

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
July 13, 2015

Chairperson Bowman called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Farmington City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Present: Bowman, Buyers, Chiara, Crutcher, Gronbach, Majoros

Absent: Babcock

A quorum of the Commission was present.

Chairperson Bowman wished happy birthday to Commissioner Majoros.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen, Building Inspector Koncsol, City Manager Murphy

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Gronbach, seconded by Buyers, to approve the agenda as submitted.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

a. June 8, 2015 Minutes

MOTION by Chiara, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried, all ayes.

**REQUEST FOR SITE PLAN AMENDMENT – CHATHAM HILLS APARTMENTS,
36001-36691 GRAND RIVER**

Chairperson Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated that the Applicant, Burton Carol Management, LLC, had submitted plans to remove the existing community building and indoor swimming pool at the Chatham Hills Apartments and to construct a new community building and outdoor swimming pool for the existing apartment complex. He stated Chatham Hills Apartments is located at 36135 Grand River Avenue and is zoned R-3, multiple family residential zoning district. Community buildings with swimming pools are considered accessory buildings and structures and are permitted in the R-3 District in accordance with Section 35-83, Residential Lot and Yard Requirements, and Section 35-43, accessory buildings and structures of the Zoning Ordinance. Both the community building, clubhouse, leasing center and the swimming pool are subject to site plan review in accordance with the requirements of Article 13, Site Plan Review of the

Zoning Ordinance. The project includes the demolition of the existing community building and indoor swimming pool and construction of a new 3,099 square foot one-story community building and a new 20 X 40 outdoor swimming pool. A new five-foot wide concrete sidewalk and new swimming pool fence enclosure are also proposed.

The new community building as proposed meets the lot and yard requirements of Section 35-83 of the Zoning Ordinance for the R-3 multiple family residential district including building heights.

He indicated the requested action of the Planning Commission is to review the submitted site plan for Chatham Hills Apartments. Aerial photos were included with the Commissioners' packets as well as copies of the applicable Zoning Ordinance sections and a copy of the site plan application submitted by the Petitioner.

Director Christiansen went over the site plan submitted by the Petitioner. He indicated the Petitioner was present to present his petition to the Commission and answer any questions they may have.

Chairperson Bowman thanked Christiansen for his presentation and invited the Petitioner to the podium.

Ghassan Abdelnour from GAV Associates Architects, 24001 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 180, Farmington thanked the Commissioners for having them here tonight and thanked the City for their help, particularly Kevin, in going through the process. He stated they are very excited to do this project and the building they are proposing is going to be a totally new building with the materials presented. He indicated the building will have a lot of stone veneer and a shingled roof and will make a huge difference for the property.

He described the new building which will include a gathering place, a fitness center, a leasing area with a storage area, simple but attractive in design. The pool area will be bigger than the former indoor one. He also described the handicap access for the pool area. He then invited questions from the Commissioners.

Chiara inquired about the depth of the pool and the Petitioner responded 5 feet maximum.

Gronbach asked if the colors depicted on the renderings are accurate and the Petitioner responded that they are actually lighter than what appears in the pictures. He then asked if the roof will be shingled and the Petitioner responded in the affirmative.

Bowman asked the comparison in size to the new and old building and Marty Berand of Burton Carrol Management, the property manager of the apartments, stated they are almost equal in size but the facility will add a community area and a fitness center with the installation of the pool being outdoors.

Buyers asked for clarification from staff as to the building meeting height requirements and the like and Christiansen responded that the height requirements are measured

from peak to the midpoint between the peak and the eve, so therefore it meets the requirement.

Crutcher inquired about the ramp down the west side of the building and the stairs going down the east requiring someone in the pool area that needs to utilize the ramp having to go all around the building to do so and further discussion was held.

Majoros asked if the pool had increased in size and the Petitioner responded it has been reduced. He then asked if the outdoor location of the pool would have an impact noise-wise on the closest neighborhoods and Christiansen responded that there is a good separation distance-wise as well as a grade difference that would prevent that from happening. Bertrand also responded that facility use will be reduced as the outdoor pool is open only from May to September and not past 9:00 p.m and that the area between the building and the housing is a good 300 yards.

Majoros complimented the plans and wanted to assure it would not be a nuisance to neighboring properties.

Buyers asked if the hours of operation would be the same and Bertrand responded in the affirmative.

Bowman thanked the Petitioners for their presentation and brought it back to the Commissioners for discuss and a motion.

MOTION by Gronbach, supported by Chiara, that the request for site plan approval for the Chatham Hills Apartments, located at 36001 Grand River, be approved.

Motion carried, all ayes.

**REQUEST FOR OUTDOOR DISPLAY AND SALES APPROVAL – UPTOWN PLAZA;
OVERSTOCK OUTLET, 31550 GRAND RIVER**

Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated that the Applicant has submitted plans for outdoor displays and sales to be located at the front entrance of the existing commercial building located at 31550 Grand River Avenue, Overstock Outlet, at the Farmington Plaza. He stated the existing commercial property is zoned C-3, General Commercial. Season commercial outdoor display and sales is permitted in the C-3 zoning district, subject to site plan review. He also went over the changes that had been made in the Zoning Ordinance last year regarding Outdoor Displays and Sales and stated the applicant met those requirements.

He stated the submitted plans provided in the Commissioners' packets show an outdoor merchandise display area consisting of two 4 x 5 foot wide by 50 foot long sections located along the front, the entrance of the existing commercial building under the existing overhang for the unit and along the 12 foot wide sidewalk that fronts the entire Farmington Plaza building. He indicated the requested action of the Planning

Commission is to review the submitted site display and sales application and the site plan for Overstock Outlet. A copy of the aerial photograph was displayed on the screen showing the Plaza which is approximately 6 plus acres with the building itself being a little over 70,000 square feet. He pointed out the two areas of display proposed on either side of the entryway, 4.5 feet wide by 50 feet long, and indicated former tenants ACO and Big Lots had also utilized outdoor displays.

Bowman thanked Christiansen for the introduction and invited the Petitioner to the podium.

Skip Fehse of Overstock Outlet, 31550 Grand River, came to the podium. He stated that Kevin had done an excellent job of presenting his application.

Bowman then turned the floor over to the Commissioners for questions and comments.

Chiara inquired in light of the building having 500 feet of frontage, why was he limiting the outdoor displays and sales to two 50 foot sections and the Petitioner stated he felt that was sufficient for his displays and it would be easier to monitor it.

Gronbach asked if he was proposing it to be year round and the Petitioner responded in the affirmative. He then asked staff if outdoor permits were limited seasonally and not year round and Christiansen responded that in locations such as this shopping center with an overhang that the outdoor displays can be year round as long as they are compliant.

Gronbach then stated he thought the intent of the ordinance was that the product displayed outside would be seasonal and should not be sold inside the store and he asked the Petitioner what his intentions were. The Petitioner stated he wanted to display items that would draw attention to the store and not necessarily seasonal and further discussion was held.

Gronbach stated he felt the items should be defined somewhat and would not want to see racks of clothing and furniture in front of the store for display.

Bowman stated that furniture is banned per ordinance.

Buyers stated that he sees a problem with Petitioner's request in comparing it with the language of the ordinance.

Bowman asked the Petitioner isn't the nature of his business and his "overstock" inventory changing constantly and difficult to define and he responded in the affirmative.

Further discussion was held about the pictures of the displayed items provided to the Commission.

Bowman stated the ordinance does not read that outdoor displayed items can not be sold inside the store, just not customarily.

Christiansen stated there is specificity contained in the language of the ordinance that would address some of the concerns expressed by the Commission but assured them that Code Enforcement monitors the displays on a routine basis.

Chiara asked if this is a 12-month approval that is renewed yearly and Christiansen responded in the affirmatives, stating that if the Petitioner was not compliant, they could deny the renewal. Chiara asked if the items would be brought in nightly and the Petitioner replied yes.

Bowman thanked the Petitioner for his presentation and brought it back to the Commissioners for discussion.

Chiara commented that they did a great job on the resurfacing of the parking lot at the Plaza.

Gronbach reiterated his concern about having defined guidelines regarding the outdoor displays and Majoros agreed. He also spoke about the denials that had been made by the Planning Commission recently.

Bowman responded that the denials were not under the same conditions and that is why the revisions were made in the ordinance and Crutcher indicated that one of the denials concerned a resale shop with used items.

Chiara asked fellow Commissioners how many had actually been in the Overstock Outlet store.

Further discussion was held concerning the language of the ordinance.

Christiansen stated the Planning Commission could place conditions on the approval if they so deemed necessary.

Majoros clarified if the one-year renewal of the outdoor displays and sales could be done by staff and Christiansen indicated yes. He then referred Majoros to page 3 of the ordinance, Section 12, and read the language into the record.

MOTION by Chiara, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the submitted plans as shown for Overstock Outlet, 31550 Grand River, consisting of two 4.5 x 50 feet long sections located in the front entrance of the commercial building under the existing building 12 foot overhang, for a 12-month period of time, and subject to review after twelve months to determine its compliance with the terms and conditions of approval by the Planning Commission and the ordinance requirements of Section 35-102.

Motion carried, four to two (Gronbach, Buyers).

REQUEST FOR FAÇADE AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS – DOLPHIN CENTER, 31691-31715 GRAND RIVER

Chairperson Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen went over the details of the proposed changes and improvements as well as upgrades to the existing building on the Dolphin Center site. He stated exterior changes to the existing building façade and a proposed outdoor seating area for a future tenant. The building is located in the C-3, General Commercial District and requires review and approval by the Planning Commission. No changes regarding building dimensions or other site improvements are proposed. A site plan has been submitted as well as a layout of outdoor seating area. The existing site sign is also intended to be modified and new grass, sod, is intended to be installed in the existing landscaped areas along Grand River. An aerial photograph was included in the Commissioners' packets depicting the Dolphin Center, a four-unit small commercial retail building located along the south side of Grand River just to the west of Orchard Lake Road and is known by the Dolphin Center due to the statue of a dolphin that sits out in front of the building. He then showed the modifications of the existing sign proposed which would make it meet ordinance requirements for shopping centers outside of the downtown. The existing building and entries to the four units were shown and he stated the Petitioner is proposing to reface the existing building and create a new roof line, cultured stone will be utilized as well as new wall sconces installed and a new exterior being proposed along the top of the stone work, glazing being utilized around the new entry doors and new glass along the entire frontage for all four units.

Bowman thanked Christiansen for his introduction and invited the Petitioner to the podium.

Salvatore Pellerito, 1723 Pine Court, Commerce Township, came to the podium. He indicated that Kevin had done a good job in presenting his project and welcomed questions from the Commissioners.

Buyers asked for a missing depiction that was presented on the screen and not in their packets.

Bowman asked for the history of the dolphin statue and what the future had in store for it. Pellerito responded it could remain if the Commission so desired, but he would give it a touch up.

Buyers stated they will not be approving the outdoor seating at tonight's meeting and the Petitioner stated it was his intent to include that for a future tenant, not yet determined. The issue of parking requirements was brought up and Christiansen stated the building would still be in compliance with the utilization of two spaces for the outdoor seating.

Buyers inquired about exterior lighting on the building and the Petitioner responded that he is putting new sconces on. Buyers then inquired if there would be new windows and doors and the Petitioner responded in the affirmative and that double doors would be put in.

Buyers then asked if the side of the proposed building would be higher than the existing and the Petitioner responded that the height is consistent all around. Christiansen responded that there will be a small extension to break up the roof line. Buyers then inquired about the sign and the Petitioner indicated that it is 20 feet tall and he is lowering it to 16 feet to meet current ordinance requirements. The issue of sod being put on the Grand River and east side of the property was discussed and the Petitioner stated that was his intention to re-sod both those areas.

Gronbach asked if there were any color or material samples and the Petitioner stated the stones would be a beige color or taupe, and the crown around would be a limestone color or grayish. Gronbach stated those would have to be submitted as part of his final approval and that his site plan does not include any landscape or sod plans and that would also be required with final approval. The issue of irrigation of the areas was also discussed.

Crutcher asked staff if trees were required and Christiansen responded no, that this is a façade renovation and all else is site improvements the Petitioner has indicated he is willing to do and wants to do. Christiansen indicated detailed plans would be provided with the final site plan to include the sod and that tonight's minutes will reflect the beige stone.

Buyers asked Gronbach if he would prefer to have the Petitioner come back to the next Planning Commission meeting with those details and Gronbach stated that if the Petitioner submits his final plans to staff for review and approval that include the colors and materials and landscape details and they meet staff approval, that that would be sufficient.

Christiansen said he would provide that information to the Commissioners when they receive it.

Crutcher asked if the Petitioner had a name for the center and he responded Signature Investments.

Bowman thanked the Petitioner and brought the item back to the Commission for further discussion.

MOTION by Majoros, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the site plan review for 31691-31715 Grand River Avenue, Dolphin Center, pending final plan approval by staff for landscaping, color schemes within the spirit of the colors discussed at tonight's meeting, inclusive of the reduction of the height of the sign and subject to further approval of any proposed outdoor seating at a future meeting and as future plans dictate.
Motion carried, all ayes.

Bowman thanked the Petitioner.

REQUEST FOR DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN ADOPTION

Bowman introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated a copy of the Downtown Area Plan was distributed to the Planning Commission at the last meeting for them to review. He indicated the purpose of the item is to consider the adoption of the plan as part of the City of Farmington's Master Plan. He further indicated the Plan was distributed on June 8th, revisions were made to the Plan based upon discussion during that meeting and the final plan is being presented at this meeting and adoption is requested.

Bowman thanked everyone who participated in this for their hard work.

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Crutcher, to move to adopt the Proposed Downtown Area Plan as the City of Farmington Downtown Area Plan as part of the City of Farmington's Master Plan and Comprehensive Planning Program, and referring it to City Council for their consideration.

Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Gronbach reiterated his concerns with the Exxon Mobil Station completing the work that was required and that perhaps a deadline should be given as to a date certain for the work to be done.

Crutcher gave his report from the Farmington Parking Advisory Committee and stated that they have three meetings so far discussing parking in downtown. He stated he was not aware how underparked the downtown is and that there was a lot of discussion about causes and remedies, immediate and long term goals and that signs have gone up with timed parking and that there will be further discussion.

He also talked about the walking tour they took of the downtown area and brought up the topic of trash dumpster enclosures and further discussion was held.

Chiara asked for an update on the Shell Gas Station at Grand River and Halstead.

He also suggested that the Commissioners should review material and visit the sites before the meeting date.

Majoros stated that if he was informed of upcoming agenda items he would visit the sites and further discussion was held concerning timeframes of Commissioners receiving packets and agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Majoros, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary