

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC/REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
February 15, 2018, 7:30 P.M.**

Chair Rae-O'Donnell called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on February 15, 2018.

Commissioners Present: Countegan, McRae, Mantey, Rae-O'Donnell, Schwartz, Stimson

Commissioners Absent: Brickner, Orr (1 vacancy)

Others Present: City Planner Stec, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultant Tangari

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Rae-O'Donnell said that the applicants had asked to have Regular Hearing 5.A. Site and Landscape Plan 51-1-2018 postponed.

MOTION by McRae, support by Stimson, to approve the agenda as amended.

MOTION carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. REVISED LANDSCAPE PLAN 61-5-2016

LOCATION:	26789 Orchard Lake Rd.
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-15-429-103
PROPOSAL:	Revised landscape plan for addition to existing Michigan School of Professional Psychology in RA-2, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Approval of revised landscape plan
APPLICANT:	Steven Schneemann, S3 Architecture
OWNER:	Michigan School of Professional Psychology

Steve Schneemann, S3 Architecture, 33610 Grand River, Farmington, was present on behalf of this application for approval of a revised landscape plan for the addition to the existing Michigan School of Professional Psychology at 26789 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills MI.

Mr. Schneemann explained that the plan before the Planning Commission this evening was nearly identical to the one approved in September 2017, except the plan showed a wall being constructed on the west edge of the parking lot, in lieu of the originally approved high berm. The purpose of the berm had been to block headlights. However, construction of the berm would require significant excavation and removal of more native trees than the present plan, which was to construct a screening wall 36" above the original retaining wall. They were also proposing a landscape barrier of arbor vitae directly to the east of the retaining/screen wall.

The plans before the Commission this evening incorporated all the requirements that were given with the approval in September. There was a mistake on Sheet A-101, in that a single parking space was shown at

the southeast corner of the lot projecting into the front yard. That would be removed. All parking would be in the side or rear yard.

Commissioner Schwartz said that at the July meeting, when the Commission had also heard this request, there had been significant discussion regarding saving as many trees as possible. Tonight the consultant's report showed 73 trees being removed and 75 trees being replanted. Was there any way to get the desired result without removing 73 mature trees?

Mr. Schneemann said they were removing as few trees as possible. Because parking had been changed from the front yard to side and rear yards as required at the previous meetings, more trees had to be removed. This did result in more trees remaining along Orchard Lake Road.

In response to a question from Commissioner McRae, Mr. Schneemann said the highest point of the retaining wall would be 6 feet, and the screen wall would add another 3 feet to that. At the other end of the spectrum, the retaining wall would be 3 feet, with no additional screen wall at all.

In response to questions from Commissioner Schwartz, Mr. Schneemann said there was no house to the south of this property. There was a residential property to the west, with vacant land between the school's property and that residential lot.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if the retaining wall was necessary, and if it was not, could the Planning Commission waive the requirement for a wall entirely, and require the greenspace be strengthened instead.

City Planner Stec said the wall was required by ordinance. A strict reading of the ordinance required the wall be placed on the west property line. Because of the property's topography, at the earlier meeting the Commission asked to bring the wall forward in order to better screen the headlights in the parking lot.

City Planner Stec said the residents to the west had talked with him about tonight's proposal.

Mr. Schneemann said the retaining wall was necessary in order to get the parking lot in low. The change the applicants were requesting tonight was to add the screen wall to the retaining wall, but in any event, the retaining wall had to be built. The trees being removed for the screen wall were the same trees that would have to be removed for the retaining wall.

Commissioner Countegan commented that berms took out more vegetation than a wall with contiguous footings; the wall might be the best way to minimize the impact on the vegetation.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked Planning Consultant Tangari to give his report.

Referring to his February 8, 2018 review letter, Planning Consultant Tangari said that as already mentioned the mistake on sheet A-101 regarding the one parking space in the front yard had been corrected.

Planning Consultant Tangari had provided a chart showing a comparison of the number of trees to be removed from the originally approved plan and the proposed amended plan. The outstanding issue of showing the tree retention fencing as 1" x 1" wood fencing, as required by ordinance, could be handled administratively. Otherwise the plan met the conditions of the original approval.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if the proposed amendment was the least bad alternative in terms of tree removal for this site. Planning Consultant Tangari said it was.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell opened the public hearing. Seeing that no one came forward to speak, Chair Rae-O'Donnell closed the public hearing and indicated she was ready for a motion.

Motion by Countegan, support by Stimson, that revised Landscape Plan No. 61-5-2016, dated January 18, 2018, submitted by Steven Schneemann of S3 Architecture be approved because it appears to meet all applicable Zoning Chapter requirements and applicable Design Principles as adopted by the Planning Commission, subject to the following condition:

- **A revised plan be submitted addressing the items identified in the January 3, 2018 Engineering Department review and the February 8, 2018 Giffels Webster review reports.**

Motion carried 6-0.

Commissioner Schwartz complimented the Michigan School of Professional Psychology on their positive impact in the community, and noted that while he had originally opposed this request, he had changed his mind at tonight's hearing.

REGULAR MEETING

A. SITE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN 51-1-2018

LOCATION: 32418 Northwestern Hwy.
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-02-126-027
PROPOSAL: Gas station and convenience store in B-3, General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED: Approval of site and landscape plan
APPLICANT: Tarak Gayed (Gas Town, LLC)
OWNER: Northwestern Vineyards, LLC

As noted above, Site and Landscape Plan 51-1-2018 was postponed per the applicant's request.

B. AMENDMENT TO PUD PLAN 1, 2015 BEAUMONT/BOTSFORD HOSPITAL

LOCATION: 28050 Grand River
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-36-403-003 & 004; 36-404-003, 010 & 011; 36-430-013
PROPOSAL: Request to include a permanent sign on the parking structure
ACTION REQUESTED: Approval of amendment to allow additional signs
APPLICANT: Sue Majewski/Beaumont, Farmington Hills
OWNER: Botsford General Hospital

Utilizing overhead slides, City Planner Stec reviewed the original 2015 PUD agreement for this site. Beaumont Hospital was returning to the Commission to request approval of an amendment to the PUD agreement in order to allow an unlit banner sign on the parking structure façade that faced Grand River Avenue. The sign would change periodically, but in essence it was a permanent sign, with the message sometimes changing.

Specifically, the Hospital was requesting consideration to allow the display of a 540 square foot changeable banner sign mounted on the southern wall of the new parking structure. The sign would exceed the maximum allowed sign face area of 25 square feet for walls signs in the SP-2 zoning district. Per the terms of the PUD agreement, the ZBA was precluded from having any jurisdiction over the site. Therefore an amendment to the PUD plan would be necessary to allow for the display of the sign. The Planning Commission needed to determine whether the proposed modification was of such minor nature as not to violate the area and density requirements or to affect the overall character of the plan, and in such event could approve or deny the proposed amendment. If the Planning Commission determined the proposed amendment was material in nature, the Planning Commission and then City Council would review the amendment in accordance with the terms of the PUD ordinance.

Commissioner Mantey asked the difference between a minor and material PUD amendment.

City Attorney Schultz explained that this determination was left up to the Planning Commission; the terms were not strictly defined.

Noting that he had not been part of the original PUD approval, Commission Countegan asked for more background regarding the original PUD agreement. City Planner Stec said that the original PUD allowed for the construction of 2 new towers, one as a surgical area, and the second for patient rooms. The hospital was not adding capacity but rather was adding more single-bed rooms. A new central energy structure was being added at the back of the site, and a new helipad landing was also being constructed. The parking garage was also a part of the PUD plan.

Staff Planner Stec showed an aerial of the entire Hospital campus.

Planning Consultant Tangari read the related portion of the PUD ordinance (Section 34-3.20.5.G):

Amendments to PUD plan. Proposed amendments or changes to an approved PUD plan shall be submitted to the planning commission. The planning commission shall determine whether the proposed modification is of such minor nature as not to violate the area and density requirements or to affect the overall character of the plan, and in such event may approve or deny the proposed amendment. If the planning commission determines the proposed amendment is material in nature, the amendment shall be reviewed by the planning commission and city council in accordance with the provisions and procedures of this section as they relate to final approval of the Planned Unit Development.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell invited the applicant to speak. The Commission would rule on whether the proposed request was a minor or material change to the PUD after the applicant's presentation.

Sue Majewski, Special Projects Coordinator, Beaumont, Farmington Hills, was present on behalf of this application. Ron Justice, Faro Screen Process, Canton MI was also present.

In response to questions from Commissioner Stimson, Mr. Justice said the proposed banner would not be lit. Beaumont would like to put up a sign similar to what they had done at other locations, and change the sign out once a year. The sign would be made of a mesh fabric to allow airflow, in order to prevent fluttering, and would be fastened with turnbuckles. Mr. Justice explained that 10% of the building's elevation would have been 560 square feet; a 540 square foot sign was requested.

Commissioner McRae made some comments regarding whether or not the sign was effective marketing. Ms. Majewski said the sign was critical to the Hospital's continued marketing of its nationally ranked status.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if the sign would be visible from Grand River. Mr. Justice said it would be minimally visible from Grand River.

Commissioner Schwartz commented that if the banner would have minimal impact on Grand River, 3 groups of people would be seeing it: (1) employees, for whom the sign would mean nothing, (2) patients in non-emergency capacity, who were already sold on the hospital, and (3) visitors. He did not understand the need for the banner. When the PUD was originally approved, it had 14 conditions, and if the banner had been requested at the time of the original approval, he did not think it would have been approved. At 540 square feet, the banner was 25 times the size allowed by the underlying zoning district. At the least, he felt the requested banner represented a material change to the PUD.

On a side note, Commissioner Schwartz said that one of the 14 conditions dealt with Beaumont encouraging personnel to live close to the Hospital. He referred to Grosse Pointe Park, who was able through donors to access programs to entice young students from Wayne State and other downtown colleges to live there. Perhaps the hospital could look into some sort of donor program that would make housing close to the Beaumont Farmington Hills campus attractive.

Commissioner Mantey said he disagreed with Commissioner Schwartz regarding the importance of the banner to the site. The Commission was not being asked to determine whether the marketing was effective or not, but using Commissioner Schwartz' reasoning, having the banner interior to the site was an argument for the application for the banner being a minor PUD amendment request.

Ms. Majewski said the marketing aspect of the banner was beyond important for the campus.

In response to questions from Commissioner Stimson, Mr. Justice said similar banners were in Royal Oak, Grosse Pointe and Trenton campuses. The banners were changed once a year, thus eliminating the chance of fading, sun damage, etc.

Commissioner Stimson said if the request were approved, he would like it conditioned on the banner being changed at least once a year.

Commissioner Countegan agreed that the request constituted a minor amendment to the PUD. The sign was not on Grand River, but was interior to the site. The sign would instill confidence in patients coming to the facility, which was a positive. It was also positive for the City to have a nationally ranked hospital here.

Commissioner Countegan asked what kind of material the banner was made of. Mr. Justice explained the material was a specialized mesh used specifically for this purpose, to allow air to flow through it. Regarding placement on the building, the spot was chosen because a) it was a key driveway into the hospital and all visitors would see it, and b) while it would be minimally visible from Grand River, it was far enough into the site so that it did not appear as a billboard and was the least disruptive to the neighborhood.

Commissioner McRae said that even though he questioned the need for the banner, he did consider the request to be a minor adjustment to the PUD. The applicants were not talking about moving the heliport

or a tower. His biggest concern was if the Commission approved this request, he would like a stipulation that prohibited other similar signs from being added, so that if there were a desire to add another sign, this one would have to come down. He did not want to see a trend in the City for similar semi-permanent banners. Other property owners might not be as responsible as Beaumont in terms of changing them out or making sure they were in good condition. He would not want an approval to be seen as precedent for other locations.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked what would preclude the applicant some time in the future applying for an additional sign on the property. City Planner Stec explained that any request for a sign over 25 square feet would come before the Commission for approval.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked if the Commission could stipulate that the Hospital could only have one sign at a time. Commissioner McRae wanted to ensure that if the Hospital wanted to put a similar sign somewhere else, this sign would have to come down.

Commissioner Schwartz reiterated that he felt this sign request constituted a material change because the sign was 21 times over the allowed area in the underlying zoning district. He didn't see how approving this sign did not create precedence. He gave several scenarios of companies that might want to do the same thing, to celebrate successes or advertise awards or national ratings. He was not convinced this sign was a necessity. There were plenty of places to put up the information in the interior of Hospital buildings. Again, if the Hospital had made this request during original PUD approval, he did not think the request would have been granted.

City Attorney Schultz commented that they resisted the idea of precedence; each case stood on its own. A PUD was more discretionary than a Zoning Board of Appeals decision, in that the PUD agreement was almost legislative in nature. While someone could make the argument that allowing the banner set precedence, the Commission did not have to give a similar sign to anyone else just because it was approved for the Hospital.

Commissioner Countegan said that from his standpoint, this was a unique request. The process reinforced the authority of the Planning Commission and the PUD process. He did not have a problem with the request being considered a minor request.

Commissioner Mantey asked what was anticipated in the SP-2 zoning district. City Planner Stec explained that the SP-2 District was a district whose main use was hospitals. Commissioner Mantey felt the 25 square foot limit for wall signs was unreasonable for hospitals.

City Planner Stec said in other zoning districts the user would be allowed a wall sign that was 10% of the façade.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell said she agreed that the request constituted a minor change to the original PUD plan. She also felt the information on the sign would be a comfort to those who used the facility as a patient or a visitor.

MOTION by Stimson, support by Countegan, that the Planning Commission find the proposed amendment to PUD Plan No. 1, 2015, dated February 5, 2018, submitted by Sue Majewski of Beaumont Farmington Hills to include a changeable banner sign on the southern façade of the parking structure, to be a minor amendment to the plan, and also that the proposed

amendment be approved in accordance with Section 34-3.20 of Chapter 34, Zoning Ordinance, based on the following findings:

- **The sign will not adversely affect the surrounding area**
- **The sign is in character with the existing area**
- **The sign will not affect the density of the PUD plan**
- **The size of the sign is in scale with the overall character of the hospital campus**

And with the following conditions:

- **The banner is changed once a year at a minimum**
- **The sign is constructed as presented and mounted per code**

Commissioner Schwartz said he would oppose the motion. Nevertheless he thought one of the findings should be the sign primarily would not be visible outside the campus on the main roads.

Commissioner Stimson said he was not sure that should be added, as the sign might be more visible when the trees were down. Commissioner Countegan agreed.

Commissioner Mantey reiterated that he would like to see the 25-square foot limit for signs in SP-2 discussed by the Commission. He noted that he had been to hospitals many times but had never been a patient; the sign would interest him.

Commissioner McRae wanted to make sure the motion referenced the specific type of construction for the banner. Also, he wanted the minutes to clearly reflect his desire that only one such sign should be allowed; if the hospital wanted a second sign in another location, he thought this one should be removed.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell called the vote.

Motion carried 6-1 (Schwartz opposed).

C. Presentation of Historic District Commission Annual Report for 2017

Utilizing overhead slides, Ken Klemmer, Chair of the Historic District Commission, presented the Historic District Commission Annual Report for 2017.

The goal of the Historic District Commission was to promote the preservation of the historic community while issuing Certificates of Appropriateness and Notices to Proceed for minor work on the homes in the area. In 2017 five Certificates of Appropriateness had been granted, including:

- David Simmons House, 22000 Haggerty Road, (HD#7), to re-orient and relocate the house to accommodate a hotel on site.
- Sherman Goodenough House (Longacre), 27405 Farmington Road (HD#312), installation of an affixed awning along the north side.
- Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halsted Road (HD #9), repaving of existing gravel parking lot with asphalt.
- Boorn-Halsted House, 28325 Halsted Road (HD# #202), replacement of 2 existing easement windows.

Administrative Certificates of Appropriateness were granted for:

- Glen Oaks Country Club, 30500 13 Mile Road (HD #16), installation of an additional roof top air conditioning condensing unit
- Frank Steele House, 35810 W. 11 Mile Road (HD #510), replacement and repair of asphalt shingles, decking, trusses and fascia for the roof on the garage
- Boorn-Halsted House, 28325 Halsted Road (HD #202), installation of 2 air conditioning units.

Historic Marker program: Currently there were 75 historic district properties in the City; approximately 50 had historic markers. The Commission was trying to encourage everyone to have a marker. Markers being added this year were HD# 212 Emmett Green House, 38201 Fourteen Mile, and HD #314 William Gates House, 36130 Grand River Avenue. Additionally a new plaque was approved to complement the existing historic marker and celebrate the legacy of John Glick at Plum Tree Pottery, 30435 W. 10 Mile Road.

Public education: A wooden window repair workshop was held Fall 2017 in conjunction with the HDC, the Farmington Hills Historical Commission and Preservation Farmington. The program, which could handle 12 participants, sold out in a day.

Project Update for HD #507, Sarah Fisher Home, 27400 12 Mile Road: The Historic District Commission met with the CEO of Evangelical Homes. The site plan involved demolition, but the developers planned to preserve 2 cottages, the main administration building, and the prominent entry gates. Currently they were doing some stabilization work on the buildings, trying to keep rain and animals out, and were completing a final marketing study. Hopefully the developers would be breaking ground this year.

MOTION by Mantey, support by McRae, to accept the Historic District Annual Report for 2017.

MOTION carried 6-0.

Commissioner Countegan complimented Chair Klimmer on the HDC's great work.

D. Presentation of Planning Commission Annual Report for 2017

City Planner Stec presented the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2017. The Commission had lost two long-time members: Paul Blizman in 2017 and Glen Fleischhacker in 2018.

Major initiatives included:

- 2017/2018 – 2022/2023 Capital Improvement Plan
- Zoning Ordinance and City Code Text Amendments
- Approval of Major Projects, including approval of a PUD for the David Simmons House, the major addition to Hitachi Automotive, and a new coffee shop at the southeast corner of 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road. Also, a PUD was qualified for redevelopment that included an assisted living facility and a self-storage building at 14 Mile Road and Northwestern Highway.

City Planner Stec called the Commission's attention to graphics that showed trends for number of Planning Commission meetings, number of applications for Site Plans, Special approvals, New and Revised Landscape Plans, Lot Splits, Rezoning, Zoning Text Amendments, City Code Amendments, PUD Options, and PUD Plans.

The report also listed in detail all the activity that the Planning Commission heard throughout the year.

City Planner Stec said the next step was to present the Annual Report to City Council.

Commissioner Schwartz said that the City Economic Development Director should use the report to show businesses that the City's process for development was mainly smooth, and a reasonable time frame for approval could be predicted.

Commissioner Stimson agreed, and suggested that the City track how long applications took from submission to final decision. Perhaps next year the report could include an average timeline for various approvals – site plans, landscape plans, PUDs, etc.

Commissioner Countegan said historically the City had a good reputation regarding growth management.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES January 18, 2018 and January 25, 2018

Regarding the January 25, 2018 minutes, Commissioner Stimson asked that his comments on page 7 be changed as follows: For example, Rochester had many 8-foot asphalt bike paths ~~everywhere~~.

Motion by McRae, support by Countegan, that the January 18, 2018 minutes be approved as presented, and the January 25, 2018 minutes be approved as corrected.

Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Schwartz said that he had never understood why the Planning Commission reviewed and approved the Capital Improvement Program. Of all the communities he represented professionally, only Ypsilanti had the Planning Commission look at the CIP, and in that case only at the land use sections. He felt the Commission's time could be better spent by only looking at land use issues.

Commissioner McRae reported that strip lights were on at a strip mall south of 13 Mile Road on the east side of Orchard Lake.

Commissioner Countegan asked if staff had anything to report on the land use issue regarding Harrison High School and the Costick Center.

City Planner Stec said the City Manager and Mayor would like to present at a Planning Commission Study Session regarding those issues, and such a study session would be scheduled in the near future.

Commissioner Countegan asked about the email in the Commissioners' packets regarding Master Plan Changes in Livonia. City Planner Stec said more information regarding this would be sent to the Commissioners via email, or at the next meeting.

Commissioner Stimson made some comments regarding an upcoming project on the southwest side of Orchard Lake and 12 Mile Road.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked about the development at Springland and Orchard Lake Road, which seemed to have stalled. City Planner Stec said the project had hit some snags, but now seemed to be moving forward. The permits were current and financing also seemed to be current.

Regarding scheduling, Commissioner McRae and Chair Rae-O'Donnell said they were unavailable for a March 8 meeting to meet with the City Manager and Mayor. City Planner Stec said he would see if an April date was available. In the meantime, the Commission would meet for its regular meeting on March 15.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing that there was no further comment, Chair Rae-O'Donnell adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven Stimson
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem