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Rachel M. Udabe

City Planning Commission Meeting Minutes June 6, 2024 5:00 P.M.

I. Opening.

A. The monthly meeting of the City Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 5:12 P.M. at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in the Committee of the Whole Room, 13th Floor, online via Zoom and by telephone.

B. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners: Daniels, Esparza, Harrison, Lewis, Markowicz, Russell, Smith, and Udabe

Excused: Commissioner Bennett

CPC Staff: Marcell Todd and Eric Fazzini

C. Amendments to and approval of the Agenda

A motion by Vice Chair Markowicz to approve the agenda was **adopted** as printed.

II. Meeting Minutes

A motion by Vice Chair Markowicz to approve the minutes of February 22, 2024, was **adopted** as presented.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. **5:15 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING** – to consider the request of James Pappas of Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas Architects to modify the plans for the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification for the multi-block area generally bounded by Santa Maria Street to the north and rear lot lines of parcels along Biltmore Street to the east and rear alley along the north side of West McNichols Road to the south, and the rear alley of Lindsay Street to the east.
(EF) **45 Mins.**

Present: CPC Staff, Eric Fazzini; Fusco, Shaffer & Pappas Architects, Steven Roffi; Amandla Community Development Corp., Felicia Turner and Greg Olson, Michaels Development Company

Commissioner Russell recused himself from the discussion, due to his working relationship as an independent vendor.

Mr. Fazzini gave a presentation regarding a new developer requesting a PD modification to reestablish the above-stated request as a senior housing development project. Mr. Roffi and Ms. Turner participated in the presentation and assisted with answering the commissioners' questions.

For Commissioners' Questions and Answers regarding the 5:15 P.M. Public Hearing. See **Attachment I**.

For Public Comments regarding the 5:15 P.M. Public Hearing, see **Attachment II**.

For Commissioners' Final Questions and Answers regarding the 5:15 P.M. Public Hearing, see **Attachment III**.

A **motion** by Commissioner Daniels after questions and answers was **adopted** as follows: "To approve same-day action."

Staff's Recommendation

Based on the Staff report and consideration of the approved criteria, staff find the request to be appropriate and recommend approval with the following conditions. One, that the developer maintains properties in a neat and orderly fashion – managing dust and collecting and disposing of debris and rubbish throughout all phases of construction from the site or preparation through occupancy of the last dwelling; and two, that the developers submit final site plans and elevations, landscaping, lighting, and signage plans to CPC Staff for approval prior to issuing required permits.

A motion by Commissioner Daniels, after questions and answers was adopted as follows: "To approve Staff's recommendations."

III. Public Comments

One virtual caller, Calvin Barrett, participated in Public Comments. See **Attachment IV**.

IV. Unfinished Business

- A. The request of Credit Union One to rezone the west side of Junction Avenue between Eldred and Christiancy Streets from an R2 (Two Family Residential District) zoning classification to a B1 (Restricted Business District) zoning classification in order to construct a new credit union building with a drive-through facility.

CG, DP

30 Mins.

Mr. Gulock gave an overview of Credit Union One's rationale for requesting to change the zoning classification from an R2 to a B1 zoning classification. See **Attachment V** for questions and answers.

A motion by Commissioner Harrison, after questions and answers was adopted as follows: "to forward this recommendation that DPW study if parking should be allowed between the two curb cuts or should be eliminated to provide visibility.

V. New Business

None.

VI. Committee Reports

None. However, Director Todd verbally reported the discussion held at the last meeting regarding the Special Committee's meeting dates. See **Attachment V** regarding questions and answers.

A motion by Commissioner Esparza, after questions and answers was adopted as follows: "regarding the previous approval – whether we could add – whether it is with what we just granted or separately – making sure that they move forward together. That is a request that we ask the fellow department, DPW to consider making improvements, replacement of the sidewalks curbs on that block based on the significant investment construction that is forthcoming also in consideration for a new service alley pavement that would run alongside the proposed development."

VII. Staff Reports

Director Todd gave a verbal report regarding the contract with Interboro and their consultant team for the I-375 area development project. This matter came before the Planning and Economic Standing Committee today. Also, the City Council did approve this morning a contract that focuses on coming up with a redevelopment scheme for the area.

VIII. Member Reports

None.

IX. Communications

None.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30 P.M.

Attachment I
CPC Meeting
June 6, 2024
5:15 P.M. Public Hearing

Commissioners' Questions and Answers

5:15 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING – to consider the request of James Pappas of Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas Architects to modify the plans for the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification for the multi-block area generally bounded by Santa Maria Street to the north and rear lot lines of parcels along Biltmore Street to the east and rear alley along the north side of West McNichols Road to the south, and the rear alley of Lindsay Street to the east.

(EF)

45 Mins.

Commissioner Russell

I would like to recuse myself. We are vendors to an independent organization.

Commissioner Udabe

Is there a choice for the design of esthetics on the outside of the buildings? And, to what extent do you expect this housing to be for folks under AMI?

Steven Roffi

We're looking for something that will be a bit transitional style from what is the existing surrounding neighborhood where there is a great mix of different styles. We also tried to stay with very maintainable and very durable both in products with the Hardie panel as kind of major molding material with a base of brick, which will enhance the different parts and entry in this phase of the project of each building. We use the hip-roof design to keep a very low-key and low-profile looking building so that the scale is a large issue, multi-family dwellings, particularly. I think that has helped to keep the profile developing lower and more appropriately.

Greg Olson

One thing that we consider when we're looking at the buildings to make them as cost competitive as possible is to build essentially walk ups. These are two story walk ups. There are essentially stack units front and back with a center entry and center stair. We're able to put the front door at that location and enclose it so it looks like a small apartment building basically like a four-unit building.

From an AMI level standpoint, we've got a diverse band of income levels still moving around a little bit because we're trying to figure out how to achieve the most points in MSHDA's scoring competition. As of our last run and – our first approach was to try to get Detroit Housing Commission vouchers for the lowest income tenants, but the DHC has noted that they're not awarding vouchers at this point.

We have struggled to figure out how to include very low-income units to allow us to score well and then also enough income in the property to make sure we can operate it. At present what we've got from a layout standpoint is seven units at 30% AMI. It's a very low income, those are unsubsidized. Four units at 40% AMI, 18 units at 60% AMI, and 16 units at 80% AMI. Then we're exploring the possibility of going after MSHDA or Vash vouchers for the last five units. Whether it be veteran vouchers or State-811 units

for the last five units. That's the current income. Next, we're still trying to figure out exactly where that will land, but that leaves us in a competitive scoring situation with MSHDA.

Commissioner Udabe

Have you thought about any sustainability features in the production of these buildings?

Steve Roffi

Essentially, we do look at energy star-level appliances. We are looking at a very efficient stormwater management program. We'll use bioretention throughout the site to enhance the underground retention area. We are looking at mechanical HVAC units.

Greg Olson

We think about these projects with the end user in mind. We try to make sure that the units are very efficient so that tenants will pay as little as possible in utility bills. One of the things we're pursuing here, the federal government issued an infrastructure package, 45L tax credits. So, that's if you make the building energy-star certified and zero energy ready, you can pursue tax credit. It's an additional source of funding; we will pursue that. It will be a building with high-efficiency furnaces, and air conditioning.

Commissioner Esparza

Director Todd, based on the nature of this request, is timing, scheduling an issue that might warrant same-day action or not in this case.

Director Todd

The developer has been working in earnest as you heard. I don't think that there is a particular rush, but I think it would probably benefit the project to ensure that they are before the City Council and Commission in a timely fashion and certainly in this case this project assuming that the Public Hearing goes well and there are no outstanding issues would be eligible for same-day action as your bylaws required.

Commissioner Esparza

Regarding the site plan, I noticed that it appeared to be absent any landscaping. Would landscaping plans be forthcoming?

Steve Roffi

Yes. We did plans as part of the package. That should be part of what you receive.

Eric Fazzini

We did have landscaping plans sent from the developer, and we would request if approved that the commission and staff be allowed to review those plans.

Chair Smith

Any thoughts on the perimeter? Are you considering fencing, no fencing?

Steve Roffi

Yes, we are indicating a five-foot security fence. We are not gating the project. However, we are looking at the outside perimeter. We brought the fencing inward to where the buildings are along each of the streets and then we pushed it out at basically the alley. We are also looking at some heavy – as the landscape plan will show some heavy screening on the East and West ends of the project where the project butts into the existing single-family.

Commissioner Esparza

Any sense of timing for Phase II?

Greg Olson

Even Phase I is a challenge. MSHDA has two rounds a year, Tax Credit Awards – October round and April 2025 round. We intend to submit for credits in October of 2024. Should we be successful we would expect to close about twelve months later and start construction.

Phase II would also be relying upon tax credit awards. What we typically do is wait until the first project is awarded, funded, and further along and then apply it for a second round. I think we have two bites of the apple every year and we try to set up a successful project as soon as possible thereafter. It also makes sense for us to have two bases because managing property is easier if you have more units.

Commissioner Esparza

Do you have any experience locally with developments? Because I thought I might have understood that you are either from Chicago or the East Coast.

Greg Olson

I have experience locally. Then getting back to the patio size, I'll just mention that I don't know if you are referring to patios from the front entry. But the patios are six by eight. Those are the sort of porches that are coming off the units themselves.

We've got experience in 37 states, the Virgin Islands, Washington DC and we are active in all those areas. I'm running the Midwest office, so I'm based in Chicago. We've done a lot of our work here in Chicago, but we've also done work in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio. We own three properties in Michigan. We didn't develop them. We own the Heritage Place at Magnolia, which is in North Cork Town in Detroit, and then two properties in Jackson. We generally know how to get around, but we've not completed the project in Detroit yet.

Commissioner Harrison

Looking at the site plan, can you talk about the lighting element? How is this site going to be lit?

Steve Roffi

What we start with is the parking lot lighting and we try to address all the neighboring properties so that we're down to virtually zero-foot candles at the edge of the property. Most of the lighting will be projected inboard towards the parking. We will have lighting mounted on the buildings as well as entries and as well as that developing patio area where each has their own light. We will probably have at the center area – we have not been through a full lighting design yet. At the central green space where we have a connector walk that will connect the two new halves of the project. The two phases will probably have some pedestrian lighting there that we intermixed with the landscaping as well as at the entry to each of the buildings.

Greg Olsen

We will probably put some security analysis from a lighting standpoint in between buildings is probably going to become sort of lighting in between buildings and I would guess that large green area which is the detention area – the bioswale will need to be lighted somehow as well as around trash enclosures, especially at fences and alleys.

Commissioner Harrison

Mr. Fazzini, do you all typically look at the lighting elements and how it's coming off the site as you assess it. Is that something that you review?

Mr. Fazzini

Yes. We would review the lighting, landscaping, and all the normal zoning requirements. There's a desire to recommend approval and ask for a condition that final site plan finalize lighting and landscaping be submitted and then we'll do an additional review after this consideration.

Commissioner Lewis

Mr. Fazzini, I assume that this development meets all the required parking.

Mr. Fazzini

Yes. For this type of development, it's a ratio of 1.25 per unit.

Vice Chair Markowicz

A question about fencing. This is something that we've seen a lot on several low-income housing projects. I failed to understand, if you could, extrapolate on that.

Steven Roffi

We addressed that in the same way. Both of our previous iterations. Basically, to not have a closed community we are leaving entry play points open. We're leaving pedestrian points open so that pedestrians whether it be residents on site or off site can come and go. It's more where we have individual buildings that we are trying to give a sense of security between the buildings. We've pulled the fencing back so that basically at the front façade or next to the front façade of the building and not in front of the building. When you have a very open front yard at all the right-of-way spaces it gives more sense of security and to be able to monitor entry points on the site more efficiently whether it be by camera or on-site staff. It just controls traffic much better, especially pedestrian traffic.

Vice Chair Markowicz

Low-income property seems to be fenced while market-rate properties are not. I struggle with that.

Eric Fazzini

I don't know if the zoning code speaks specifically to your question.

Steve Roffi

When we deploy our electrical engineer to look at metrics they're looking for consistency throughout the different pathways to parking areas to and from the buildings to try to control what spills over onto adjacent parcels. Consistency is a goal. Since the advent of LED products that's becoming easier to do because they're much easier to control. We can shield and we can direct light.

**Attachment II
CPC Meeting
June 6, 2024
5:15 P.M. Public Hearing**

Public comments

5:15 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING – to consider the request of James Pappas of Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas Architects to modify the plans for the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification for the multi-block area generally bounded by Santa Maria Street to the north and rear lot lines of parcels along Biltmore Street to the east and rear alley along the north side of West McNichols Road to the south, and the rear alley of Lindsay Street to the east.

(EF)

45 Mins.

Chair Smith gave instructions to participants regarding speaking rules during the Public Comments. Participants were given two minutes to speak.

In-Person participants

None.

Virtual Participants

Mr. Barrett

My name is Calvin Barrett. I'm representing the Knights of the Road Motorcycle Club. We were established in 1940. We're American Motorcycle Association, Historical Chartered. We own four pieces of property between Biltmore and Gilcrest: 7136, 128, 124, and 118, which, all will be greatly affected by this plan in a negative way. I'm here to let you know that we're kind of opposed to this plan. We've been on this block for over 80 years. We've kept our properties clean and maintained and paid our taxes on time.

Since the early 90s we've been trying to purchase these two pieces of property, 17124 on Gilcrest and 17127 on Biltmore. We've maintained these properties and kept them up for years. No other property in this area has been kept up by whoever owns them. The two properties we have made into a small park area for everyone in the neighborhood.

This project is not good for this area for numerous reasons. Number one, the traffic is already very congested on W. McNichols – and in that area - numerous vehicle accidents are happening every month, actually, every day. Our property has had cars run into our building three different times in the last ten years. Plus, the motorcycles parked legally on W. McNichols have been run over on two different occasions. And all five of these incidents, four of them – on two different occasions, costing membership and the club thousands of dollars. Reason Number two, this area is considered a high crime area by the City of Detroit police which, we all know too well that our building has been broken into and robbed many times. Cars have been stolen right off W. McNichols, bringing more people is only going to make matters worse, not better.

End of Public Hearing

**Attachment III
CPC Meeting
June 6, 2024
5:15 P.M. Public Hearing**

Commissioners' Final Questions and Answers

5:15 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING – to consider the request of James Pappas of Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas Architects to modify the plans for the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification for the multi-block area generally bounded by Santa Maria Street to the north and rear lot lines of parcels along Biltmore Street to the east and rear alley along the north side of West McNichols Road to the south, and the rear alley of Lindsay Street to the east.

(EF)

45 Mins.

Commissioner Harrison

I would like to hear if they (petitioners or staff) were aware of any opposition. Is this something that has come up before or is this the first time?

Felicia Turner:

As the representative of the CDC and a representative who has been part of this planned development for a number of years, we have not ever received any comments in any capacity from Mr. Barrett or the Motorcycle Club. In years past, we had various iterations of this project, one which you saw here today. We have gone out each time to members of the community particularly the properties that are adjacent to the site. Just as we did this time, and we have never gotten any feedback, negative comments, in fact, we have never heard of anyone reaching out to us to contact us from the motorcycle club at all.

They were also one of the businesses that I contacted personally. We walked in the McNichols corridor that is adjacent to our project site. We left flyers, we asked them to give us a call directly if they wanted to reach out for an individual meeting or anything like that. We heard not a single thing. Actually, I am a bit surprised to hear from them here today.

Chair Smith

Do you currently own all the parcels within this area?

Felicia Turner

We own 17 parcels within the project footprint. The remaining parcels are with the Detroit Land Bank Authority.

Chair Smith

Between the seventeen parcels you currently own and then the current Land Bank parcels that make up the full project area?

Felicia Turner

Yes. There are some parcels that are to the north of Santa Maria. There are only two types of owners for the property located within the project area.

Chair Smith

And the ones north of Santa Maria are not a part of this meeting? Correct?

Mr. Fazzini, I see in your report that staff may have provided recommendations – possibly by the end of the meeting. Are you comfortable? Do you have a recommendation?

Mr. Fazzini

Based on the staff report and consideration of the approval criteria, staff find the request to be appropriate and recommend approval with the following conditions: one, that the developer maintains his properties in a neat and orderly fashion – managing dust and collecting and disposing of debris, rubbish throughout all phases of constructions from the site of preparation through occupancy of the last dwelling; and two, that the developers submit final site plans and elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage plans to CPC Staff for approval prior to issuing required permits.

Chair Smith

Do fellow commissioners understand the staff's recommendations?

Commissioner Daniels

Move to approve same-day action.

Vice Chair Markowicz

Support.

Chair Smith

The motion is adopted unanimously.

At the request of Chair Smith, Mr. Fazzini gave an overview of the next steps.

Commissioners' additional questions and answers, concluded.

Attachment VI
CPC Meeting
June 6, 2024

Committee Reports

Director Todd

There are no Committee Reports. However, there is the matter of setting up the next special committee meeting. We talked about some potential dates at our last meeting – polling the commissioners, the special committee members to see what may work best. Again, we have been meeting on Wednesday, even Wednesday immediately prior to a Thursday meeting or alternate Wednesday. Staff will look for that direction and can set the meeting and move forward.

Commissioner Lewis

Director Todd, the matters that were going before the Council, could we schedule the meeting at a time when those matters can be addressed through you and Planning and Development to understand how we are to move forward based on what was discussed.

Director Todd

Most certainly. Mr. Gulock and I did attend that discussion this morning, along with representatives from the Housing and Revitalization Department. There was no direction. We are not sure if the Council is going to come back to the issue or what the next steps will be. It will definitely require some additional follow-up on our part with the City Council, but the discussion was not very long nor was there any specific direction coming from them.

Commissioner Lewis

Is HRD then, ready to move forward in any fashion or does that discussion with the Council need to – some sort of discussion and agreement with the Council need to occur prior to.

Director Todd

I do not believe that it does. I think that the conversation we were having with HRD can continue on its own merits, come through the commission and then return to the council. Whatever future discussion and/or desires of the Council will mesh with the actions, the request of this Body.

Commissioner Lewis

If I'm understanding, then we could work with HRD and then make a recommendation to the Council.

Director Todd

Yes.

Commissioner Lewis

Then, in that case, when staff is prepared, I would then rely on staff to put a few dates together and just get them out to the committee and then we can decide based on your time frame.

Director Todd

So, noted.

Commissioner Harrison

Did we tack onto that last thing the suggestion from Commissioner Esparza? Or, do we have to do that?

Director Todd

While you have already taken action on the primary requested rezoning, you would be free to go back and add that item, if you would like as a separate recommendation. That is not a problem.

Commissioner Harrison

I would let Commissioner Esparza do that.

A **motion** by Commissioner Esparza, after questions and answers was **adopted** as follows “regarding the previous approval – whether we could add – whether it is with what we just granted or separately – making sure that they move forward together. And, that is a request that we ask the fellow department, DPW to consider making improvements, replacement of the sidewalks, curbs on that block based on the significant investment construction that is forthcoming and also in consideration for a new service alley pavement that would run alongside the proposed development.

**Attachment V
CPC Meeting
June 6, 2024**

Unfinished Business

Commissioners' Questions and Answers

The request of Credit Union One to rezone the west side of Junction Avenue between Eldred and Christiancy Streets from an R2 (Two Family Residential District) zoning classification to a B1 (Restricted Business District) zoning classification in order to construct a new credit union building with a drive-through facility.

CG, DP

30 Mins.

Presenters: Cherie Pointes, Credit Union One; Dan Meyers, VP of Admin Services, and Bob Mulka, Corrado Contracting.

Chair Smith

I have one question about design. I was curious as to what they were going to do.

Chris Gulock

This is a conceptual design.

Chair Smith

I was curious – what is going in there?

Chris Gulock

I assume it's signage. I would have to defer to

Bob Mulka

There will be an EIFS-type material in that area. Based on signage requirements and allowances, they would like to put a sign, at least on one of those facing the street so that all the members have the ability to let them know where they are. That is typically what it is for, signage.

Commissioner Esparza

Director Todd, this is a significant investment on this block. I am curious as to how we might encourage a city department to consider new sidewalks and curbs, based on this activity that is forthcoming at this site.

Also, the adjacent alley, which is a variety of broken-up concrete and, earth, and lawn could use some consideration of a new fully paved surface alley. So, I would consider that with this request.

Director Todd

We know that ARPA dollars and other dollars, Block Grants, and some of our general fund dollars over the years have been used for such purposes. Most recently through ARPA dollars have certainly provided the city with funding to go around the city and do a lot of beautification and maintenance projects, some of which have been done most recently in preparation for the NFL Draft and some of the other events

that they city has hosted. I'm not sure if this area may in fact already be scheduled for such improvements, either again, or through ARPA dollars or one of the other funding sources.

Consistent with the other recommendations that we have regarding the removal of parking, if the commission would like to add a recommendation related to this, and asking the City Council to consider making the request or the Commission making the request of DPW to look into it. I imagine that it is something that can be done. Again, either as part of a special request or again as part of regular scheduled maintenance, which, optimistically, I would like to think is on someone's desk.

Just given the amount of work that we have seen in other areas around the city, - this particular area may have some knowledge of the coming project. They did not yet want to embark upon it until this was done.

Again, if it is the commission's desire that certainly can be an additional recommendation that you can pin to what staff has provided, or direct staff to follow through in some way.

Vice Chair Markowicz

We have seen this item once before, and there is a recommendation from staff to forward this recommendation – that DPW study if parking should occur between the two curb cuts or should be eliminated to provide visibility. I will entertain a motion.

A **motion** by Commissioner Harrison was made, after questions and answers, was **adopted** as follows: "to forward this recommendation that DPW study if parking should be allowed between the two curb cuts or should be eliminated to provide visibility."

Vice Chair Markowicz

The rezoning is approved.

**Attachment IV
CPC Meeting
June 6, 224**

General Public Comments

Participants were given two minutes to speak.

One Virtual participant –

Calvin Barrett

We have applied to the Land Bank Several times for this property. It was supposed to be on hold for us. We applied in the '90s when Dennis Archer was the Mayor of Detroit, and we were not allowed to buy it because they said it was Land Bank. But the Church comes in and bought it all up, and they never kept it up, we have. This is going to negatively affect us and the whole neighborhood. I do not see how they can say that they contacted us. We have two mailboxes out front, and nobody ever put anything from the Church in there about us going to a meeting because we would have shown up. We are trying to be good neighbors, and we have been good neighbors. We are not troublemakers; we're a family-oriented club.

Somebody who has paid taxes in the city for eight years and has never been late, some consideration should be taken to help us out. What's going to happen to our property? Are you going to take the whole alley? If you take the alley, we won't be able to get in and out of our property. I guess that's about all I've got to say. The statement that was made that they come and talk to us, I do not see how that could be because we got a secretary who gets the mail. Every week, we have a meeting, every Friday, and it would have been read and we would have definitely shown up.

We have been taking care of mowing and cleaning that property for over 30 years. All I get from the Land Bank is okay; we'll help you out. You can buy it, and then they say no, you can't buy it. Then they switch it from the Land Bank to the Community Project Program, and I get the runaround from them, too. All of this is documented. I have papers to prove it. I do not know what else to say, but it looks like the city is going to do what it wants to do anyway. Good luck with that project because people are not going to want to live there.

General Public Comments Concluded

**Attachment IV
CPC Meeting
June 6, 224**

General Public Comments

Participants were given two minutes to speak.

One Virtual participant –

Calvin Barrett

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General Public Comments Concluded