

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING/REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
December 13, 2018, 7:30 P.M.**

Chair Schwartz called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on December 13, 2018.

Commissioners Present: Brickner, Countegan, Goerke, Mantey, Schwartz, Stimson, Turner

Commissioners Absent: McRae, Orr

Others Present: City Planner Stec, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultant Tangari, Staff Engineers Olson and Seewald

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Countegan, support by Stimson, to approve the agenda as published.

MOTION carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. PUD PLAN 2, 2018

LOCATION:	31015 Grand River Ave.
PARCEL I.D.:	23-35-101-005
PROPOSAL:	Self-storage facility and offices with accessory uses in B-3, General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Recommend to City Council
APPLICANT:	Gerald T. Clark
OWNER:	Woodgate Development Company, LLC

City Planner Stec explained that the applicant would be presenting a concept PUD plan and was asking for a recommendation to City Council for PUD qualification. Tonight was for final PUD qualification review only; site plan review would be heard by the Commission at a later date.

Dennis Cowan, Plunkett Cooney, 38505 Woodward Avenue, Bloomfield Hills, MI was present on behalf of this application for final PUD qualification. Todd Clark and Gary Gerrits, Service Master, 979 South Old US Highway 23, Brighton MI were also present, as was Francesca Aragona, Designhaus Architecture, 301 Walnut Boulevard, Rochester MI.

Mr. Cowan noted that they had been before the Commission in August 2018, when they had received preliminary PUD qualification, and in November 2018, when tonight's public hearing was set.

Mr. Cowan said that previously they had asked for a 55-foot height. At the request of the Commission they had reduced that request so that now at its highest point the roof height was 47 feet. The parapet wall that would shield rooftop equipment would add another 3 or 4 feet to that.

The site was a challenging one due to its irregular dimensions, complicated by the fact that the applicants wanted to preserve the office part of the current building on the far western part of the site. They also

wanted to meet the City's requirements to increase the green space, which they were able to do by increasing the green space by 10,000 square feet.

From a business perspective, it was important for the self-storage area to have a covered loading and unloading area. This was especially important during inclement weather as customers were carrying boxes, loading and unloading, etc., and also kept that activity out of sight from the street. In order to provide interior loading and unloading the first floor was 16 feet high; the remaining floors were 10 feet high. No other benefit was gained by the higher first floor in that there were no additional units gained, etc. In fact, the typical pro forma at other locations was to accommodate 1,000 units; this location had been reduced to 730 units, in order to allow the applicants to utilize the location and opportunity at this particular site.

Mr. Cowan said if they could have reduced the building height more they would have done so. They felt they had made a good faith effort to reduce it as much as they could, while still preserving the landscaping and additional green space, as well as keeping part of the original building.

Mr. Cowan said that having a slightly higher building at this particular site was not as problematic as if it were further down Grand River in the middle of other buildings. At this location the height would not stick out because of its prominence and the triangular shape of the property, as well as the fact that it was on the corner, as opposed to being further down the road.

In terms of community benefits, they offered the re-use of this currently vacant entryway property. There would be two businesses on the site as opposed to one, in keeping with the Grand River Corridor's goal of providing a mixed-use feel. They were preserving the natural features on the site as well as adding the additional green space and landscaping in excess of the ordinance requirements. They were eliminating a curb cut on Grand River.

Mr. Cowan said that at the request of the Engineering Department they had done a traffic study, which had just come in today; Planning and Engineering had not yet had an opportunity to review it. However, Mr. Cowan felt the traffic study would validate the need for the 2 curb cuts, and also would validate the very low traffic impact of the self-storage facility, which showed 30 trips a day. This reflected in and out traffic of about 15 visitors per day.

Mr. Cowan said there would also be construction of a new building on the site. Working with the Engineering Department on a joint effort, they were going to extend the water line to Freedom Road. Per the Engineering Department this would improve pressure in the general vicinity. They were also going to extend the sidewalk. The discussion they had with Engineering so far was to extend the sidewalk to the barrier point. There were some complications extending it further, including safety issues. They had submitted additional information to the Engineering Department; they would rely on the Department's judgement with respect to the sidewalk.

If the Commission was concerned about whether there was a need for more self-storage in this area, Mr. Cowan said there were not enough climate-controlled self-storage units in the area to meet the existing need. Industry statistics showed that about 9.4% of households nationally utilized self-storage. Self-storage was important for residents who were downsizing in order to stay in the community, and who needed additional storage space for seasonal, hobby, or personal items. Self-storage was also utilized when people remodeled or sold their homes and they needed temporary storage in the meantime.

Small businesses who utilized small spaces including their homes used self-storage for inventory, files, records, etc.

Mr. Cowan said the self-storage contracts did not allow any type of business activities on the site. Further, there was automobile storage in their single-story units; no work on automobiles was allowed in those units.

Regarding parking, on the Service Master side they were showing 23 spaces including 10 inside the garage. Employee vehicles were stored there during the day. Service Master had 2-4 people in the office, with 10 drivers picking up the trucks while leaving their vehicles on site. All the other 20-30 employees went directly to the job site. Occasionally the off-site employees might have to come to the office for paperwork or an HR matter, but on a day-to-day basis, the 10 drivers would just leave their vehicles at the site, and those drivers would generally park in the inside spaces. There would be more than ample parking for the rest of the employees and visitors.

There were 15 parking spaces on the storage side. Seven would be covered in the loading/unloading area, and 8 would be uncovered. Based upon planning consultant comments and what Farmington Hills had experienced with other self-storage facilities, that would be adequate parking for the 730 units.

Mr. Cowan concluded his presentation and asked for a positive recommendation to City Council.

In response to questions from Commissioner Countegan, Mr. Cowan said the height would now be 51 feet. The top of the roofline was at 47 feet. Again, that was directly related to the need to allow trucks to drive through the first floor. They had originally asked for 55 feet.

Chair Schwartz asked what the height limit was in the Grand River Overlay District. City Planner Stec said that the area in the Overlay District had been pre-qualified for a PUD, which provided an opportunity for a greater height. In the Grand River Overlay District, the south side of Grand River was allowed a maximum of 5 stories/65-foot height, with a 7-story maximum for hotels east of Whittington. On the north side the limit was 4 stories /54 feet. The Overlay District was located generally from Beaumont Hospital to Middlebelt Road, which was approximately 1 mile east of the subject site.

Utilizing overhead slides and referring to his December 7, 2018 review letter, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background for this application for final PUD qualification and recommendation to City Council. The parcel was zoned B-3 General Business, and was surrounded by other commercial properties.

The project was granted preliminary PUD qualification in August. In order for a zoning lot to qualify for the Planned Unit Development option, the zoning lot should either be located within an overlay district or other area designated in Section 34-3.20 as qualifying for the PUD option, or it must be demonstrated that all criteria listed as paragraphs A through F would be met. Under E, the PUD must meet one of 8 objectives of the City. The applicants pointed to four objectives that they believed the project met, as follows:

- i. To permanently preserve open space or natural features because of their exceptional characteristics or because they can provide a permanent transition or buffer between land uses.

The applicant noted that existing stands of trees and natural areas would be preserved; the project did appear to occur entirely on the already developed portion of the site and reduced overall impervious surface by about 10,000 square feet.

ii. To permanently establish land use patterns which are compatible or which will protect existing or planned uses.

The office use was similar to a previous use. Discussion of the self-storage facility needed to consider both the use and the scale of the proposed building when considering compatibility.

vi. To promote the goals and objectives of the Master Plan for Land Use.

The applicant called attention to eight goals of the Master Plan, including the promotion of redevelopment in the Grand River Avenue Corridor. The applicant further called attention to three development principles of the Grand River Corridor Vision Plan.

vii. To foster the aesthetic appearance of the city through quality building design and site development, the provision of trees and landscaping beyond minimum requirements; the preservation of unique and/or historic sites or structures; and the provision of open space or other desirable features of a site beyond minimum requirements.

The applicant noted that landscaping was proposed to exceed ordinance standards, and also called attention to the design of the storage facility.

Planning Consultant Tangari said that while he would not be doing a detailed site plan review this evening, he did want to call the Commission's attention to *Summary of Requested Relief from Zoning Standards* listed on page 5 of the review letter:

1. B-3 height limit: 40 feet required maximum, 51 feet requested.
2. Permit self-storage use in the B-3 District.
3. Required 25-foot front setback. The existing building was legally nonconforming, and the applicants were asking for it to remain as it was: set back 14.8 feet.

In response to a question from Chair Schwartz, City Planner Stec said the self-storage uses on Orchard Lake Road were located in the B-3 and LI-1 zoning districts. The self-storage approved at the corner of 14 Mile and Northwestern Highway was in the B-2 zoning district.

Chair Schwartz thought the proposal also met objective viii. under paragraph E:

viii. To bring about redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use is determined to be desirable.

Chair Schwartz noted that he and Commissioner Brickner had spent many hours on the Grand River Corridor Authority with the goal of revitalizing that Corridor. From the renderings, this development would be one of the most modern buildings there and might also help trigger other development in the Corridor.

Chair Schwartz opened the public hearing. Seeing that no one came forward to speak, Chair Schwartz closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Commission.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Goerke, that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council that P.U.D. Plan 2, 2018, dated November 21, 2018, submitted by Gerald T. Clark, be approved because the plans are in accordance with the objectives, goals and

policies of the Master Plan for Future Land Use, and are consistent with the objectives and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option as outlined in Section 34-3.20 of Chapter 34, Zoning Ordinance.

- 1. The Commission finds that the proposal meets the following PUD objectives of Section 34-3.20.E.: i., ii., vi., vii., and viii.**
- 2. This motion is subject to modifications of zoning chapter requirements as indicated on the proposed plan and as discussed this evening, including:**
 - Maximum building height of 51 feet.**
 - Permit self-storage use in the B-3 zoning district.**
 - Existing non-conforming front yard setback of 14.8 feet for the part of the existing building fronting on Grand River.**

Regarding the height, Commissioner Countegan said the Master Plan contemplated greater height with redevelopment. The applicant had shown a desire to compromise and meet the City halfway with lowering the original height request from 55 feet to 51 feet. The greater height would allow the facility to be enclosed, and the applicants were not realizing greater capacity as a result of the requested height.

Motion carried 7-0.

REGULAR MEETING

A. SITE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN 68-10-2018

LOCATION:	29325 Eldon and southeast corner of Middlebelt & Eldon Street
PARCEL I.D.:	23-25-301-052 & 022
PROPOSAL:	Multiple-family development in RC-2, Multiple-Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Approval of site and landscape plans
APPLICANT:	Fabio Cervi
OWNER:	Kallis Enterprises

Utilizing overhead slides, and referring to his December 7, 2018 review letter, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the review for this request for site and landscape plan approval as well as tree survey approval for a proposed multiple-family development at 29325 Eldon and southeast corner of Middlebelt and Eldon Street, in the RC-2 zoning district.

The proposal met dimensional, density, and parking standards.

Outstanding issues included:

- Regarding circulation, there was an access easement in place with the property to the south, where there was a stubbed driveway. The Engineering Department had pointed out that a connection to this stub would complete a functional frontage road of slightly over 1,000 feet running the full distance from Eldon Road to Grayfield Road.
- Regarding parking screening, while the visitor parking spaces were set well back from the road, consideration should still be given to screening headlights with a hedgerow for vehicles using those spaces.

- Other outstanding landscaping issues could be approved administratively.

Chair Schwartz asked if the floodplain was east of the detention pond. Planning Consultant Tangari said there was no development in the flood plain, including the detention pond. The flood plain served as a barrier between this development and the single-family home to the east.

Commissioner Stimson asked if the Engineering Department had any issues with the locations of the curb cuts for this development as they related to the curb cuts across Eldon Street. Staff Engineer Seewald said he had not heard any concerns regarding the placement of the curb cuts on Eldon.

Commissioner Mantey asked about the Engineering Department request that the far west access drive connect to the stub street located on the property to the south. City Planner Stec pointed out on the overhead how the connection would be made.

Commissioner Stimson asked if there was something going on with the property that required the road and the sidewalk to curve on the western portion of the site.

Chair Schwartz invited the applicants to make their presentation.

Jason Fleis, Greentech Engineering, 51147 Pontiac Trail, Wixom MI was present on behalf of this application. Applicant Fabio Cervi, 12419 Stark Road, Livonia MI was also present.

Mr. Fleis said they wanted to provide a curvilinear entrance sidewalk from Middlebelt, as that would help provide more privacy when someone walked in from Middlebelt, with landscaping providing additional screening.

Commissioner Stimson asked if the applicants would provide a barrier for headlights for the visitor parking spaces as noted by Planning Consultant Tangari. Mr. Fleis said they had already sent an updated plan to City Planner Stec showing the hedgerow as requested.

Chair Schwartz noted that trees were shown as being added on Sheet L-1. How far was the edge of this development from the single-family house to the east? Planning Consultant Tangari said that the closest point from the proposed building to the closest point of the single-family property line was 102 feet. From there to the nearest house was at least another 100 feet.

Seeing that discussion had ended, Chair Schwartz brought the matter back to the Commission.

MOTION by Stimson, support by Goerke, that Site Plan 68-10-2018, dated November 19, 2018, submitted by Fabio Cervi be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, with the following condition:

- 1. Additional landscaping be added to block the headlights of vehicles parking in the visitors' spaces.**

The Commission discussed whether a condition should be added to the motion requiring the connection from the access on Eldon Road to the access easement in place on the property to the south, where there was a stubbed driveway. It was the consensus of the Commission not to include the connection in the motion, as they felt the connection would have no real benefit, the stub was too close to the corner, and they preferred the plan that was shown tonight without the connection.

Commissioner Stimson said that aesthetically he thought the plan would more pleasing without the connection. He was also concerned about added traffic on Eldon Street.

City Planner Stec explained that when the property to the south was constructed, the entranceway to that property was to be a temporary entranceway. The plan was for that to be removed when it was possible to get to the entire complex from Eldon, with another access on Grayfield.

Commissioner Stimson said he would like to see if the plan could be approved as shown tonight, without Engineering mandating that connection. Aesthetically, he preferred the plan as it was.

Motion carried 7-0.

MOTION by Stimson, support by Turner, that Landscape Plan 68-10-2018, dated November 19, 2018, submitted by Fabio Cervi, be approved because it appears to meet all applicable Zoning Chapter requirements, and applicable Design Principles as adopted by the Planning Commission, subject to:

- 1. Additional landscaping be added to block the headlights of vehicles parking in the visitors' spaces.**

Motion carried 7-0.

B. SITE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN 69-11-2018

LOCATION:	36350 Eight Mile Rd.
PARCEL I.D.:	23-32-326-023
PROPOSAL:	Addition to a Place of Worship in RA-1, Single-Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Approval of site and landscape plans
APPLICANT:	David Lovalvo
OWNER:	The Church of Jesus Christ

Utilizing overhead slides and referring to his December 7, 2018 review letter, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the review for this application for site and landscape plan approval for Wellspring Church, located at 36350 Eight Mile Road, a 4.5-acre parcel.

The applicant was proposing a 1,625 square foot addition to the existing church, which was approximately 5,940 square feet. The addition expanded the main assembly hall and was designed to continue the roofline and match the materials of the existing building.

Outstanding issues included:

- Parking. Parking was required at a rate of one space per 30 square feet of assembly area. The assembly area was 2,508 square feet, requiring 84 spaces. The church already provided 63 parking spaces and was proposing to land bank an additional 21 spaces, to reach the 84 total required. The applicant must provide substantial evidence that its parking needs were less than the required parking. The floor plan of the main assembly hall showed 220 discrete seats, which under an alternative parking calculation for the number of seats would require 73 spaces (one for each three seats or six feet of pew). The land banked parking bay met the locational standards of Section 34-4.4 for placement of worship parking lots.
- Trash enclosure. The church did not have a dumpster; the applicant should clarify how waste was handled.

- Pedestrian connection. There was no pedestrian connection to the 8 Mile Road sidewalk.
- Lighting. Parking lot lighting appeared to meet all standards of Section 34-5.16. It was not clear whether any of the lighting on the plan was existing, or whether any of the fixtures shown were replacements for current equipment. The plans included nine non-cutoff wall sconces and four floodlights directed at the building. Those fixtures required affirmative approval from the Planning Commission.
- Regarding tree removal. There were 17 regulated trees on the site, including one blue spruce. None were proposed to be removed at this time. If the land banked parking were ever constructed, four regulated trees would be removed; tree replacement would be required at the time of construction.
- Regarding landscaping. No additional landscaping was required. Some landscaping notes were required on the plan; those could be approved administratively.

Commissioner Countegan asked what the expansion would be used for. Planning Consultant Tangari said the assembly hall was being expanded. Currently the church had 63 parking spaces.

Chair Schwartz addressed the lack of a pedestrian connection to 8 Mile Road. The building was set far back from the street, and was far from any residential homes. In this case, requiring the pedestrian connection seemed like an unnecessary expense.

Juli Sala, Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick, Inc., 51301 Schoenherr Road, Shelby Township MI was present on behalf of this application. David Lovalvo, 3661 Briarbrooke Lane, Oakland Township MI was also present.

Mr. Sala said the purpose of the addition was to shift the existing seats further west; there would be the same number of seats as there were presently. The addition was creating more space for other internal improvements, including larger restrooms, etc.

Regarding parking, there were approximately 100 parishioners that attended the church, with 60-70 parishioners attending at any one time. Parking was never an issue, with 1/3 to 1/4 of the parking lot remaining empty during services. Adding new parking would be an unnecessary increase in impervious area, which was why they were requesting land banking the extra required spaces.

Regarding the sidewalk connection from 8 Mile Road to the church, the closest parishioners were 15-20 minutes driving distance away. To their knowledge they didn't have anyone that walked to the church, and there had never been a complaint regarding the lack of a sidewalk connection to the street.

Regarding the exterior of the building, they were redoing the handicapped spaces, and repairing the sidewalk.

Regarding lighting, the building was set back so far from the street that it was hardly visible, and they were concerned about lighting the heavily wooded site. Mr. Sala pointed out that the photometric plan did not show an additional new light pole closer to 8 Mile Road though this was on the site plan. There was a spot by the drive that currently had no lighting and the light pole was therefore being added. As this would need to be added to the photometric plan, they could submit corrected photometric plans tomorrow. There would be no light encroachment across the property line. They were also planning on putting new LED fixtures in existing pole lights.

As already noted, there was no trash dumpster on site. The parishioners took the trash with them and disposed of it elsewhere. There was no trash pick-up and no trash was taken to the curb.

Regarding landscaping, they believed they could save every tree on site. If a tree was damaged during construction, they would replace it. Also, there might be a couple of trees in between the parking rows that would also need to be replaced in the spring.

Mr. Sala believed the existing pond had enough capacity to handle the storm water runoff on site; they would work with the Engineering Department to make sure the pond was cleaned out and functioning as it should. If the Engineering Department required the pond to be expanded, they would do that.

In response to questions from Commissioner Turner regarding the floor plan showed on Sheet A100, Mr. Sala said the overall capacity of the assembly area was 220; he did not have that broken down between what was in the gray area (the new area) and what was not. He also did not know the capacity of the fellowship hall.

Commissioner Turner asked if the fellowship hall was ever rented out. Mr. Sala said it was not. There would never be separate functions occurring in the assembly hall and the fellowship hall simultaneously.

Chair Schwartz said that it appeared there were 44 seats in the gray area.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Sala and Mr. Lovalvo reiterated that the actual number of seats had not changed; the assembly hall had shifted west in order to spread the seating out and to make other internal remodeling possible. The required parking would be the same whether or not the assembly hall was shifted as shown; parking was currently nonconforming. The church had two meetings a week, one on Sundays and one midweek.

Seeing that discussion had ended, Chair Schwartz brought the matter back to the Commission.

Commissioner Mantey said he was comfortable with the request to land bank the excess parking.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Goerke, that Site Plan 69-11-2018, dated November 15, 2018, submitted by David Lovalvo, be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to the following determinations and conditions:

- **Land banking of parking spaces is acceptable.**
- **Pedestrian connection from 8 Mile Road sidewalk is not required.**
- **Ground mounted building accent lights are acceptable.**
- **A revised site plan, including a revised lighting plan including one additional lamp post, be submitted for administrative review and approval.**
- **The plan requires Planning Commission review for required parking lot and replacement trees prior to construction of banked parking spaces.**

Motion carried 7-0.

Staff Planner Stec noted that the landscape plan was the prior landscape plan for this property. The Commission, if it was so inclined, would be accepting the existing landscape plan.

MOTION by Stimson, support be Goerke, that the existing landscape plan for 36350 Eight Mile Road be accepted, subject to the following condition:

- **A revised plan be submitted for administrative review including added notations as indicated in the December 7, 2018 Giffels Webster review report.**

Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT None.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Brickner wondered why there was a *For Lease* sign in front of the newly remodeled building adjacent to Best Buy on Orchard Lake Road, when it appeared all the available spaces there were leased. City Planner Stec said he would follow up on that situation.

City Planner Stec said there would be two January 2019 meetings; the dates would be emailed to the Commissioners tomorrow.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 15, 2018

MOTION by Goerke, support by Stimson, to approve the November 15, 2018 meeting minutes as published.

Motion carried 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dale Countegan
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem