

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2019**

APPROVED

April 22, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Carter of the Planning Commission at 7:30 p.m. at which time allegiance was pledged to the American flag.

PRESENT: Phillip Carter (Acting Chairman), Anthony Lawrence, Joe Barts, Peter Sharpe, Ray Cousineau and Sandro Grossi
ABSENT: William Day (Excused)
OTHERS: Carmine Avantini (CIB Planning), Steve Brown (City Manager) 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 February 4, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes and the February 20, 2019 Joint Meeting Minutes:

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Lawrence and Barts to approve the February 4, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes and the February 20, 2019 Joint Meeting Minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

February 26, 2019 City Manager Update
March 12, 2019 City Manager Update

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. **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW, CREEKSIDE II, 3515 MAPLE ROAD & 3400 THEODORE, STREET, WIXOM, MI 48393:**
Applicant is seeking Planning Commission feedback on a conceptual site plan for the above stated addresses. The conceptual site plan is for a new, single-family home development that would require a rezoning from R-3 to R-4.

Mr. Avantini noted that the pre-development team met with the applicant two weeks ago and a plan was submitted. Questions were asked. They decided not to move forward. The process is for a conceptual review. On April 9, 2019, the applicant will meet with City Council and have a similar conceptual review to get feedback before putting together a site plan. Tonight is an opportunity for the Planning Commission to provide guidance to the applicant.

Michelle Spencer, Powell Engineering, 4700 Cornerstone Drive, White Lake. Ms. Spencer is here tonight on behalf of the applicant. She noted that the previously proposed townhomes on the southern edge near Norton Creek were negatively received by the public who did not want either apartments or townhomes. They went through and created a single-family development to deal with those concerns. The applicant would like to rezone from R-3 to R-4 and they would like a cluster development since there are a lot of environmentally sensitive areas. That includes Norton Creek, the fact that the site is heavily treed and has steep slopes which they would like to leave intact. It is a bountiful site. They want to leave the southern half and the northern half in order to preserve the natural features. There are loops running both ways. They will need to do a bridge

feature with two points of access in and out of the site. They want a nice downtown look. There will be different options for each elevation. The applicant referred to the schematic drawing depicting the railroad. The development will include smaller homes for empty nesters as well as larger homes. There is quite a large barrier between Maple Road and the development. It will be well screened along Maple and there will be a screening buffer on the area to the east. There will be lots of park space. The applicant solicited feedback from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lawrence asked how many homes are planned.

Mike Thomas, 1108 Timberview Trail, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Mr. Thomas said there will be 107 homes. Commissioner Lawrence noted that the lot sizes on the southern part are much smaller. The applicant concurred and noted that the Norton Drain will be difficult to get through. A bridge will be nice looking but costly. Ms. Spencer noted that it will be more dense where the railroad frontage is and that there is some unattractive industrial there. However, it will be less dense along Maple Road near the homeowner's association.

Commissioner Lawrence asked how many square feet the homes will be. The applicant estimated in the range of 1,650-2,350 square feet. It was noted that lots on the March property are a fraction smaller than the other lots (53 feet versus 50 feet). Also some of them will have side entry garages. The homes on the March property will be slightly smaller due to the price points. They will be as attractive, maybe bungalow or craftsman style with perhaps more autumn-toned colors rather than pastels. He spoke to Bill Chatsfield of Walled Lake Schools and learned that it is important to provide for thru-traffic from Theodore through the subdivision and up to W. Maple. The streets are private except for the continuation of Theodore. There will be sidewalks on both sides. Mr. Chatsfield has seen it, approved it and has signed off on it.

Commissioner Carter asked whether there will be sidewalks throughout. Mr. Thomas said that sidewalks will be on one side of the private street and on both sides of the public streets.

Commissioner Barts asked the applicant to define a cluster development. Ms. Spencer said it is an open space development that is written into the Code. They are clustered together instead of using the entire lot. Commissioner Barts noted that the environmental concerns are obviously related to the cluster concept. He asked whether the applicant foresees the need for any variances based on the conceptual proposal other than the rezoning. Ms. Spencer said that they should be able to meet the Code. They do not expect to require setback variances other than what is allowed. Mr. Avantini said that open space goes back to what is required in order to preserve more woodlands, environmentally sensitive features and open space. He noted that these lots are very comparable to the lots across the street from the City's municipal center. He does not believe there were any waivers granted in that development. The applicant's homes can be built without waivers. Commissioner Barts confirmed with the applicant that each home will be single-family.

Commissioner Carter noted that traffic is a prevailing concern for this site since this particular intersection has been difficult especially in the mornings. They will tie into the eastern side of the development which ties into Maple in order to keep the thoroughfare. Ms. Spencer noted that the Walled Lake Schools currently owns and wanted both areas of access to split it. She noted that Mr. Thomas had a traffic study done. Going single family is a step in the right direction since the trip count goes down. Commissioner Carter asked whether the applicant has comparison numbers for trip counts based on differing housing types. Mr. Thomas showed the Commissioners the traffic study.

Commissioner Cousineau noted that he does not recall the density of the applicant's original plan. Mr. Thomas noted that it was 306 and it went down to 107. Commissioner Cousineau asked about the lot sizes. Ms. Spencer said that the lots on the northern pods are 55 feet by 140 feet and either 50 feet by 100 feet or 53 feet by 120 feet on the southern pod. Commissioner Cousineau noted that is comparable to the lots of Robertson Brothers. Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Avantini what the lot widths are of the JMC development on Wixom Road. Mr. Avantini said that they are in that range.

Commissioner Cousineau asked about the homes' price range. Mr. Thomas said they will range from \$295,000-\$420,000. It was noted that Robertson Brothers started at around \$349,000 and topped out at \$420,000. Mr.

Thomas said that he spoke with Mr. Robertson who informed him that the single family are still going strong but that townhome sales have flattened. Mr. Thomas will build both parcels himself. He noted that Walled Lake Schools is selling the northern 14.2 acres and Todd Marsh is selling the southerly 16.4 acres.

Commissioner Cousineau asked about the R-3 zoning. Mr. Thomas said there is a 20-unit difference between R-3 and R-4. Commissioner Cousineau asked the applicant whether he has had any discussions with the neighboring homeowners. Mr. Thomas said no but that he will be doing so soon. He noted that there is a 20-foot green buffer at the railroad track and a 10-foot buffer along the easterly property line by the school. There is another buffer (about 25 feet) but it is single loaded up there; i.e., there will not be houses on both sides of the street. That garages will be situated in the back and they will be accessed by driving on the side yard. You drive between the houses. The former proposal had back alleyways. Commissioner Sharpe noted that this is not represented on tonight's schematics. Ms. Spencer noted that the drawings are being used more to depict the architectural features of the houses and it has nothing to do with the site. The pictures are meant to be a representation of the general architectural style. Commissioner Cousineau confirmed with the applicant that the homes fronting W. Maple will have rear garages. They have curb cuts with driveways. In some instances they will be attached to the garage but not in others. There will be driveways in the side yard accessing the garages for the entire development. Commissioner Cousineau noted that the Robertson Brothers development has virtually the same elevations. Mr. Thomas noted that he will have four housing types and two different elevations. Customers are seeking open floor plans.

Commissioner Cousineau confirmed with Mr. Avantini that private roads are permitted. They cannot be prohibited but they need to be built to a required standard.

Commissioner Carter asked where the sidewalk is on the southern cluster. Ms. Spencer said that it will be on the outer perimeter. Commissioner Carter asked whether there will be street lights. Mr. Thomas said there will be street lights along the public road. In response to Commissioner Cousineau's request, Ms. Spencer pointed out the location on the plans. Commissioner Cousineau noted that there is an interior connector roadway and that other roads are private. Theodore may be improved; however, he will take it to the property line. The School District would like it so that the traffic will not stack on Wixom Road. Many people have told him that the school contributes to the congestion on Wixom Road.

Commissioner Cousineau asked the applicant whether it is committed to making off-site improvements; i.e., traffic control and signalization. Mr. Thomas said that he was previously; however, this new proposal is one-third the size and much less profitable. He is not currently committing to that and will see how things play out. Commissioner Cousineau said that he believes a level of improvement to Theodore connecting it to Wixom would be important even if the applicant does not do it himself. Prior schematics show a median although roundabouts were also suggested. Commissioner Cousineau asked about the rationale for using private roads. Mr. Thomas said that it relates to cost savings and grading to the lots. They will narrow the right-of-way from 60 feet to 40 feet. Mr. Avantini noted that this will likely fall under the cluster request. He noted that before the applicant proposed this development, the City had previously met with eight different developers, all of whom wanted to do this as R-3 since smaller lots would be cost prohibitive. All eight of those walked away for that reason. It appears that the cluster option will overcome that concern.

Commissioner Cousineau noted that with this combination of rear garages and side driveways, there will be a variety of side yard setback configurations. What is a minimum setback? Ms. Spencer said they will all be the same and that the driveways will rarely align. It could be 4 feet on one side and 15 feet to get the drive back there. It will look like they are centered but in reality they are on one side. Commissioner Cousineau noted that the garages can be detached or attached. Mr. Thomas has done the schematics. They need to be able to design the plot with a good floor plan and convenient, appropriate access and turning radius and they have done all that.

Commissioner Cousineau asked about the marketability of detached garages in new construction. Mr. Thomas said that they sell like hotcakes in other climates. They can position things with connective routes from the house to the garage. Since townhomes have no yard and things like barbecues and chairs at grade are prohibited, they are trying to provide the amenities in the backyard. Commissioner Barts noted that they started with detached garages in the plan although only one was built. It looks silly and did not work. Mr.

Thomas noted that detached garages are being done all over Oakland County and they are selling. Mr. Avantini noted that the developer across the street from the City's municipal center did not put their best foot forward. Ms. Spencer said that they have done breezeways where it is enclosed to the garage. Commissioner Carter asked whether a breezeway is considered a detached garage. Mr. Avantini said that he believes it is under the Building Code. Commissioner Barts said that he believes there may have been one on Loon Lake in order to squeeze the house in.

Commissioner Cousineau noted that the only area where the applicant is adjacent to single-family homes is on the north parcel on the east side. Ms. Spencer noted that there is one home on the west side. The south parcel is Industrial. Mr. Thomas noted that screening with conifer trees will work since they are fast growing. There is 20 feet there.

Commissioner Sharpe noted that he kind of likes the applicant's plan since it is not just 107 fifty-foot wide houses. It has some character. He likes the curved road. It has a nice feel and natural landscaping. It is consistent with what is going on in the rest of downtown. However, he has trouble envisioning the road layout. The applicant promised to get that to the Commissioners via Mr. Avantini within the next couple weeks.

Commissioner Barts agrees with Commissioner Sharpe's comments. He noted that the land will be developed and that two previous efforts were denied because of multi-family. There are 107 single-family homes which is what people want.

Commissioner Lawrence noted that he much prefers this plan over the initial one. He personally had problems with the initial proposal for multi-family which was echoed by the public. He thinks the applicant has done a good job with this latest plan.

Commissioner Barts noted that the applicant's outreach to the neighboring homeowners associations will go a long way, along with appropriate signage on the site announcing the applicant's developmental plans. Mr. Thomas noted that the previous signage issues were inadvertent and that he will take care of this.

Commissioner Cousineau thinks the applicant's plan is nice and ideal. It will support the downtown area. Single family is perfect for that location. Traffic is a problem and will continue to be although it is also a regional problem. He would like to see some cooperation regarding Theodore Street and would also like to see the traffic study and signalization plans. He encouraged the applicant to compare the old/initial plan to the new one when he presents it to City Council and area residents.

Mr. Thomas noted that he bought these properties at the old price which was more than he would pay for single family. Commissioner Sharpe noted that the residents do not care how much Mr. Thomas paid for the property. Mr. Avantini noted that other than traffic, there is nothing to complain about. The larger the lots, the more traffic per unit is generated. This R-4 project will have more empty nesters than R-3 would. The difference is 19 peak-hour trips. However, if it has more empty nesters, he would not be shocked if the numbers do not even out. Commissioner Cousineau suggested that this fact be highlighted to the residents. Even if it is a 20-30 percent difference, it represents a nominal number. It is a smaller number on the road network.

Commissioner Carter suggested that the applicant present the conceptual drawing for the driveways when it meets with City Council. He thinks this project is a good idea and he likes it.

Call to the Public:

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Avantini noted that he has started seeing more applications and inquiries and expects even more as the weather warms. There has been some interest in the Menards outlots. He will come back to the Planning Commission with additional Zoning amendments. The comment period for the Master Plan will expire shortly and he will be going to the County soon for that. There will be a public hearing. They will make a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Avantini noted that Kelly McIntyre will be joining his firm full-time as a Director of Planning. She has 25 years of experience in the public sector. She handles all of the work in the City of South Lyon. His company now has four different divisions. Ms. McIntyre will oversee planning and zoning to ensure quality control.

City Manager Brown noted that the Airline Trail development has started and signage has been posted. He got his first complaint about some brush hogging from a house very near there. Commissioner Lawrence confirmed with Commissioner Lawrence that the trail paving will be completed this year. It was noted that the Wixom match was \$294,000 out of pocket; however, because of the way the bid came in and the grants which were awarded, the City's out-of-pocket match has been reduced to \$60,000.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Cousineau noted that it would have been nice if the Commissioners could have received a copy of the plans in advance of tonight's meeting in order to prepare. Mr. Avantini noted that they recommend that but it is at the discretion of the applicant. He noted that the City does not have the ability to ask for off-site improvements and it is prohibited by State law although they can work cooperatively with the developer.

Commissioner Lawrence asked what is new on the former Ford Motor land. He has noticed a lot of heavy equipment. City Manager Steve Brown said that is demolition equipment to tear up the concrete and recycle it onsite for future use in road construction. ICP, the new property owner, wants to demonstrate its seriousness and it wants to get potential purchasers interested in the property. Adamo is doing the work. ICP is paying for it. He does not believe it will be brownfield eligible. However, tomorrow is the State-level meeting when brownfield will be finalized.

Commissioner Carter noted the new development across the street from the City municipal center and that the holes are all filled with houses. There is only one red house on the far north end. Was that approved? Mr. Avantini said that it was. That development has a variety of housing types and colors. Mr. Avantini noted that he is happy that all the homes on the roads leading to the park and which frame the park are two stories. Commissioner Carter asked whether there is a remaining lot around the park. Mr. Avantini said that it is spoken for.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Nancy Fisher
Recording Secretary