

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL - COMMUNITY ROOM  
MARCH 13, 2023 – 6:00PM

The study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:05pm.

Council Members Present: Barnett, Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Massey and Newlin

Council Members Absent: Boleware

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine, Directors Brockway and Kettler-Schmult and City Attorney Joppich

**REVISED PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 3, 2021**

Charmaine Kettler-Schmult, Director of Planning and Community Development, stated that this was a continuation of previous discussions with City Council regarding a Planned Unit Development that occurred on January 9<sup>th</sup> following a decision by Council to postpone action on this revised PUD Plan to allow the developer to revise plans based on Council feedback. City Council then held a study session meeting on January 9, 2023 on this same issue but there was limited time left of the meeting to get Council feedback so Council invited them back to a future study session.

Jim Butler and other representatives of the applicant reviewed the concept for the PUD, marketing demands, the management company TAMC and public art as part of the proposed project. They presented 3D drawings of the proposed project and various views from ground level as well as a fly-over of the entire development. It was noted that at the highest point the building is 55 feet and that there would be 117 feet between the proposed development and the neighboring condominiums.

Council inquired what other developments could potentially have gone on this site and the taxes that would be generated from the development.

It was noted that commercial retail, restaurants, auto repair businesses are few other uses that could have been constructed on the site and that the proposed development would bring in approximately \$500,000+ per year.

Discussion was held on the impact that other uses would have on the condominiums versus the proposed apartments; but it was also mentioned that that retail businesses would face Northwestern Highway and the buildings would not be as tall.

Representatives further reviewed the proposed project going through the type of units, design and amenities provided and community features of the project. Market studies provided showed the affordability and need in the community and price points for the units were discussed.

In response to Council, it was noted that the project would cost approximately \$30 million to build.

Council suggestions and comments included:

- That the parking area is gated to deter auto theft

- The project could spur further redevelopment in the area due to demand for services needed based on the additional residents
- One vision for the area included a transit hub with nightlife and transportation to downtown
- Density and upkeep of apartment buildings into the future were still a concern for some members of Council
- Questioned the community benefits
- Suggested considering a bus stop on the site for students

Jim Butler, representing the applicant, confirmed that right-of-way for a future transit hub would not be a deal-breaker for them and there is some property available that may be able to accommodate this request. They have no objections to a bus stop on site but believed that would most likely be determined by the school district. Community benefits included down-zoning of the site, reducing the plan from 5 to 4 stories and reducing the height from 75 feet to 55 feet. Other amenities and community benefits include electric vehicle (EV) stations, public art and providing a need within the community. With regard to public art, they wanted to work with a local artist but first were wanting feedback from the Council to determine if the city had a concept in mind.

Photos were presented of the various apartment complexes that they managed, including some 25-50 years in age; and it was mentioned that the complexes have been so well maintained that they are still being recognized and receiving awards.

Mr. Butler stated that they looked at modifying the plan to reduce the density but it just didn't work for the project.

Staff explained that this plan would come back to City Council at a regular meeting for consideration.

### **REDEVELOPMENT LIQUOR LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

Attorney Joppich mentioned that he provided Council with a memo addressing some of their questions from the last study session at which this was discussed, including whether the city could obtain a license and whether the city could include public improvements such as roads as part of the overall investment for consideration. He stated that he included additional information in his memo as the laws have changed since the city established the redevelopment district area in 2007. He explained that the new laws open up possibilities for liquor licenses for Downtown Development Areas (DDA) and Corridor Improvement Areas (CIA) and the requirements are more lenient.

The response to if the city could obtain a license was no. The city could not qualify with the requirements. The question on whether public improvements including roads could be used as part of the investment is still in question but there is a possibility as there is no clear definition of "investment" throughout the law. Attorney Joppich is continuing to look into this matter.

Attorney Joppich added that the city also has the ability to expand or modify the redevelopment district area as it was established under an old set of laws and the city could also establish further CIA's or DDA.

Cristia Brockway, Economic Development Director, reviewed the current real property investment in the redevelopment district as reported by the City Assessor. She noted that they are still compiling personal property figures and that would take more time.

Council questioned whether the real property figures provided were based on taxable value or the actual full investment as Council felt those two numbers were different and that the law took into consideration full investment dollars.

It was determined that this issue needs to be revisited when staff has better figures to review.

City Manager Mekjian mentioned that this topic will integrate with the city's master plan process and City Council's desire to create entertainment or social districts or additional CIA's and it will be important to bring these issues up at the joint meeting with the Planning Commission that is proposed for April 20, 2023.

Mayor Barnett requested a summary of the MLCC rules for the CIA's and DDA's.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:25pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk