

STOW PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the Stow Planning Commission meeting held on Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Brauer, Mrs. Harrison, Mr. Ross, Mr. Sprungle

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Kohlmeier.

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Planning Rob Kurtz
Planning Commission Secretary Pamela Daerr
GIS Coordinator Steve Gibbons

PRESS REPRESENTATIVE: Stow Sentry

Mr. Sprungle called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6: 03 p.m. and asked the audience to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Brauer moved and Mr. Ross seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2017 meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

P.C. 2016-010: HATTIE LARLHAM – EXTENSION OF CONDITIONAL ZONING CERTIFICATE – FAMILY HOME FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES; 4479 HUDSON DRIVE

Mr. Warner, Vice President of Operations at Hattie Larlham was present to represent this item.

Mr. Kurtz: This is a request by Mr. Daniel Warner, Vice President of Operations at Hattie Larlham, applicant and property owner, for the Planning Commission's approval of the extension of the Conditional Zoning Certificate previously approved for the construction of an 8-bed residence for individuals with disabilities at 4479 Hudson Drive. The property is zoned R-2 Residential and family homes for persons with disabilities are conditionally permitted in this district.

The Conditional Zoning Certificate expires on June 13, 2017, and the applicant is requesting a 12-month extension. The previously approved plan will remain the same and the conditions contained in Council Res. 2016- 72 will remain in effect.

Since the approval, the buildings have been demolished on the site. Staff would support this.

MOTION: Mr. Brauer moved and Mr. Sprungle seconded to approve P.C. 2016-010. **Notes: Planning Commission recommended approval of the extension.**

YEA: Brauer, Harrison, Ross, Sprungle.

NAY: None. The motion passed 4-0.

**P.C. 2017-008 – MEIJER (STOW KENT PLAZA) WOOLPERT, INC.: REVISED
CONDITIONAL ZONING CERTIFICATE & SITE PLAN; 4301 KENT ROAD**

Ms. Lanie Wess of Woolpert, Inc. 4454 Idea Center Boulevard – Dayton, Ohio and Mr. Chrisman Jones – Meijer – 2929 Walker Avenue – Grand Rapids, Michigan – were present to represent this item and were sworn in by the Planning Commission Secretary.

Mr. Kurtz: This is a request by Ms. Lanie Wess of Woolpert, Inc. agent for Meijer, applicant and property owner, for the Planning Commission's approval of a revised conditional zoning certificate and site plan for the construction of a department/grocery store in the Stow Kent Plaza. The property is zoned C-4 General Business and department stores with outdoor storage are conditionally permitted in this district.

The originally approved plan (P.C. 2014-025 & Res. 2014-156) included the construction of a 192,940 square foot store plus a 2,500 convenience store/gas station located at the site of the Wendy's restaurant. The store size has been reduced and shifted to the east away from the Stow Glen property. Also a parking area proposed to be located behind the store has been eliminated.

This revised plan will involve the construction of 159,253 sq. ft. Meijer department store. The building will include various departments, a grocery store, a drive-thru pharmacy and an outdoor garden center. The Meijer store will be located approximately 800 feet from the Kent Road right-of-way and 169 feet from the west property line.

To accommodate this proposed development, the applicant is proposing to demolish approximately 55,000 square feet of the existing plaza. The demising line will be located two units north of the existing Fitworks space. Approximately 89,500 square feet of the plaza was previously demolished. The additional demolition will leave approximately 33,962 square feet of the original plaza building constructed in 1965 and the more recent addition located at the south end adjacent to Kent Road.

The exterior of the Meijer building will be finished in a combination of masonry panels with alternating smooth and brick patterns. The front elevation varies in height from approximately 22 feet to 28 feet and features two taller building elements approximately 38 feet in height that are located at the two main store entrances. The remainder of the Stow Kent Plaza structure will be renovated with a new paint scheme and façade additions as was approved in 2013 (P.C. 2013-020 & Council Res. 2013-181). That is under construction as we speak.

The applicant is proposing to replace the existing main plaza identification sign on Kent Road. A monument sign is also proposed at the Fishcreek Road entrance. It will be constructed with a brick base and is proposed to be 6.75 in height and 49.5 square feet in area. It will be located 24 feet from the Fishcreek Road right-of-way and 5 feet from the side property line.

With the proposed project, the plaza will consist of a total of 292,922 square feet of retail space in five separate structures: Meijer store (159,253 sq. ft.); Macy's (84,182 sq. ft.); Stow Kent Plaza (33,962 sq. ft.); Sherwin Williams/O'Reilly's (13,992); and the former bank building (1,533 sq. ft.). There will be a total 1513 parking spaces provided within the entire Stow Kent Plaza.

There will be a buffer of 50 feet along the western property line where the existing vegetation will remain undisturbed. The existing buffer includes evergreen trees along the western property line. Additional landscaping and screening will be installed west of the proposed store.

Previously approved variances required as part of this revised plan include: a variance from 1183.05(b)(3) to permit a free standing sign to be located 5 feet from the north property line (min. 20 feet required); and a variance from 1145.08 to permit a building height of 38 feet (maximum of 35 feet required).

To review, the major differences between this previously approved and this one:

- The store size is reduced from 492 to 159.
- Setback from Stow Glen increased from 80 to 169
- Elimination of the gas station
- Open space has increased from 27% to 39%. The overall shopping center site will increase from 19% will be 27%.

Mr. Sprungle: One variance would still be required for the 38 foot rather than the 35 foot. What are we saying about the sign?

Mr. Kurtz: There was an identification sign on Fishcreek. There is a requirement for a monument sign to be located 20 feet from the side line and in this case since this is where the property line is [pointing to the screen] it would not be able to meet the 20 foot setback.

Mr. Sprungle: So that variance still stands of 5 feet from the north property line.

Mr. Kurtz: Right.

Mr. Sprungle: So the variances stand and the differences are a smaller footprint, greater setback from Stow Glen, and elimination of the gas station with a little more open space.

Mr. Kurtz: Those are the main differences.

Mr. Ross: Are these all separately owned parcels?

Mr. Kurtz: The Meijer parcel is the only separately owned. Meijer owns this parcel here [pointing to the screen] with this exempted out and then Stow-Kent continues to own this and the remaining. There are two property owners.

Mr. Ross: To put up the monument sign on Fishcreek you have to get permission from the adjacent land owner, correct.

Mr. Kurtz: That's right, the Stow-Kent Plaza owners.

Mr. Ross: Can you trace the bus route through this site for me. How is this going to work?

Mr. Kurtz: I do not know the exact route; they are coming through here [pointing to the screen]. You have two potential bus routes; one from PARTA and one from Metro. Primarily you would think the easiest route would be from Fishcreek since the bus shelter is in this location [pointing to the screen].

Mr. Ross: But there is no turn around so the busses will not probably exit at the stop sign.

Mr. Kurtz: I would think they would have to exit on Kent Road.

Mr. Ross: But not at the stop light.

Mr. Kurtz: The stop light is down here [pointing to the screen].

Mr. Ross: But a bus is not going to drive through there are they?

Mr. Kurtz: They are going to have to.

Mr. Ross: Really, that's a shaky site plan.

Mr. Kurtz: They are coming down here [pointing to the screen], I suppose they could do this [pointing to the screen] if they were going to Macy's. So that's an alternative too; they could also do that.

Mr. Ross: So we don't have any idea what the bus route is going to be.

Mr. Kurtz: That is out of our control.

Mr. Ross: Oh really.

Mr. Kurtz: The previous plan was reviewed by both Metro and PARTA. I haven't seen the updated plan but this feature of it hasn't changed with this revised plan. I do know that. Their relationship through here has stayed the same.

Mrs. Harrison: Is there currently a drop off in that plaza?

Mr. Kurtz: I think there is.

Mrs. Harrison: I know there is one on Fishcreek Rd.

Mr. Kurtz: There is one across the street at Target. In talking with the Metro people they are anxious to have additional drop-off spots and the one at Target is not ideal because they will not allow them to add any more concrete area when adding onto the shelter. This would be a new drop off for this area and Metro was interested in that previously.

Mr. Ross: The other thing this Committee has talked about in our discussions was revising our criteria for the number of parking spots required. Is there any way of land banking a good portion of the hard surface we have here because it's basically hard surface everywhere you look.

Mr. Kurtz: Compared to what is there now, there is actually more open space even including the vacant space to the north. There is not a blade of grass on the current shopping center within the parking lots. They are providing a significant amount of open space.

The landscape islands are not small; they are the equivalent of four spaces.

Ms. Wess: Addressing your question regarding the size of the landscape islands, they basically take up four parking spaces that are approximately 40 feet x 20 feet. There is quite a bit of additional landscaping added, especially around the perimeter of the site with the smaller building. We were able to keep all of the existing vegetation along the west property line. There are some significant evergreens that are going to remain and some trees that are substantial in size. It's going to feel a lot greener than the other plan.

Mr. Ross: I agree that the western property line is nice the way it is proposed. The rest of it is absolutely abhorrent in terms of the number of, much of the asphalt and the hard surfacing. That's the kind of thing that gives this community a bad image. I think that is what our residents have told us time and time again. Soften these places up. I don't see it happening here.

Ms. Wess: I think for in front of the Meijer store we tried to minimize the amount of parking spaces for Meijer to what they actually need. If you look at the spaces within the Meijer's store property line, we only have about a 3.0 parking ratio to a 1,000 square feet. So it is important that there is enough parking in front of their store. That's the real issue. You can't really reduce the parking even more. Overall we have a 5.0 parking ratio in the entire Stow-Kent Shopping Center but for the Meijer alone it is really a 3.0

Mr. Sprungle: One of the things I noticed when we start to look at parking on this, I see that all the other properties around the Meijer's store are typical 9 foot parking spots and the Meijer spots are 9.5 feet, which is good but does that require a variance. Do we have a 10 foot requirement? Was that something we approved last time?

Mr. Kurtz: We approved 9.5 foot parking spaces last time.

Mr. Sprungle: So it's an improvement over what we have on Macy's in the front part.

Ms. Wess: Right. Those are the existing stall sizes on the shopping center.

Mr. Sprungle: I see this as an improvement over what had been approved. I know that one of the issues that was discussed last time and was a little contentions was the gas station.

Ms. Wess: Right.

Mr. Sprungle: I see the gas station is no longer a part of the program and that Wendy's stays. Do we have a topographical map? I think there is also a slope between this and Stow Glen.

Mr. Kurtz: Yes at the bottom corner of the site plan drawing they have a section that shows that.

Ms. Wess: I noticed the height of the building is shown at 25 feet but it is really 22 feet. There is about a 10 foot elevation relief between our finished floor and that property line with a lot of vegetation in between.

Mr. Sprungle: In the past it might have required a retaining wall.

Ms. Wess: It did. There is a high-pressure gas main about 25 feet from the property line and there is an easement of about 50 feet that you can't grade. They don't want you to even plant any bushes within those 50 feet. We are going to keep that existing vegetation and plant trees.

You can see on our plan some evergreens where there is a little bit of open area you can see through so we are going to plant the additional evergreens in those areas.

Mr. Sprungle: Where is the easement on that elevation?

Ms. Wess: This is the west property line [pointing to the screen] of Meijer.

Mr. Kurtz: Stow Glen is over here [pointing to the screen].

Ms. Wess: This is Stow Glen [pointing to the screen], this is the vegetation we are going to keep, we're going to plant additional evergreens and then our drive around our building and our building.

Mr. Sprungle: The easement then is where? Here [pointing to the screen]?

Ms. Wess: The easement is 50 feet from this property line [pointing to the screen], this area [pointing to the screen].

Mr. Kurtz: You mean the pipeline easement?

Ms. Wess: Correct.

Mr. Sprungle: So this is the easement here [pointing to the screen]?

Ms. Wess: Correct.

Mr. Sprungle: So you can do anything you want in here [pointing to the screen]?

Ms. Wess: Correct.

Mr. Sprungle: But they don't want you touching this [pointing to the screen].

Ms. Wess: Correct. You can see this little cross section right there [pointing to the screen]. That signifies that cross section.

Mr. Brauer: Is this considered one of your larger buildings?

Mr. Jones: It is the smaller of the two prototypes we have. We have the 192 prototype and the 15 prototype and this is the smaller of the two.

Mr. Brauer: I was in Indiana this weekend and I saw a Meijer store that never stopped. That can't fit in here.

Mr. Jones: Right. In Indiana we have 31 stores. Actually here in Ohio we have 41 stores but they are mainly in Columbus, Cincinnati and Dayton.

Out of the 159,000 square feet about 78% is dedicated to grocery and pharmacy. About 100,000 feet is grocery, produce, sea food, deli, and then health and beauty and pharmacy. The balance is general merchandise.

Mrs. Harrison: When are you plans to build this?

We start some utility relocation work in July of this year. That will take us through this construction season until about November. Mr. Kurtz mentioned this plaza was built in the 60's so there are all kinds of existing utilities running through the property. We will be relocating some water lines, some sewer lines, some stormwater lines, and some electric lines from July to November.

The other plan you showed had a building that is going to be removed. Big Lot's lease terminates on January 31, 2018. They have lease-hold rights, quiet enjoyment rights, and rights to the parking.

Mr. Sprungle: So you really can't even start construction.

Mr. Jones: So it's just the utility work that does not impede Big Lot's business.

Mr. Sprungle: Are those the exact same buildings that were going to be removed under the last plan?

Mr. Jones: Exactly the same.

Mr. Brauer: Mr. Kurtz has there been any discussion with Macy's if this proposal goes through that Macy's would do a remodel or upgrade.

Mr. Kurtz: There has been discussion. Macy's leases the building and do not own the property. It would be up to Macy's and/or Stow-Kent to initiate that.

Mrs. Harrison: I think it would be nice with some of the parking issues. How it's kind of built over here with some trees and other things and that carried into the other parts of the plaza and eliminated some of the parking. I think that makes it worse when you look at everything around Macys.

Mr. Jones: We are trying to do our part in that with the Meijer development. It's been greenspace and landscaping.

Mr. Sprungle: It's almost like there is too much parking for Macy's.

Mrs. Harrison: That's why I think it makes it look skewed.

Mr. Sprungle: You don't own that property so you can't include that as part of your parking.

Mr. Brauer: We almost _____ to eliminate that.

Mr. Sprungle: Yes we do, but that's what gives it the hard-surface look.

Mr. Brauer: It does.

Mr. Ross: The unfortunate thing is our code doesn't have any parameters in it to identify where the green space needs to be. I understand why it is where it is.

Mr. Brauer: But we can make that recommendation.

Mr. Ross: Other zoning codes do try to influence where that green space is because in many cases like we see here it is behind the building and it doesn't do anybody any good in terms of the aesthetics of the site development. I don't think we have any parameters in our code that help us do anything, it's unfortunate.

Mr. Brauer: Does staff support this?

Mr. Kurtz: Yes.

Mr. Brauer: It's a huge improvement.

Mr. Sprungle: I think so too. It fits on the property better than the previous plan.

Mr. Jones: Absolutely, we totally agree.

Mr. Ross: Is there a proposal to put another stop light. I don't think it makes sense but at the exit where we would typically find people coming out of the Macy's drive looks like the only logical drive on this site to make a loop through and there is no stop light there. We know we're going to have traffic issues. I can see a plethora of accidents happening right there. Putting stop lights that close together is probably not a wise move either.

Mr. Kurtz: I would think that is too short of a space. This site does have two stop lights; one on Fishcreek Road and one on Kent Road. It would be hard to believe it would be warranted at that location.

Ms. Wess: We did a traffic study the last time through with the larger building and the movements that are expected at all these drive ways. Based on the use and the size of the building it wasn't an issue. We had to do a little bit of improvements to the signalized entry at Kent Road where we are going to delineate a dedicated left turn lane and across the street also a dedicated left turn lane to make that sync up and the driveways are adequate.

Mr. Sprungle: Mr. Kurtz has the engineer looked at that?

Mr. Kurtz: Yes.

Mr. Ross: It strikes me like we do campus planning where we put sidewalks and the kids walk where it makes sense as opposed to on the sidewalks so...unfortunate.

MOTION: Mr. Brauer moved and Mr. Sprungle seconded to approve P.C. 2017-008. Notes: Planning Commission recommended approval of the revised site plan subject to the following: Engineering & Building Department approval of construction and storm water management plans; City Arborist approval of landscape plans; Fire Department approval of plans including: fire lanes to be marked and posted around the perimeter of the entire building excluding the loading dock area; and landscaping mulch not to be used in or around designated smoking areas; and Council approval of previously approved variances.

YEA: Sprungle, Brauer, Harrison, Ross.

NAY: None. The motion carried 4-0.

OTHER

Mr. Kurtz: I have one issue I would like to ask the Planning Commission to please give some thought. If you recall the meeting where the rezoning for R-B came through, there were some neighbors that were interested in R-B for their properties which are on Liberty Road. I thought it would be worthy to at least ask the question.

We had not talked about that with the Comprehensive Plan contemplating R-B in that area because I think the site metrics are different than the lots that are on Liberty Road as opposed to those on Graham Road. I wanted to at least have you think about that when we finalize the Comprehensive Plan to verify whether that is appropriate.

Even though the properties are adjacent, and the ones I am referring to are behind. Here is the stream we are talking about [pointing to the screen] and it was determined this is the logical barrier so it was okay for this to be R-B and one owner was indicating why not this too [pointing to the screen].

Mrs. Harrison: Different roads.

Mr. Kurtz: They asked the question and Council people asked the question so I said I would ask Planning Commission. You can give your thoughts.

Mr. Brauer: You have two different roads and one has high traffic.

Mrs. Harrison: With Graham Road we talked about nobody really wants to buy a house on Graham Road and that made more sense there.

Mr. Sprungle: Although they're connected in the back the lots are significantly different in nature.

Mrs. Harrison: Yes. I think people on Liberty would have a much easier time selling their house there than on Graham Road right up across from Walgreens and all of that. I don't see them as that similar.

Mr. Kurtz: Thank you for your input.

NEXT MEETING: Scheduled for May 23, 2017.

With no further business to discuss, Mrs. Harrison moved and Mr. Brauer seconded the motion to adjourn. It was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Richard Sprungle
Planning Commission Chairman

Pamela H. Daerr, CPS
Planning Commission Secretary