

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Carter of the Planning Commission at 7:35 p.m. at which time allegiance was pledged to the American flag.

PRESENT: Phillip Carter (Vice Chairman), Anthony Lawrence, Joe Barts, Ray Cousineau and Sandro Grossi

ABSENT: William Day (Excused) and Peter Sharpe (Excused)

OTHERS: Carmine Avantini (CIB Planning) and Nancy Fisher (Recording Secretary)

Determination of a Quorum:

A quorum of the Planning Commission was present for this meeting.

Agenda:

No additions or changes were made to the agenda.

Approval of the November 27, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Lawrence and Cousineau to approve the November 27, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

City Manager's Update – November 28, 2017

City Manager's Update – December 12, 2017

Call to the Public:

There were no comments made by the public.

Unfinished Business:

There was no unfinished business listed on the agenda for this meeting.

New Business:

1. **MY PLACE HOTEL, SPR #08-014-17, 48881 ALPHA DRIVE, WIXOM, MI 48393.**

The applicant is seeking site plan approval for the construction of My Place Hotel at 48881 Alpha Drive, which is in the Alpha Tech Corporate Park, east of Wixom Road and north of I-96. The development is proposed on the vacant parcel to the east of the Holiday Inn Express. Proposed site improvements include: a 3-story, 64-room, 28,776-square foot hotel; 104 parking spaces, including 5 barrier-free; a dumpster enclosure; grilling pavilion; and various landscape improvements. Access to the site will be from two new curb cuts along Alpha Drive. The property is zoned IRO, Industrial Research Office District, where hotels are permitted uses in that district.

Mr. Avantini referred to his December 13, 2017 review letter. He has been working with the applicant for some time and had a pre-development meeting with them. This hotel will be located directly to the east of the Holiday Inn. It is the applicant's second location in the State. He has asked the applicant why it requires additional parking. He needs details from the applicant for the waste receptacle although he understands it will be made out of concrete masonry unit (CMU). He would like to ensure that the waste

enclosure matches the building and that it has a stone veneer. He would like to see the mechanical units screened. Other than that, he is happy with the building's design. He thinks it will stand out architecturally and would like to see the applicant use architecturally dimensioned roof shingles. He will need to see manufacturer's specifications for the lighting. All of the aforementioned matters can be handled administratively. He will review the applicant's construction drawings.

Mr. Avantini recommends approval conditioned upon: 1) since the proposed parking exceeds that allowed, information on the shared parking and, if applicable, accessory uses in the building must be provided to the Planning Commission for review and approval; 2) verification from the City traffic consultant regarding driveway location and design; 3) review of sample building materials by the Planning Commission, including that proposed for the dumpster enclosure; 4) submission of manufacturer's specification sheets for all light fixtures; and 5) review and approval from all other City departments, consultants and agencies.

Commissioner Lawrence confirmed with Mr. Avantini that the items to be handled administratively is above and beyond the five conditions mentioned in his December 13, 2017 review letter. Commissioner Cousineau asked what is required in terms of mechanical screening. Mr. Avantini said that screening or landscaping would be required whether the mechanicals are rooftop or ground mounted. It is hard to specify since it is not always known where they will be located. He will handle this administratively. Commissioner Cousineau noted that when the Commissioners are reviewing commercial industrial uses, it would be nice for the applicant to provide colored renderings and materials to present to the Commissioners at the hearing especially with regard to future hearings. Mr. Avantini said that in most cases the applicants are able to do that. However, this applicant flew in from South Dakota.

Eric Myers, 1910 Eighth Avenue, N.E., Aberdeen, South Dakota. He did bring some samples including the cement board. The building will have four colors which is what they put on all of their properties. It holds up really well and has a different architectural look to it. He provided the Commissioners with colored renderings of the building's final appearance. Commissioner Cousineau asked whether it is full masonry stone. The applicant said they typically do a cultured stone. It is a full masonry unit. Commissioner Carter noted that the plans indicate the stone is described as an adhered veneer. The applicant said that the stone adheres to a skim coat. They are individual and are installed piece by piece. They are not pre-cast. RGC is their local sister company. Mr. Myers works for Ron Rivet who started the Super Eight Motel chain in 1973 which was eventually sold off as a brand. Mr. Rivet decided to re-enter the franchise business because he saw a niche for a product like My Place Hotels. He has since opened 36 properties in 18 states. There is others located in Marquette, North Aurora, Chicago and Indiana. The concept is economy extended stay. The rooms contain small kitchens, including full size refrigerators, microwaves and cooktops, with nightly, weekly and monthly rates. Their competitor is Residence Inn who is priced on the higher end. My Place rates will be \$99 per night while Residence Inn runs \$159 per night. My Place is able to keep its costs down since it does not offer a pool or fitness center. All of its buildings are newly constructed; they do not refurbish existing buildings. He showed the Commissioners pictures of the rooms and lobby design. They all have full laundry facilities.

Commissioner Cousineau asked why the applicant selected Wixom. The applicant said that they have assessment criteria they employ to make sure the numbers work. They were able to secure a good piece of land which was reasonably priced and had interstate exposure. The City has very strong occupancy rates that are trending upward. They also took into account the new businesses which occupy the former Ford Motor property. He assured the Commissioners that the trash enclosures will have a stone exterior which will match the building. It will be brick with a stone overlay.

The applicant noted that the parking spaces were in the Purchase Agreement with the waste management facility next to them. The property was bought from Thomas Duke who is short of parking spaces there.

They have the right to park up to 15 cars on their property from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. It is a shared parking agreement. Commissioner Carter noted that there should be no peak parking demands during those hours. Mr. Avantini said that if there is a parking challenge, he would rather see them partner with the hotel than to limit green space. Commissioner Carter noted that it is not a bad thing to have a little extra parking for a hotel. He confirmed with Mr. Avantini that the applicant is still within the lot coverage. The applicant noted that most of their sites are 1.5 acres. However, this site is 2.9 acres. This building's layout is standard for all of its locations. It will be four stories and contain 63 units which shrinks its footprint. Commissioner Cousineau confirmed with the applicant that it can meet the conditions set forth in Mr. Avantini's December 13, 2017 review letter. He noted that a lighting plan has already been submitted to the City Planner.

Mr. Avantini noted that the items which would still need to be included in any motion made by the Commissioners tonight include Nos. 4 and 5 and that the applicant has met all the requirements for Nos. 1, 2 and 3. Commissioner Cousineau inquired about the construction time table. The applicant said they will likely break ground in February or March, 2018 at the latest. Construction typically moves quickly and it should be completed within 5-6 months.

MOTION and second by Commissioners Lawrence and Cousineau to approve SPR #08-014-17, My Place Hotel's request for site plan approval for the construction of a 3-story, 64-room, 28,776-square foot hotel; 104 parking spaces, including 5 barrier-free; a dumpster enclosure; grilling pavilion; and various landscape improvements. This approval is conditioned upon administrative approval of the finalized parking which exceeds that allowed, verification of the City traffic consultant regarding the driveway location, final review of the building materials including the dumpster and the enclosure, final review of manufacturer's specification sheets for lighting and approval of all other City consultants, departments and agencies. The property is located at 48881 Alpha Drive, Wixom, Michigan 48393, is zoned IRO, Industrial Research Office District, and the parcel ID number is 22-08-327-006.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Call to the Public:

There were no comments made by the public.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Avantini noted that the second open house was held tonight which had about 10 people in attendance. He will be getting the final draft pulled together and it will come back before the Planning Commissioners probably at the last meeting in January, 2018 for final distribution.

Mr. Avantini noted that he has already had a number of meetings for projects slated for the first quarter of 2018.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Lawrence expressed some confusion over the Planning Commissioner's recent training session and some of the directives Ms. Rosati mentioned were confusing on some level. Chairman Day noted that there has not been a Commissioner training session held for the last 20 years. Commissioner Lawrence noted that the Planning Commissioners are wordsmithing their Motions; yet, Ms. Rosati seemed to be saying that the Commissioners should be framing the motions from their own heart, the way they see it. But then she coached them to stay on point since the Commissioners' motions become part of the record. Those two directives seem to be in conflict. Commissioner Lawrence noted that traffic is an increasing issue within the City as it development intensifies and he think that needs to be mentioned. He thinks

Mr. Avantini does a great job of setting forth recommendations in his staff reports and review letters but wants to know whether the Planning Commissioners should follow that to the letter. He would like some guidance on this.

Mr. Avantini said that some communities do not go through a lot of discussion and they rely heavily on the City Planner's review letter to support their motions. However, that does not happen in Wixom. Ms. Rosati was trying to make them aware of what the Courts have ruled. He finds it hard to believe that if they are were challenged that the Court would look at it and say the Planning Commissioners are not doing a good enough job as long as they discuss the salient points even if their motion references the conditions set forth by the City Planner. He is not sure that the Court case that Ms. Rosati referred to applies here. Commissioner Lawrence confirmed with Mr. Avantini that the Planning Commissioners just need to cover all the points and that they do not need to recite Mr. Avantini's conditions verbatim. Mr. Avantini said that he thinks that the Planning Commissioners have done their due diligence. Commissioner Carter noted that a verbatim read has always been prudent since personal decisions made by the Planning Commissioners leave the City open to lawsuits. He likes that Chairman Day always asks the applicant whether it can meet the conditions and recommendations stated in Mr. Avantini's review letter. Commissioner Lawrence has no objection to the way the Commissioners have been doing it. He thought that they are being told to take a new direction; however, it now seems there is actually less structure required.

Commissioner Lawrence noted that Mr. Avantini and Ms. Rosati mentioned a traffic study yield rating of D or F. He has no idea what this means and he thinks that the Commissioners should know more about this. He does not even know the outcome of traffic studies. He requested much more comprehensive training in traffic issues for the Planning Commissioners. He thinks the City has a hellacious traffic problem and is even more concerned with the impact on traffic of the upcoming school development project. He considers traffic training for the Commissioners to be necessary. Mr. Avantini said that he will discuss this with the City Manager but thinks it is a good idea. He noted there are two different types of traffic studies: 1) interior to the site (access and circulation); this will be the predominant study the Commissioners will see 98 percent of the time; and 2) road networks (how it impacts roads and intersections during peak hours). Mr. Avantini said that he will make sure that the school development project clarifies the traffic studies. He noted that traffic generation is effected by the type of housing. Different types of housing generate varying traffic levels. Single family homes generate 10 trips per day while empty nesters generate only 3.4 trips per day, or about one-third of single family housing. He will attempt to schedule training for the Planning Commissioners prior to the hearing on the school development project.

Commissioner Cousineau noted that most of the site plans are fairly mechanical and straightforward although the school's site plan will be much more complex. Commissioner Lawrence noted that the City can expect a very large crowd for that hearing. Mr. Avantini noted that there is currently a glut of single family housing although there is simultaneously a shortage of the types of housing that people are looking for. That tends to make residents protest it because it is different; it involves more long-term planning for future demand and younger generations' needs and desires. He tried to get small-lot housing approved in other communities but encountered a lot of resistance even though there is demand for it. He referred to an article in a professional municipal journal which he will scan and send to the Planning Commissioners and City Council. In the end, that keeps companies from attracting skilled employees because they cannot afford the housing or are unwilling to make the commute. He realizes that Wixom residents are worried about recreating what happened at The Villages. He will bring in educational speakers for the Planning Commissioners on topics of their choice.

Commissioner Cousineau requested training for the Planning Commissioners before the hearing for the school site. Mr. Avantini noted that the school would like to submit its plan soon but they could see it

sometime in February, 2018. Commissioner Barts inquired about the traffic frequency involved with apartment units. Mr. Avantini noted that this varies based upon the type of apartment. Those numbers are calculated by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) and is dependent upon the land use, whether that is suburban or urban, and housing type. Commissioner Barts noted that this project will have all housing types. Mr. Avantini believes that the numbers can be calculated for the school project and he will have the traffic consultant come in to educate the Planning Commissioners.

Commissioner Cousineau said that there is already a traffic problem on Wixom Road including traffic from Milford Road and Commerce. It is unreasonable and unfair to put the solution solely on the school's developer. You cannot prevent the developer from making use of its property. There is an attitude that the developer, especially the latecomers, should pick up the tab for traffic signals, lane widening, etc. He thinks that is unreasonable and unfair. Communities have to come to the table with millage votes.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Nancy Fisher
Recording Secretary