

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
NOVEMBER 13, 2023 – 6:00PM

The study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Bruce at 6:03pm.

Council Members Present: Boleware, Bridges, Bruce, Knol, and Newlin

Council Members Absent: Barnett and Massey

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Director Brockway and City Attorney Joppich

CHALDEAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION MULTIPLE-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECT (PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 1, 2023)

Charmaine Kettler-Schmult, Director of Planning and Community Development, explained that the purpose of the study session meeting was to update the current City Council and incoming Mayor and City Council on the project. The city’s Planning Consultant will speak on the project and then the proponent will make their presentation with time for some questions from Council.

Jill Bahn, Planning Consultant from Giffels Webster, explained that a Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a tool that communities can utilize to allow for more flexibility in a development in exchange for some community benefit not otherwise provided with a project. She discussed the steps involved to go through the PUD process and discussed the surrounding zoning and request for the project before Council this evening. She noted that the Planning Commission recommended denial of the project at its last public hearing meeting. Deviations from the current zoning ordinance that were being requested by the proponent include:

- Increased density – 240 rooms proposed that would be consistent with the RC-3 district. Under the current RA-1 zoning, the maximum number of units would be 13
- Increased building height – 35 feet 5 inches is proposed and the requirement is 30 feet
- Parking spaces – 169 proposed and 200 parking spaces are required

Council inquired about the trade-offs or community benefit for allowing a PUD for this project and inquired about the surrounding zoning and whether this would be considered spot zoning if changed for this parcel.

Consultant Bahn responded that a potential community benefit could be the offering of affordable housing with this project but it is the decision of Council to determine why they would deviate from their zoning standards. She added that she would not necessarily consider this spot zoning but the question for Council would be if this is out of character for the area and whether there is a community benefit.

Martin Manna, Chaldean Chamber of Commerce and Community Foundation, commented on the many meetings held with the Planning Commission and commented that they were provided any feedback following the last public hearing meeting. The project includes affordable housing that he would consider an extension of Baptist Manor. Mr. Manna discussed the Chamber and Foundation and their purpose and services provided to the community. He explained that the project is a MSHDA project that would be

rent-controlled and based on media income with the units being provided for persons making \$68,000 annually or less. He explained that separate from the Planning Commission meetings they held a private meeting with the neighbors and their main concern was traffic. He believes there is a demand for attainable housing in Farmington Hills and he presented to Council drawings and information on their current mission driven projects.

Tom Haji, Director of the Chaldean Community Foundation, explained at this is a \$25 million dollar project in the city and they have received approval by MSHDA for funding. Community benefits include providing for smaller units and affordable housing that is in high demand, developing a corridor that has remained dormant for the last 27 years, offering greenspace/park area and creating both temporary and permanent jobs.

Mr. Haji outlined other available land in the community and why this project would not be possible in other locations throughout the city. He added that a developer has not proposed a single-family project along this corridor and that their project fits the future master plan for this area. They conducted a traffic study due to concerns expressed by residents in the area, which he believes shows there would be no significant impact on the area. The traffic that is being seen today in the area is largely due to construction projects throughout the city pushing traffic onto other streets. He reiterated that they have strong support and funding from the state for the project and that this is a logical extension to the west and not spot zoning.

Council requested information from the Planning Department with regard to available land in the city for this project.

Council complimented the proponent on forming their Foundation and the services they provide to the community. Concerns expressed included having only one ingress/egress to the site, density and the majority of the surrounding zoning currently RA-1 single-family and having no transition to that zoning. It was suggested that condos would provide for a better transition to the RA-1 zoning on this site and suggested that investing into existing apartment buildings or hotels might be another option.

Council questioned if the area was proposed to remain RA-1 or if there would be a change with the master plan discussions. Consultant Bahn responded that there was some discussion at the Planning Commission level as to whether they should look at changes in this area.

There was a request for clarification on the height. Consultant Bahn clarified that the proponent was requesting a height of 35 feet 5 inches not 30 feet 5.5 inches as noted in their memo and that a corrected memo would be provided to Council for the public hearing meeting.

Further discussion was held on density and number of homes allowed in other RA single-family districts. It was noted that the RA-3 single-family district would allow for a maximum of 24 single-family homes.

Mr. Manna stated that they originally approached the city about putting this project at a parcel at 14 Mile and Middlebelt Roads and they looked at 12 Mile and Inkster but there were many projects that had already been denied by Council for that area and that property since sold and is being developed. He explained that they cannot building condominiums with a subsidized, affordable housing project and they cannot own the property until the project is approved.

Council inquired how the proponent would maintain and update the development if they had a 30-40 year loan and could not raise rents for the life of the loan. Mr. Manna responded that there is cash flow for maintenance and updating the development and that is all part of public record.

APPROVED

A member of Council suggested referring to this project simply as housing rather than affordable or attainable housing and agreed this type of housing is needed in the community.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk