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David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Gwen Lewis
Melanie Markowicz
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.

City Planning Commission Meeting
October 6, 2022, at 5:00 PM

MINUTES

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Commissioner Smith called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm

B. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Brenda Goss Andrews, David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison, Melanie Markowicz, Frederick Russell, Jr., Donovan Smith

Excused: Commissioners Kenneth Daniels, Lauren Hood, Gwen Lewis

Staff: Marcell Todd, Jr., Eric Fazzini, Timarie Szwed, Kim Newby,

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

Commissioner Markowicz motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Andrews second the motion. Motion was verbally approved by all Commissioners present with a roll call (6/0). Motion approved.

II. Meeting minutes of June 2, 2022

Commissioner Markowicz motioned to approve the June 2, 2022, minutes with the amendment that Commissioner Markowicz is listed on the excused list. Commissioner Esparza second the motion. Motion was verbally approved by all Commissioners present with a roll call (6/0). Motion approved as amended.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. 5:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING – To consider the request of petitioner Shane Overbey to

amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-30, District Map No. 28 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a B4 (General Business District) zoning classification where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning classification is currently shown at 4630 Crane Street, generally located on the east side of Crane Street between East Forest Avenue to the north and Yates Street to the south. (EF) 45 mins

Present: Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff; Shane Overbey, Applicant.

Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation regarding the report dated October 4, 2022. The site is in the Gratiot Woods neighborhood, on the south side of Forest Ave. To the north is commercial, which is included within the overall development site. To the east and south is vacant. To the west is residential with mixed occupancy/vacancy that we observed during our site visit. The zoning is split for this site building (R2 and extending to Forest is zoned B4 as well as B4 along the E. Forest corridor).

A review of the proposed site plan was given along with proposed elevations. In the proposed floor plans the applicant is proposing about 5-6 tenant spaces, 3 do not have a use specified at this time but will be leased by the applicant. The applicant does not currently own the property but has a contract to purchase it from the city on the contingency that rezoning is approved. Other tenant spaces include a cabinet making business and contracting offices. The small second floor portion of this building is proposed for an additional office and another leased space. The portion of the building currently zoned B4 would not have to be rezoned.

The total overall acreage is .63 and rezoning is not required for the north half, but the applicant desires to bring uniform zoning to the site. Staff observation is that the split zoning may be the result of alleys along E. Forest Ave. extending to Cadillac being used as the dividing line between commercial and residential uses. While there are not alleys present through this area, that line may have been extended to create that B4/R2 boundary that exists today. This was done irrespective of existing uses or existing buildings that were present at the time.

The specific land use would be Trade Services General, which is under the use category of industrial service, a by-right use in the B4 district. If this zoning is approved as currently proposed, no conditional use approvals would be required. Trade Services General permits offices or shops for contractors. Under the B4 zoning, if approved, that would also permit offices, retail sales, personal services. The applicant has stated that they may be pursuing an industrial interior design company or some architectural studio space within that leased area. For Trade Services General there is no outdoor storage permitted and there are no B4 specific restrictions. That is a use that is permissible in B2 as well as SD1 and SD2.

The Master Plan designation for this site is low-density residential, which doesn't currently match zoning that is typically in the area for single-family homes, but the Planning & Development Department (PDD) found that the proposal was generally consistent, given the small size of the site. As the proposal is like the previous historic use of this site, which was laundry services, and they will not change the overall character

of the neighborhood.

The applicant has stated he has contacted four neighbors directly and they were in favor of the vacant building being reused. No community meetings have occurred to date, but the applicant is working with the Department of Neighborhoods District Manager to schedule either individual neighborhood meetings or one joint meeting which we hope will occur this month in October.

Commissioner Andrews asked for the status of the vacant buildings (are they city-owned, Land Bank, or on the demolition list, etc.).

Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff, responded he does not know the ownership status of the five (5) residential buildings. The newest building is occupied, and I believe a second building is occupied, but based on the condition of some of the buildings being boarded up, they did not appear occupied. Two or three of the homes are vacant. I did not include the ownership on those parcels, but I can do that.

Commissioner Esparza asked the applicant about the response of the four neighbors he contacted.

Shane Overbey, Applicant answered I just saw them coming or going as they went in and out, introduced myself and told them what my ideas were. They all seemed to be supportive of having an occupied building instead of a vacant one across the street from them. They were not happy that occasionally random cars show up behind the building in that alley and must get towed away.

Commissioner Harrison asked for clarification about the building currently B4 to the east and to the south.

Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff, responded that the zoning line roughly follows the rear building walls of the east and continues through the subject site. They have a non-conforming certificate verification from the late 1970's. That has likely gone away with the use being abandoned, but there was a record of there being a non-conforming use because of the zoning.

Shane Overbey, Applicant said that the idea behind this building is to house my construction companies with company offices, they are currently based in downtown Detroit. We would like to get out into an area with more space. We also have one of our sub-contractors, a cabinet company that has also outgrown their space in Detroit. I currently don't have any tenants lined up for the rest of the building, but I'm working on that.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

Discussion was held regarding the building's split zoning, the vacated alleys in the area and the parking lot to the south. The parking lot at the site is overgrown and hard to see, but it is paved, and the concrete parking curbs are still there. Shawn Overbey reported that in the interior of the building with split zoning, all spaces are open to each other.

Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff spoke about the ownership of the four lots to the west on Crane. The north most lot is owned by Michelle Gowens Smith; the property use is two-family. The next building to the south is owned by an LLC and has a single-family classification. The third building in is owned by Sandy May and that is a single-family use. The fourth building in is also owned by an LLC, single-family. The last building is privately owned and single-family.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, clarified that they are the taxpayer of record. They may not be the actual owner. Staff is looking at the Assessor's records.

Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff, reported that staff did not provide a recommendation because we are waiting to hear the public comment and Commissioners. Generally, staff is in favor of the request.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, informed the Commissioners that staff came in prepared with the possibility of bringing this back at a future meeting for a continued public hearing to ensure that we have indeed engaged the public. We are concerned that we haven't received any responses from the public thus far.

Commissioner Smith reiterated that all the proper procedures to get, gain and garnish public input was provided, however you just have not received any comments. Between now and the next meeting, will you also do the same outreach process (public hearing notices, etc.)?

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, said that if that is the desire of the Commission, we can do a full noticing; otherwise, we would just follow it up with an email blast and the utilization of the Department of Neighborhoods' communications system.

Commissioner Smith added, and the community meeting when it is scheduled.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, said at the appropriate time simply adjourn this meeting to a date and time specific, November 3rd at 6:45 pm, to continue the public hearing.

Commissioner Smith said we will leave the public hearing open and to the call of the chair, adjourn the 5:15 public hearing to the November 3rd meeting at 6:45 pm and we will continue the public hearing at that time.

- B. 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – To consider the request of Parkstone Development and the Detroit City Planning Commission to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-48, District Map No. 46 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a SD2 (Special Development, Mixed-Use) zoning classification where a R3 (Low Density Residential) zoning classification is currently shown at 7601 Rosa Parks Blvd., 1967 and 2011 S. La

Salle Gardens, and 7626, 7616, 7608, and 7600 Dunedin Street generally located at the site of historic St. Agnes Church, bounded by S. La Salle Gardens to the north, Dunedin St. to the west, Rosa Parks Blvd. to the east, and Bethune St. to the south. (TS)
45 mins

Present: Timarie Szwed, CPC Staff; Tonja Stapleton, Janelle Bulat, Brandon Colvin of Parkstone Development Partners (PDP); and Martin Herz, Developer.

Timarie Szwed, CPC Staff, gave a brief Power Point Presentation based on the report dated October 3, 2022. The proposed map amendment is for the St. Agnes Lofts, which will be on the location of the former St. Agnes Church located in District 5, along Rosa Parks Blvd., just north of West Grand Blvd. (4 blocks) and two blocks east of 14th Street. The future land use shows this as low to medium density residential. The Master Plan interpretation is this was found to be generally consistent, based on its small size, and the proposed use is not significantly denser than what occupied the site previously for many years. It is not anticipated to change the overall character of the Rosa Parks neighborhood. The Planning & Development Department (PDD) added that the mixed-use development will provide needed commercial activity for this area and provide stability along the Rosa Parks Blvd. corridor, which is currently undergoing a multi-million-dollar streetscape improvement.

Tonja Stapleton, Parkstone Development Partners (PDP), reported it is one parcel right now and PDP is in the process of sub-dividing it. It has been approved by City Council as an OPRA District that will assist in developing the residential. Not a single building is proposed to be demolished. It is less intensive than the previous use there, an elementary school. Currently zoned R3, PDP is requesting a SD2 zoning district. The SD2 is more favorable regarding parking requirements. During our community engagement, creating seas of parking in a residential neighborhood was a concern. There is a building in the middle of the site that cannot be used for residential, so we are going to come up with a creative adaptive re-use for that structure and the SD2 gives us the maximum flexibility in that regard.

Martin Herz, Developer, gave a brief Power Point Presentation on St. Agnes Lofts. Born and raised in Germany, he came to Detroit in 2016. He chose the LaSalle Gardens neighborhood as a place to work and live. He purchased a house on LaSalle Blvd. that he renovated. Most of his projects are in the neighborhood and he proceeded to show slides of projects he has done. St. Agnes is at the corner of our current development. He mentioned the anchors in the area such as the New Center area, Henry Ford Health System, and the Motown Museum.

St. Agnes has six buildings on one city parcel, roughly 85,000 square feet and we have the intention for a mixed-use development with a medium-residential and some commercial uses. The church has been popular with movie makers and videos have been made. There will be two phases. Phase one will be the residential portion with a smaller commercial component to it. A duplex house is being brought up to code. The Abby Building could house 24 residential units. The school building will house 48 units. The Manor Building will house 15 residential units. There is no specific use for the church, but it would be a great commercial space and could be a nice amenity for the neighborhood. The church is solid but needs a lot of extensive renovation. A lot of churches have been revitalized into restaurants and market spaces, which are potential uses. The church is 20,000 square feet. My idea is to incorporate all the buildings into a campus park and give it a center feeling and character for the

surrounding neighborhood. Part of our community outreach indicated a lot of people would be interested in a community center, they are currently meeting in a strip mall on Rosa Parks. In the basement of the Manor Building, we could create a meeting room with kitchen space that could be used for community groups and other people in the neighborhood. We would like to move parking on the west side to be able to create a campus park.

Brandon Colvin, Parkstone Development Partners (PDD), introduced himself as the Community Engagement Coordinator of Parkstone Development. Thus far outreach has been going on over 12 months and during that time educational outreach to ensure that community members and residents are familiar with our interest in this parcel. We included a survey designed to capture community sentiment and understand which redevelopment and reinvestment options (14 were given) best fit with community needs and their interest. 85% of the community members surveyed and spoken with are residents of LaSalle Garden.

- art gallery (52% very interested)
- brewery (42% very much in favor)
- pet shop/store (36% very interested)
- dry cleaner (47% not interested)
- funeral home (73% not interested)
- nail salon (42% not interested)
- dance studio (37% interested)
- office space (42% interested)
- medical clinic (42% interested)
- coffee shop / community gathering space (84% very interested)
- dog park (58% interested)
- restaurant (90% interested)
- retail (52% very interested)
- banquet hall (37% interested)

Martin Herz has been living in the LaSalle Gardens neighborhood for over 5 years and has invested his own dollars into his own community. For that reason, we got more engagement when speaking with the residents.

Commissioner Andrews agreed with the Chair, Donovan Smith's statement that the developer incorporated resident requests in their plan. Very seldom do we get that kind of breakdown of what the residents want. Did floral shop or hardware come into mind? Was there a playground area for children or respite spot for adults to sit being considered?

Tonja Stapleton, Parkstone Development Partners, said the survey that Brandon worked on cherry-picked some uses. They wanted to discern whether SD1 or SD2 was the more appropriate zoning classification. There are certainly a lot of options and we wanted to give Martin the most flexibility when he goes to start recruiting tenants. We didn't specifically ask about a flower shop or some of the other uses. LaSalle Park is a place for families and children and not dogs. A lot of the residents wanted a dog park separate from their community park.

Martin Herz, Developer, added that the campus park he mentioned is meant to be an open area that people from the neighborhood can use. We are working on a plaza space in between those buildings connected with the potential coffee shop and the dog park, so there would be

benches and other opportunities to sit, gather, drink a coffee, talk to the neighbors, walk the dog, etc.

Timarie Szwed, CPC Staff, said SD2 will give the most flexibility for the types of uses that the community has indicated they are interested in seeing there.

Commissioner Russell asked for an update of the Herman Kiefer site.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, responded that there has been a lot of controversy with the community over the slow progress that the developer has made there. There has been movement/progress. Staff would be happy to schedule Mr. Castellano, the lead developer, would be happy to come in and provide you with a presentation and an update that I'm sure not only the Commission, but the community and City Council would be pleased to see.

Commissioner Russell asked if there are any sustainability concepts you are looking to incorporate in this site?

Martin Herz, Developer, responded regarding energy efficiency, we are looking into a heat pump system for the units which seems to be very promising. Regarding the rainwater retention, we are looking into a rainwater garden that would be somewhere in between the parking lot and the main building that could be incorporated into the overall layout of that campus park. In general, 80% of the surface is paved and we would like to re-use the pavement substantially. We would like to have a main walkway which would have plaza space in the center that connects the power plant/coffee shop building with the school, reducing the pavement 60-70% and the rest would be landscaped. We also have energy efficient windows and building materials that are sustainable. We are also getting a PACE loan which is created to subsidize energy efficient technologies. No solar at this point. No new structures are planned at this point, just renovate the existing structures.

Commissioner Russell asked what about the community center and would it be for the residents of the property, the community as a whole, or a combination of the two?

Martin Herz, Developer, answered that the Manor Building has a garden level that is spacious and has a lot of natural light. We thought that would be a good place for a community center. I am a member of the LaSalle Neighborhood Association, and I brought the President, who is to speak later. We came up with the idea to create one a meeting area in the garden level of that one building that would be open to the LaSalle group, for example, or other groups in the area, block clubs, etc. Furthermore, we could also give it to people who live in the area and have private events, i.e., baby showers.

Commissioner Harrison thanked the petitioner on the presentation and specifically on the community outreach that has been done. What is next in terms of additional community engagement for the project?

Martin Herz, Developer, responded that we will continue to inform them about the project. The next community meeting is on the 18th with the LaSalle Neighborhood Association. As soon as we start construction, we were thinking about a web site or Facebook page that has updates on the progress of construction.

Brandon Colvin, Parkstone Development Partners, added that the individuals surveyed in the community can reach them via email, phone as well as snail mail. We have already created a mechanism for not only immediate feedback, but should the residents have additional questions, they can find us.

Commissioner Smith requested the timeline the renovation work begins.

Martin Herz, Developer, responded that the timeline depends on our financing and structure, which is currently in the making. We are working with LISC (75% of the funds needed) and PACE and private equity. The point we will be ready to start construction would be 18-24 months.

Commissioner Smith asked the applicant if the boundaries for your OPRA strictly limited to the area we are rezoning or is it outside that boundary?

Martin Herz, Developer, answered that the OPRA covered 7601 Rosa Parks, the main parcel, and then a smaller parcel, 1967 S. LaSalle, and 2011 S. LaSalle. The other parcels are still owned by the Land Bank, and we could not include them in our OPRA back then because there was a different process and timing-wise it didn't add up.

Commissioner Markowicz told the applicant that this is a great reuse of a historic building in a historic neighborhood that needs a variety of amenities. I enjoyed the communication that has taken place thus far. The park in the center between the parking lot, the coffee shop and the residential buildings, that those parking spaces are going outside, is that accurate?

Martin Herz, Developer, responded that we hope that we can get them outside of the campus parking, it depends on the zoning and how many parking spots we will need. Desirably it would be an open park space in between the buildings so that we can move the parking out. Ideally, moving the parking to the west side of the property, which is completely vacant, would be a good use for parking.

Commissioner Markowicz said that obviously this is a historic building that has beautiful materials and in rough shape to be sure. What character and defining features do you intend to save? Between now and when you secure funding and start the project, was there a plan for stabilization and securing the property so it doesn't deteriorate further?

Martin Herz, Developer, replied that as soon as we would have the capital together, we would start immediate improvements. We would demo the building on the inside because the walls are falling in, clean up the site, and roof repairs are needed.

Commissioner Markowicz asked staff to provide a site plan with a larger context of the surrounding neighborhood. That would be helpful, especially when it comes to talking about what type of traffic we'd have with this development and to view the wider context of this residential neighborhood. I'd also like to know from staff the differences between SD1 and SD2.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rudolph Marco: Resident of this area my whole life. As a child this was an extremely viable, commercial area. Since the 1967 riots, the area has been an economic desert for quite some time. When Martin made himself available in this area, we got to know him, to feel his heart, see his vision and we are really excited about the opportunity and the prospect of this seed taking root and hopefully expanding to even more viable activity in the neighborhood.

Javier (Virtual): I live about 2 blocks from the site with my family and we walk by that church all the time. Everything that has been presented, it seems something incredible for somebody to take that on. I fully support. It would be rewarding for the neighborhood.

Discussion was held regarding same day action, which Commissioner Esparza requested. Timarie Szwed said that this does meet the approval criteria for a rezoning and staff recommends approval. Commissioners Russell, Smith and Markowicz were concerned that the question of which zoning district, SD1 or SD2, would be more appropriate for the site and asked staff for additional information. Are we able to identify any uses now that the community is interested in that is permitted in the SD2 and not permitted in the SD1? Martin Herz, Developer noted that the SD2 zoning would allow them more flexibility in uses and reduce their exposure to parking limitations. Tonja Stapleton noted that, although same day action would be beneficial, they did not specifically request it. Marcell Todd said that this matter could come back at the next meeting under Unfinished Business.

Commissioner Smith said my take would be not to decide today and come back in two weeks with the questions raised by the commissioners in regard to the SD1 and SD2 and we can make a clear decision at that time. With that, the public hearing is concluded.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, said that if that is the will of you and your colleagues the matter will come back as indicated at your next meeting and appear under unfinished business.

IV. Unfinished Business (May be taken up earlier in the meeting as opportunity presents) - None

V. New Business - None

VI. Committee Reports - None

VII. Staff Report – Staff Report will be deferred until the your next meeting.

(Prior to the 5:15 pm Public Hearing)

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, for those who are viewing the meeting, the notices go out encouraging individuals to participate via zoom; however, the room is open and always has been since the city began holding meetings in person in January. The encouragement, following the direction of the Health Department and the City Council is for people to participate as much as possible via zoom, but the room is open. By the end of the year, the Auditorium will be equipped at a level where we may also begin to meet in the auditorium with all the necessary

equipment to allow for a hybrid meeting.

VIII. Member Report - None

IX. Communications - None

X. Public Comment - None

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

NOTE: With advance notice of seven calendar days, the City of Detroit will provide interpreter services at public meetings, including language translation and reasonable ADA accommodations. Please contact the **Civil Rights, Inclusion and Opportunity Department** at (313) 224-4950, through the TTY number 711, or email crio@detroitmi.gov to schedule these services.