



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Final

Planning Commission

1000 Rochester Hills Dr
Rochester Hills, MI
48309
(248) 656-4600
Home Page:
www.rochesterhills.org

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

Tuesday, January 15, 2019

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Deborah Brnabic called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 9 - Ed Anzek, Deborah Brnabic, Gerard Dettloff, Greg Hooper, Nicholas Kaltsounis, Stephanie Morita, David Reece, C. Neall Schroeder and Ryan Schultz

Quorum present.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2019-0003 December 18, 2018 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Hooper, seconded by Reece, that this matter be Approved as Presented . The motion PASSED by an unanimous vote.

COMMUNICATIONS

A) Planning & Zoning News dated December 2018

DISCUSSION

2018-0584 Rochester Hills Research Park - City File No. 18-021 - a proposed office/research and warehouse/production Planned Unit Development campus addition to the EEI Global site on 25 acres located at 1400 S. Livernois, on the west side of Livernois, south of Avon, zoned REC-W Regional Employment Center - Workplace, Parcel No. 15-21-276-013, Designhaus Architecture, Applicant

Present for the applicant were Peter Stuhlreyer, Designhaus Architecture, 301 Walnut Blvd., Rochester, MI 48307 and Derek Gentile, 1400 S. Livernois, Rochester Hills, MI 48307, owner.

Ms. Kapelanski advised that the applicants were proposing an office campus addition to their existing development. The site was in the REC-W Regional Employment Center - Workplace district, which allowed the proposed use. They were planning to add three additional buildings, along with an access road, walkways and landscaping. Although plans had been submitted and gone through one review, they were looking for feedback from the Commission.

Mr. Stuhlreyer related that the parcel had undulating topography. He and Mr. Gentile had talked about the site, and they both thought there was an opportunity to transform a site plan across it. He looked at the road connections, road improvements and safety features. There would be connections to the Trail, and it would be a great R&D hub with a very central location with great access. He showed an aerial view of what they thought geometrically and physically would fit the lines and the flow of the site and would balance with the parking tabulation. He noted that the building currently had 150 employees, and there were 450 parking spaces. They would be increasing that to 680 and doubling the square-footage of the buildings in a balance between high bay space and office space in an effort to attract higher tech, research, automation, prototyping, etc., types of businesses into the area. They discussed getting a connection from Horizon Ct. to the campus road to improve the flow of emergency vehicles and to do something to alleviate different traffic patterns. They currently had a boulevard entrance at a traffic light at the north end of the site which would go to the south and attach to Rochester Industrial Dr. He felt that would be a great public benefit. The site would be interlaced with walkways, pedestrian pauses, boulevarded streets, a food truck court for employees and connections to the Trail. They thought that the proposal was an overall positive thing, and they believed that they could reach the requirements of a PUD and come to a balance of square-footage and uses and parking.

Mr. Gentile stated that a high priority was to add some site amenities for their employees. Being next to the Clinton River Trail was a real benefit to the employees. They currently did not have an easy way to access it from their employee entrances, so they wanted to build a nice, landscaped walkway to get there. Mr. Stuhlreyer came up with the concept of a food truck area and a courtyard that would access the Trail. They felt that could enhance community activities taking place on the

Trail. They were routinely asked to use the parking lot for fundraising events such as runs or walks. He wanted the development to look really nice - more of a campus feel like a university - with a high-end research and development center. He had a creative agency, and as a marketing firm they had a lot of customers who came to the site on a routine basis. He had been asked multiple times by some of his suppliers if there might be an opportunity to be a part of their campus. They had customers in the advanced manufacturing area inquire about an opportunity to use some of their space. He stated that there was no shortage of demand; it was just how they should build it so it fit their purposes and worked for the overall look and feel of the space. They were very excited about it.

Mr. Kaltsounis mentioned that the Commissioners typically asked if applicants had talked to their neighbors, and he asked if they had talked to any of the households across Livernois. Mr. Gentile said that they had not. Mr. Kaltsounis thought that the project was nice. He frequently passed by the property and admired the trucks, and he saw that the parking lot was still there. Mr. Gentile said that the storage parking would probably go away, because they would need it for regular parking. He had several other facilities that handled that type of activity. Mr. Kaltsounis said that his only concern was that the project needed a little more color. There were some blue accents on the building, but he wondered if they could add a little more color off of Livernois. He gave the example of the JENOPTIK building. There was glass and color, and it was set apart.

Mr. Gentile explained that they did not spend a tremendous amount of time on the aesthetics. They had been focused more on the logistics - the roads, the sidewalks and the green space - but he felt that it was a good point. He reiterated that he had a whole creative team which could go to town.

Mr. Stuhlreyer added that they took more of a look at the scale and scope. They thought that the individual buildings would probably be built to suit or be pad lots based upon the parameters of the PUD. If there was a major user, it would probably come in with its own architecture, although buildings would have to go through site plan approval based on the PUD. Mr. Kaltsounis remarked that the Commission had fun with the outside of buildings, and he knew that Mr. Gentile's company sold flair. Some of the new modern buildings were setting examples, and he thought that the subject location would be a good place to do that, and that was his challenge to the applicants. Mr. Stuhlreyer agreed that there was an opportunity for all four of the new buildings to be jewels.

Ms. Morita pointed out the trucks on the north end, and she asked if they would no longer be there. Mr. Gentile said that was correct. Ms. Morita asked if there would be a building right next to the Trail. Mr. Stuhldreier said that none of the relief they would be seeking would be related to setbacks. Ms. Morita asked if the area was low and wet, and Mr. Stuhldreier confirmed that it was a non-regulated wet spot. They had done a tremendous amount of engineering already. Ms. Morita stated that she really loved the idea of their company reinvesting in the City, and she thanked Mr. Gentile. She said that she would also like to see some color and flair and some individuality with the buildings. Her only hesitation was the proximity of the building to the Trail and making sure that whatever went there matched the natural environment. She had ridden the Trail enough to know that there were nice parts with buildings that fit in and areas next to some unsightly industrial buildings. She felt that the project could provide a great opportunity for a company willing to take a chance on that space, recognizing that they had this great green space right behind them. She concluded that if it was done well, it would fit in well.

Mr. Schroeder thought that it would be beneficial if every building had a different color at the entrance so that when someone arrived, they could just look for the red or the blue building. He added that it was a very nice proposal.

Mr. Dettloff agreed that it was a great concept. He echoed Ms. Morita's sentiment about investing back into the City. He asked if they could speculate on the number of potential new jobs. Mr. Gentile believed that it would be 450-500.

Mr. Anzek commented that they had done a nice job, and he felt that it would be a good use of the land. He asked if Mr. Gentile would hold design rights over the other buildings, indicating that someone else's showcase might not be so attractive to others. He knew that it would be a reflection of Mr. Gentile's business. Mr. Gentile said that his father held a firm fist, and being a creative agency, they would pay close attention to that. They were outdoorsman, and they liked the green space. Having an aesthetically pleasing building would fit in with that. He did not want to have a cinder block wall facing the Trail; it would be something tasteful. Mr. Anzek asked Mr. Gentile if he planned to own or lease or both. Mr. Gentile said that he was in discussions with his development partners. It would be a condominium development, so there would be some restrictions to be followed. If someone wanted to put in a headquarters

and wanted to have a hand in customizing the building, they wanted to offer that flexibility. However, they wanted to maintain standards on the look and feel and make sure it was aesthetically consistent with the rest of the campus. Mr. Anzek asked if there would be any interior restaurants. Mr. Gentile said that it was a little early to guess, and it would depend on the user. Mr. Anzek noted the topography east of Horizon Ct., where it dead ended, which he said would be a significant elevation change. He had looked at it, and never thought he could take a car down it. It was pretty steep, so he wondered if they would cut and fill. He pointed out that at the access point coming from the lower left corner, there was a gravel lane. It had an access to the parking lot where the big trucks were parked and was seldom used. He recalled that there was an easement granting Mr. Gentile access rights. It had been difficult for the Fire Dept., because station one required a lot of security. They did not want vehicles driving behind or too close to the fire station if possible. He felt that it would be an interesting opportunity to look into, to see if they could gain a third access off of Rochester Industrial to the Horizon loop road. It would be a great way for people to get to Hamlin. He suggested that perhaps Ms. Roediger could arrange a meeting with the Fire Dept. to talk about it. He pointed out that Hortizon Ct. was used for visitor parking for the fire station, and they would have to find out if the fire station would need additional visitor parking.

Ms. Roediger responded that they had met with the Fire Dept. to talk about those exact issues. The Fire Dept. recognized that they had always used Horizon Ct. differently than how it was intended, which was as a public right-of-way. They were looking at alternatives for how they should park vehicles and have access. She felt that connecting Rochester Industrial, Horizon Ct. and EEI Global to the light at Drexelgate would be a win for the access in the area. She added that the Fire Dept. was willing to work with them. Mr. Anzek said that when 500 jobs were being added, the current employees might use it as an alternative to Hamlin also. If they were backing up at the southern roadway at rush hour, and there was an emergency, there would be a road wide enough for the fire trucks to get out and pass the people who were stacked. He thought that overall, it was a great use of a great piece of land. He knew from past experience that both JENOPTIK and KOSTAL had cited proximity to the Trail as something for their employees, and it was one of their site selection reasons. He thought that it would be a good selling point for the building in the back.

Mr. Hooper asked what kind of relief they were looking at with a PUD rather than developing it under REC-W,. Mr. Stuhlreyer said that one

thing would be the connection to Horizon, which was an off-property asset. The second was parking, because they would be about 150 short of the requirements.

Ms. Kapelanski had not thought they were looking at a PUD. They could go that route, but REC-W envisioned an office campus and would allow that use. Mr. Stuhlreyer said that one of their bigger concerns with phasing was that if they looked at it as a true site plan, they did not have interest in full commitment for the exact architecture of the building layouts. The companies would want particulars. They might need a height of 24 or 30 feet. Instead of having to come back with an amended site plan, he thought that having a PUD with some parameters would allow the subsequent site plans to come in cleaner. Ms. Kapelanski noted that for the first review, they were just asking for parking modifications and some parking setback modifications. She suggested that they might want to think about developing under REC-W. Mr. Hooper said that a lot would depend on the engineering and storm sewer, which would be underground because of the impervious surfaces they would be creating. Mr. Stuhlreyer said that their calculations showed about 50-50. Detention would be underneath the large parking lot on the west, and there would be four or five basins in the green spaces. Mr. Hooper supported the concept, and he wished the applicants good luck.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that she also supported the concept. She asked the applicants if they had any further questions for the Planning Commission. Mr. Gentile said that he did not. Mr. Stuhlreyer said that they had been interested in getting some initial feedback, and they would go back to the drawing board. Mr. Gentile said that his biggest concern would have been if someone had a major issue they had not thought about. He gave Mr. Stuhlreyer a lot of credit. They spent a lot of time going through the process, and they kicked the tires about the requirements. He felt that they had addressed important things like green space, access and aesthetics. They met with staff and the Mayor and got some feedback, which helped. He announced that they were ready to move forward.

Mr. Reece said that Mr. Stuhlreyer was spot on about how they should look at the project. If they looked at it holistically as a site plan under development over a period of time, they would not have an elevation for every building to approve under one site plan. They had to consider that, because it would be an important part of how they proceeded. He did not think it would be realistic to box in the owner and the architect and insist that every building be designed. It would evolve over time, whether it was

12 months or 18 months, and they had to keep an open mind. It would be a work in progress in terms of the buildings. If they could hammer out the parking, because 150 short was a lot, that would be important. He stated that it was a great concept, and he had all the confidence that Mr. Stuhlreyer would respect the comments about the Trail and the neighbors across the street. They might want to look at doing a traffic study. He knew that it got backed up at Drexelgate during rush hour. He felt that it was a phenomenal use of the property, and that it could be a real jewel in the City.

Chairperson Brnabic congratulated the applicants and said that the Commissioners looked forward to them moving forward and turning the concept into a site plan.

Mr. Anzek asked about the lone parcel in the southwest portion that was not shown on the plan and if they had considered trying to purchase it to tie in with the development. Otherwise, he considered that it would be an orphan with no access. Mr. Gentile said that General Development bought that ten acres. When they first started talking, his initial thought was to acquire that land, but General Development got it. He did not see anything holding them back from doing what they wanted, and his assumption was that when the project was approved, that General Development would want to get on board. Mr. Stuhlreyer had included a parking lot that would be accessible for their buildings. Mr. Anzek pointed out that they would have to go over a wetland. Years ago when someone was looking at it, they could not get a one-lane road across the wetland. He said that it would be great for them to be a part of the development instead of trying to wedge in at some future point. Mr. Stuhlreyer said that originally, they showed a building six in the location, but the deal did not work, but they did have a doorway into their property.

Discussed

2019-0009

A proposed integrated, for-sale residential community consisting of single-family homes, duplexes and small four-plex condominium buildings or small cottages on two parcels totaling approximately 8.8 acres on the east side of Livernois, between Auburn and South Boulevard, zoned R-4 One Family Residential, Three Oaks Communities, Applicant

(Reference: Plans and elevations had been placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof.)

Present for the applicant was Bruce Michael, a Principal with Three Oaks Development, P.O. Box 8307, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.