This proposal has about 12-15 units per acre. It is an aggressive spot rezoning scheme. There will be parking spots, loading spaces and required rubbish removal. The applicant mentioned that there was 1,000 feet of retail frontage. Downtown Rochester has people walking around and there are big parking lots that are full. He wondered where the people would park and walk around here. This is aggressive spot zoning in the sense that they are moving from single family to attached, high density multiple family units to commercial building development. It is a very lucrative use of the land. He supposed that after holding it for 17 years, Mr. Gilbert is entitled to something. He said he is not against development because he has also developed property. He lives right behind this proposed development and certainly he could move. There is an opportunity to influence the nature of Rochester Road in a positive factor and it will bring a lot of money into the City. This is the kind of meeting where no decisions are made and he was able to come tonight and get a placid, beautiful view because sensible, reasonable development rules and standards that made this City what it is were upheld. They are not being upheld very well in this mixed-use settlement, particularly with regard to the height. Perhaps an alternative they could have looked at is single-family condominiums with two-story attached condominiums. That might be a less aggressive use of the property. Across the street from and behind the proposed development are homes. He knows that in the last two years, within 550 feet of his property, two people died. One was a pedestrian and one person was pulling out of his subdivision. Looking at the Site Plan, there will be a tremendous amount of people needing to pull in and out of Eddington Blvd. Ordinarily, if this were a C-1 or C-3 rezoning request, they would need their own approach. There would have to be distinct setbacks between the different types of zoning. That is absent here. They have multiple family zoning abutting single-family homes. His house had to be 40 feet from the rear lot line and this development looks about 15 feet away from the line. He commented that they all want to play with the same set of rules. Additionally, Pulte's Arcadia Park is going to dump out cars from 181 dwellings onto Eddington Blvd. There are currently 330 homes platted in various Eddington Farms subdivisions with three ingress/egresses. It is busy and dangerous pulling in and out of there now. There is an easement to the north and he thinks people will drive over from the north to the south to exit Eddington Farms. In his opinion, they cannot make the transition from commercial to multiple-family to duplex to single-family in 400 feet. It will cause a density problem and will affect him. On behalf of the people who may get injured or hurt in front of that subdivision, he would like to warn of that possibility.

Mr. Kaiser asked Mr. Gilbert when the traffic study would be done, and he replied within a week. He said they have done the field work and just have to put together the data. Mr. Kaiser said Mr. Sardelli's comments are well placed regarding the traffic concern. He asked to what degree they would be requesting buffer modifications. Mr. Gilbert did not believe there would be any. Mr. Kaiser asked about wetland intrusions. Mr. Gilbert answered they would need a request only for two road crossings. The consultants met and agreed on the boundaries and there would be very little impact. They would cross the Honeywell Drain.

Mr. Anzek said Staff has been working with the applicants for 10-12 months, and one thing identified early on was the wetlands issue. Dr. Niswander viewed the site and evaluated the wetland delineation. Any impact would have to be mitigated and they discussed that the land to the east would be appropriate for that. They have not gotten into a full technical review and analysis of this site.

Mr. Kaiser asked if the Honeywell Drain, which he would call a stream, is going to be left essentially intact. Mr. Gilbert replied it would be. Mr. Kaiser asked if there would be landscaping and mowing up to the edges of it or if it would be kept somewhat in its natural state. Mr. Gilbert responded that earlier, they wanted to close the drain and mitigate the entire lower area to the south, making it a single, high quality wetland with

nothing encumbering it. That did not go over well, so upon further review, they decided to make it a feature of the project.

Mr. Kaiser suggested that as they progress with the proposal, they think about people walking around the development who want to mow it and how they can make sure that does not happen and it is kept the way it is. Mr. Gilbert said most people respect wetland buffers. The protective clause could be included in the condominium documents.

Mr. Kaiser said he would probably make most of the same comments Mr. Sardelli made if he lived there. On the other hand, he wanted to compliment the applicants because they listened at the workshops for the Master Land Use Plans. At one meeting, it was mentioned that there would be a need for the development of alternate types of housing. This project may or may not serve all the concerns they have about the future residents – because they do not want people to move out of Rochester Hills – and he is concerned about the price range they are considering. Mr. Gilbert said they are primarily residential developers and have had many discussions about the price range young couples, empty nesters, or new families might be looking for, and they believe it would step up in value from \$200,000.00 to \$350,000.00 off Rochester Road.

Mr. Kaiser commented that if the project is approved by the Commissioners and Council, he feels it would be stupendous in so many ways for the entire community. Mr. Kaltsounis noted for the record for Mr. Sardelli that the area is now zoned R-4 and it is shown as mixed use on the Master Land Use Plan. A mixed-use PUD is supported for this property on the Master Land Use Plan, although under the current zoning it is not.

Mr. Boswell mentioned he drives along this area every day and this proposal is startling. He sees things he likes, but the scale does seem to bother him. Driving by Eddington each day, he notices people trying to go south on Rochester and people trying to go north from Drexelgate, and it is harrowing. On some of the renderings, Eddington was relocated to the south and he wondered if it would be advantageous to put the two roads across from each other and if it would then warrant a light.

Mr. Gilbert said it was his understanding that the City will relocate Yorktowne to the south to line it up with Meadowfield and install a light. Any light between Hamlin and Avon will help drivers and whoever has enough warrants gets a light, so perhaps Eddington will get one.

Mr. Rosen asked what the residential would be if it were not in a PUD. Mr. Anzek said if it were not in a PUD, multiple units would not be permitted. Mr. Rosen asked if four stories would be allowed in multiple-family. Mr. Anzek answered that he did not believe so, and that four stories would be permitted in O-1 (Office) with Planning Commission and Council approval. Mr. Rosen said four stories struck him as imposing. He said he was trying to put himself in someone's place as they drove by. He wondered what impression it would give and wondered if four stories were necessary for the economics. Mr. Gilbert replied that it was mostly for the look and architectural character. Mr. Bogaerts offered to bring in photos of properties in other communities developed in this manner to give a better picture and comparison. Mr. Gilbert added that they used a flat roof. If it were a three story building with a sloped roof, it would be as high as a four story. Mr. Rosen said they would be physically as high, but would not look the same.

Mr. Kaiser said the pictures did not have trees or landscaping and to get an idea of the scale of the buildings, they could compare it to the historic, single-family home on the site. Mr. Rosen said he understood that, but during the Planning Commission meetings is where the major decisions get made that affect everything afterwards. He brought up the four stories again and Mr. Gilbert said the property is actually lower than right on Rochester Road. Mr. Rosen asked if anyone else was bothered by four stories because discussing that now might make a difference to Mr. Gilbert.

Mr. Anzek said because the wall of brick for the building fronts is being broken up in dimensions, and they have taken care with the design, it offsets the look of a high wall.

Mr. Gilbert said that they are controlling the design of what a builder has to put there. This is very expensive architecture with a lot of detail and for that to work, it boils down to so many units per building to make the economics work. This is not downtown Birmingham where people will pay really top dollar to live there. There are a lot of ways to lower the cost and get the same return, but to do a quality project and to sell the concept, the look is important to the overall success. They never thought they wanted to put single-family homes backing to Rochester Road with decks on Rochester Road and kids playing in the yard. They believe this will be for professional singles and empty nesters. Once people have families, they will move into Eddington Farms and other subdivisions. He suggested that perhaps down the road there might be matching funds to further do some street designing and it could be a very nice half-mile.

Mr. Kaiser thought the stories should stay at the same height because if they are lowered, the buildings become nothing special. He concluded the meeting and reminded the applicants of some of the things they should fine tune – the pedestrian plan for inside the development, the ditch, and the traffic.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Rosen asked if anything happened with the McDonald's exit by Adams and Walton. Mr. Anzek replied that they looked into it and there still has not been a change, so the City is ready to make a demand. The exit they made does not work.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The Chair reminded Commissioners that the next regular meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2002

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the Chair adjourned the special meeting at 10:05 p.m. time Michigan time.

Eric Kaiser, Chairperson

Maureen Gentry, Recording Secretary

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