

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: June 23, 2014

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Porter, Commissioners Boettcher, Davis, Fritz, Ballard, M. Olson, Buelow and L. Olson

ABSENT: Commissioner Hahn

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner, Mark Moeller; Assistant City Planner, Carlos Espinosa

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairman Porter.

Approval of Minutes – May 12, 2014

The minutes from the Commission's meeting of May 27, 2014 were reviewed and upon motion by Commissioner L. Olson and second by Commissioner Davis were unanimously approved as submitted.

Site Plan Review – Automotive Enterprises, LLC

Chairman Porter introduced this item and called on a representative of Automotive Enterprises, LLC to provide an overview of their proposed site plan.

Andrew Dahl representing Automotive Enterprises, LLC, stated that because of the bridge construction project, the current Chevrolet, General Motors Dealership needs to relocate. Although sites allowing for the creation of a new auto dealership are limited within the City, his company had signed a purchase agreement to acquire the present Cornerstone Community Church property, located on Service Drive, westerly of the present Toyota Dealership. In response to his company's request, the Planning Commission had recently recommended rezoning of the site from R-1 to B-3. This recommendation was subsequently approved by Council on May 19th. Following that, his team of consultants had prepared a proposed site plan for the project and he was hopeful that the project can continue to move forward. At this point, he introduced Brandon Gries, with Gries Architectural Group Inc., Neenah, Wisconsin, to provide an overview of the proposed site plan.

Mr. Gries noted that the proposed building for a new Chevy General Motors Dealership will be 22,000 square feet in size and will consist of two stories. Generally, site lands located to the north and west of the building would be used for automotive storage. None of this would be located within the 50 foot buffer, required of auto dealerships, from adjacent to residential areas. Within that 50 foot buffer, Automotive Enterprises Inc was proposing the construction of a landscaped berm. As shown on the plan, the berm would be approximately 3-4 feet in height and would include a single row of arborvitae trees. Additionally, a stormwater detention pond was proposed at the northwesterly corner of the property. He emphasized that, given concerns expressed

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during the rezone public hearings, no access was proposed between the development and the adjoining residential development to the west. Mr. Gries further noted that primary access would be from Service Drive on the north side.

At this point, Chairman Porter asked if Commissioners had questions of Mr. Dahl or his consultant.

Commissioner Fritz stated that he had concerns of the proposed dumpster location, which is planned for the west side of the building. He asked if there is some way this could be moved to the east side of the building, away from the residential area. Mr. Gries responded that he would look at this.

Mr. Fritz further noted that he had concerns of the use of a single plant material for the proposed buffer screen. Given this, he suggested moving towards a more diverse landscape plan that includes the use of a number of plant types. He also felt that the form of the berm in this area seemed to be more of a small "bump" and may look strange. He also suggested that landscaping be incorporated in the area between the berm and proposed detention pond.

Commissioner Davis stated that it was very important that Mr. Dahl and his consultants meet with Johnstone Addition residents in developing its plan, and especially the landscape buffer area. She also suggested that some sort of decorative fence be constructed around the proposed pond. Mr. Dahl responded that these forms of details may be incorporated into the pond area once its exact dimensions are known. He emphasized that his company is also very interested in making the property look nice, and is more than willing to work with the immediate neighborhood in developing a desirable transition into that area.

In response to a question, Mr. Gries noted that, given current plans, water would be located within the pond at most times of the year.

In response to a question from Commissioner Oison, Mr. Gries noted that the stormwater detention pond was being designed in accordance with the City Stormwater Management Ordinance. As such, both its capacity and function would be consistent with that ordinance. It was also his understanding that the final stormwater management plan would need to be approved by the City Engineer prior to the issuance of grading and building permits for the site. Commissioner Buelow asked of the potential of higher berm within the buffer area. Mr. Dahl responded that the berm proposed was consistent with what immediate neighbors desired.

In response to a question from Commissioner Boettcher, Mr. Dahl noted that the present sound system would be replaced by one that would not include exterior noise of any kind. Given this, neighbors will no longer hear phones ringing on the site.

In response to a question from Mr. Fritz, Mr. Dahl noted that he envisioned that lights would be on until approximately 11-12 pm at the west side of the building. Following

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that time period, minimal lighting would be used. He also explained that all lights would be of the LED style which directs lighting downward and results in less light pollution than is currently experienced with sodium vapor and other types of light.

At this point, Chairman Porter called on Mark Moeller, City Planner, to provide an overview of the site plan application.

Mr. Moeller noted that following Council's approval of the rezoning request from Automotive Enterprises, LLC, staff did receive a completed site plan from the company on June 13th. In accordance with Council request, the Planning Commission was scheduled to consider the plan on June 23rd. Notices of this schedule, along with copies of the submitted plan were forwarded to all property owners who had received notice of the zone change. Copies of the plan were also forwarded to City staff and an "in-house" review of the plan was scheduled for June 17th. This review was held, and the following corrections proposed:

- Fire Department concerns were that additional hydrants at the site may be needed on the basis that proposed building was not to be sprinkled. Additionally, a minimum distance of 20 feet will be required between the retaining wall to the south side of the building for fire access and the building. A question was also raised relative to the radii of proposed primary entrance points into the new facility.
- The Engineering Department had again noted that a completed stormwater management plan would need to be permitted by the City Engineer prior to any form of site grading. He had also suggested that the proposed berm be moved as far to the east, within the 50 foot buffer, as possible in order to provide some clearance to a present 20 foot wide utility easement within the buffer.
- Sewer and Water Departments questioned the impact that proposed site improvements might have on present utility easements located through the redevelopment site. It was suggested that the City Attorney to be advised on this.
- The pylon sign is shown to be located on private as well as public property. This sign should be relocated so that all of it is located on private property. Provisions should be made to require that, once established, the landscape berm be fully maintained and managed to promote a visual screen between the auto dealership and adjoining residential area indefinitely.

Mr. Moeller noted that the previous concerns had been submitted to the developer's consultants and that they were diligently working on providing responses.

Mr. Moeller stated that in accordance with conditions tied to the zone change, the plan does not propose to promote any form of vehicular access between the development site and adjoining residential development to the west or south.

Given that lighting was an issue that surfaced during the zone change request, the developer had presented, as part of the site plan application, a proposed photometric lighting plan showing the impact of planned LED lights on the site as well as adjoining

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neighborhood. Given this plan, light pollution on the adjoining residential neighborhood should not be an issue. Additionally, it was noted by Mr. Dahl, the current sound system of the new facility as well as the present Toyota Dealership would be modified to mitigate exterior noise.

In addressing storm drainage, Mr. Moeller stated that concerns had been expressed of the idea of a detention pond which holds stagnant water for significant periods of time.

Given the previous, Mr. Moeller stated that it was important that all major concerns be addressed this afternoon before any formal plan approval. If certain questions arise that can't be resolved, the Commission may table approval pending additional information to the project. Additionally, it could approve the site plan on conditions that are (in part) tied to promoting protections to the adjoining residential neighborhood.

At this point, Chairman Porter opened the meeting to public comments. Teresa Brendel, 794 Johnstone Street, stated that she and her husband own property adjacent to the planned landscape berm area. In her mind, she felt there was a significant amount of gray area in the project that deserved attention, one of which including the formal plan landscaping at the berm. She emphasized that outside of receiving the site plan application package in the mail, the developer has not spoken to the neighborhood directly. She further expressed concern of ground water problems that exist throughout this area and was concerned that storm drainage would be directed towards their property.

Chairman Porter stated that in reviewing the plan, the proposed berm would not allow drainage to flow onto the Brendel property.

Commissioner LaVerne Olson also noted that springs are evident in this area and that any redevelopment of this site may need to consider what impact will occur to the neighborhood as a whole.

Mrs. Brendel stated that she was also concerned that the proposed redevelopment of this site would force current employees to park within the Johnstone Addition, rather than Service Drive (as they now do).

Bruce Volkman, 1258 Parkview Avenue, stated that he was also concerned of the idea that their subdivision may be used for parking by dealership employees. He also expressed concern of the fact that the pond may generate a significant bug problem to the neighborhood, particularly if water is forced to stand in it for a majority of the year.

Commissioner Fritz asked if provision was being made for on-site employee parking. Mr. Dahl responded that franchise requirements do require a certain amount of space for dealer auto display. However, he envisioned that once the total campus is reconfigured, areas for employee parking will be defined. Mr. Moeller further noted that on site employee parking would be required under the City's Zoning Ordinance.

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There being no other person to speak during the public comment period, Chairman Porter declared that period closed.

Following discussion, Commissioner Davis recommended approval of the site plan subject to the following:

1. The submittal of a revised landscape plan for the berm area. This plan should be submitted to the Planning Commission following review and approval by the immediate residential neighborhood.
2. Provision is made to accommodate employee parking in accordance with City Code requirements.

This motion was seconded by Commissioner Boettcher. In discussion of the motion, the consensus of those present was that given that the applicant needs to be out of his current facility by the beginning of next year, the Commission should not unjustly hold up site plan approval. Given that, approval was being granted in return for the applicants submittal of additional data related to the westerly buffer area as well as parking. Mr. Dahl responded that he would be more than willing to work with the Commission and adjoining neighborhood in meeting those conditions. He further noted that he would be discussing the landscape plan issue with Winona Nursery, and would hope to have a revised landscape plan for the berm area to the Commission at its next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.



Mark Moeller
City Planner