

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
MAY 27, 2021, 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held electronically as authorized under the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.261, *ET SEQ.*, as amended, and called to order by Chair Stimson at 7:30 p.m. Commission members were asked to state their name and location, as to where they were attending the electronic meeting.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Brickner, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Countegan, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Mantey, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Orr, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Schwartz, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Stimson, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Traflet, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Turner, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan
Varga, City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan

Commissioners Absent:

None

Others Present:

City Planner Stec, City Attorney Joppich, Planning Consultant Tangari, Staff Engineers Saksewski, Alexander, Dawkins, and Sonck

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Orr, support by Traflet, to approve the agenda as published.

Roll call vote:

Yeas:	Brickner, Countegan, Mantey, Orr, Schwartz, Stimson, Traflet, Turner, Varga
Nays:	None
Absent:	None
Abstentions:	None

MOTION carried 9-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. PUD PLAN 1, 2021, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 54-2-2021

LOCATION:	31525 Twelve Mile Rd.
PARCEL I.D.:	23-15-201-270

PROPOSAL: Convert existing hotel into a senior assisted living complex in
The ES, Expressway Service District
ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to City Council
APPLICANT: Manor Senior Living LLC
OWNERS: 31525 W 12 Mile Road MI, LLC

Paul O'Meara, Project Manager, Rowe Professional Services, Farmington Hills MI, was present on behalf of this application for a recommendation to City Council of a Planned United Development at 31525 W. 12 Mile Road, a proposal to convert an existing hotel into a senior assisted living complex. Douglas Boehm, Executive Director of Manor Senior Living, Sterling Heights MI was also present, as was Todd Seidell, Seidell Architects, Gaylord MI.

Mr. O'Meara made the following points:

- A hotel under various names had been located at the corner of Orchard Lake and 12 Mile Roads since the 1980's; this was currently a Radisson Hotel.
- The applicant would like to purchase the property and convert it to a 128-unit mixed use senior living facility, using the PUD option. The property does not qualify for this use in the Expressway Service (ES) district.
- The current hotel use is no longer economically feasible.
- The applicant has several senior living facilities throughout Michigan that are working well. The development team believed the senior living facility use will be an appropriate transition from the commercial environment that exists there now, with the 2 restaurants that abut the site, and the adjacent gas station to the north. To the west of the site is a multi-family residential development.
- The senior living facility will be a nice conversion from what is there today, and also will be a better use than possible future ES uses, such as a fast-food restaurant or larger gas station complex. The use will have 10% of the vehicle trips than those other ES uses would generate. The use will contribute to the reduction in traffic demand for the area
- The City has long targeted this area for desired improvement in coordination and interaction among the different sites at the corner, so that there would be less demand on Orchard Lake Road. With that in mind, the applicant was proposing an easement through the property to provide access from 12 Mile Road as well as Orchard Lake Road, reducing the need for every user of the greater site to use the intersection.
 - The easement would provide a 12 Mile Road access for the Coney Island restaurant to the south.
 - The restaurant on 12 Mile Road to the immediate west (formerly Chef's Kitchen) would lose necessary parking spaces if a driveway were provided to the restaurant property. Therefore, the applicant was recommending an easement to that property, so that when it became possible in the future, the restaurant could interact with the proposed new driveway to 12 Mile Road.
 - The applicant was also recommending an easement to the Marathon gas station on the corner, so that when the gas station wishes to join this connecting option, they can add an access to the new Orchard Lake Road driveway.
- Regarding parking counts: There were currently 290 spaces on the site. The applicant was recommending a reduction to 95 spaces, or a 67% reduction. This will result in the removal of a large amount of asphalt, and allow for significantly more green space and landscaping to this site than had been done in the past.
- The front entrance canopy will be removed, and replaced with a higher canopy in a slightly different location, allowing emergency access to the front service area.
- Screening will be added to the west of the building, to shield ventilation units that had been added over time.

- Regarding qualifying for the PUD option, the redevelopment for this use will be compatible with neighboring land uses, provide a buffer to the neighbors, be a definite improvement to the landscaping and green space, and the entire redevelopment will introduce change to provide a way for the site to become economically viable.

In response to questions from the Commission, the development team gave the following information;

- The correct Orchard Lake Road entrance is shown on the site plan. The entrance on the landscape plan was the original driveway configuration. However, after further conversation with the City and the neighboring property owner, the entrance was changed as shown on the site plan.
- The hotel had been pursuing a property sale prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. When the pandemic hit, all hotels in the area and around the country were affected, and the financial situation became much worse.
- There was an abundance of hotels in the Farmington area; changing the use for this facility would not impact the availability of hotel rooms in the area.
- The driveway onto Orchard Lake Road would not require the utility pole location to be changed. However, landscaping will need to now be modified, to avoid a conflict with the 25-foot clear vision triangle, and to accommodate the guy wires from the pole.
- If approved, the applicants hoped to start the project in late summer or early fall 2021.
- The applicants had preliminary conversations with the building department regarding interior changes to the building for this use. ADA requirements will be met.

Commissioner Schwartz discussed the access provided to Orchard Lake Road and 12 Mile Road. While providing the access onto 12 Mile Road was a positive change, traffic would find it difficult to turn left onto 12 Mile Road, and it would also be difficult to turn right onto 12 Mile Road and move across 12 Mile to attempt to make a left turn at Orchard Lake Road. This situation merited further discussion.

Chair Stimson invited the Planning Consultant to give his review.

Referencing his updated 5/14/2021 written review comments, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background and review for this request for PUD recommendation to City Council.

The 4.96-acre site is currently zoned ES Expressway Service, and is developed with a three-story, 217-room hotel with access to 12 Mile Road via a single driveway.

Surrounding zoning districts and uses included B-4 commercial to the north, ES expressway service to the east, I-696 to the south, and RC-2 multi-family to the west.

Under Section 34-3.20, the Planning Commission may make a determination that a site qualifies for a PUD based on a set of criteria and procedures, and the Planning Commission granted preliminary PUD qualification at its January 21, 2021 meeting. The criteria for qualifications were outlined in tonight's review letter. In order for a zoning lot to qualify for the Planned Unit Development option, the lot shall either be located within an overlay district or other area designated in this chapter as qualifying for the PUD option, or it must be demonstrated that all of the criteria listed in the ordinance will be met. The PUD option may be effectuated in any zoning district.

As noted, the Planning Commission did grant preliminary qualification for the site at their January 2021 meeting. One of the qualifications for criteria required that the application meet at least one of 8

objectives as listed in paragraph D. The applicant felt that they met 4 of the objectives, and the Planning Commission agreed:

- To permanently establish land use patterns which are compatible or which will protect existing or planned uses.
- To provide alternative uses for parcels which can provide transition buffers to residential areas.
- To foster the aesthetic appearance of the city through quality building design and site development, the provision of trees and landscaping beyond minimum requirements; the preservation of unique and/or historic sites or structures; and the provision of open space or other desirable features of a site beyond minimum requirements.
- To bring about redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use is determined to be desirable.

As required, the applicant had updated the package for final PUD determination. They were seeking relief from ordinance standards as follows:

1. Density. Density appears in line with comparable uses in other districts. The unit counts will be enumerated in the PUD agreement.
2. Use. The use is not typically permitted in the underlying district.

The applicant has provided a site plan for a 128-unit independent senior living complex, including a breakdown of the type of senior units:

- 21 studio units for memory care
- 107 units for “assisted living and independent living”
 - 22 studio units: 11 assisted living, and 11 independent
 - 81 one-bedroom units: 40 assisted living, and 21 independent
 - 4 two-bedroom units: all independent

Generally, assisted living units are treated as components of convalescent care for the purposes of determining parking and density requirements, whereas independent living is typically treated as multiple-family for those same purposes. The Planner’s analysis reflected these differences.

Summary of Plan.

The site plan proposes to re-use the existing building with minor modifications to the exterior and a thorough interior renovation. Parking on the site will be reduced from 290 spaces to 95 spaces in order to create usable open space with walking paths, sitting areas and additional landscaping. The plan also proposes a connection to the parking lot at 31519 12 Mile Rd (the former Chef’s Table restaurant), and a connection to Orchard Lake Road via the parking lot of the Coney Island at 27701 Orchard Lake Rd.

The building includes common dining facilities; the units not identified as memory care have layouts that appear to include a kitchenette, though this is not labeled on the plans.

Master Plan.

The master plan designates the site expressway service, consistent with current zoning. However, the Master Plan is not meant to assign specific values to specific parcels.

Land Use Plan. The entire site is dedicated to the senior housing use; several areas are set aside as open space, and include walking and sitting areas.

The redevelopment of the building, use, and site plan generally meets the standards of the underlying ES district.

Regarding parking and easements:

- 58 parking spaces are required; 95 are provided.
- The neighboring restaurant loses four parking spaces with the cross-connection driveway; as this site did not have parking spaces to spare, the loss of these spaces must be accounted for with a shared parking agreement for 10 spaces; this shared parking agreement could be part of the PUD agreement, to be implemented if the traffic/access connections are ever made.
- Barrier-free space requirements were met.

Regarding Density:

The density met the general intent of the ordinance. As outlined in the review letter, and per Section 34-4.17, based on the combination of independent, assisted, and memory care units, it appears that the site's proposed density is essentially in line with permitted densities in districts where these uses are typically permitted. The PUD agreement will specify a breakdown of unit types.

Regarding landscaping:

The landscape plan is in line with landscape requirements.

Regarding lighting:

The lighting plan indicates noncompliance with the ordinance (Section 34-5.16) at three points on the western property line. Adjustments will be required. Given the changes to the site, including removal of pavement in this area, perhaps the three fixtures could be moved away from the property line. If the lighting remains in its current location, house side shields may be required. An updated lighting plan should be submitted.

Regarding pedestrian and vehicular circulation:

- A pedestrian connection to the public sidewalk is provided. However, there is no pedestrian connection to the Coney Island to the south or to the Marathon gas station. There is a connection to the restaurant on 12 Mile Road.
- The applicant proposes to make a vehicular connection to the parking lot of the 12 Mile Road restaurant, ultimately permitting the existing restaurant's driveway to be closed and improving access management on 12 Mile Road. The applicant is also making a connection to Orchard Lake, which includes an access point for the restaurant property to the south, which is currently only accessible by southbound traffic on Orchard Lake Road.

General comments

The subject site is located in a commercial area, but also abuts multiple family to the west. There are a variety of local service, restaurant, and retail uses within walking distance. Some examples: Starbucks is less than 900 feet walking distance away, several sit-down restaurants and service businesses are within a quarter mile walk, the Holocaust Memorial Center is less than one third of a mile walk, and the U.S. Postal Service is less than a half mile walk.

As the Planning Commission considers the proposed density and open space, it should consider the location of the project to determine whether the project warrants the increased density on the site.

Last, the applicants are proposing façade changes; the Planning Commission should review the new and existing materials proposed to be used.

Planning Consultant Tangari concluded his review.

Chair Stimson opened the public hearing. Seeing that there was no public who indicated they wished to speak regarding this application, Chair Stimson closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Commission for further discussion and/or a motion.

City Planner Stec noted that the existing building's façade was mainly EIFS. The applicants were proposing to paint the EIFS. Did this meet the qualification criteria of fostering an aesthetic appearance through quality building design and site development? In some previous PUD's, the applicants were required to provide 80% natural materials, such as stone and brick.

City Planner Stec also noted that there were no designated paths on the site plan to get to adjoining restaurants.

After further discussion of process, and noting that the City generally did not require sidewalks between adjacent privately owned properties, Commissioner Orr offered the following motion:

MOTION by Orr, support by Schwartz, to recommend to City Council that P.U.D. Plan 1, 2021, including Site and Landscape Plan 54-2-2021, dated April 20, 2021 submitted by Manor Senior Living, LLC, be approved because the plans are in accordance with the objectives, goals and policies of the Master Plan for Future Land Use and are consistent with the objectives and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option as outlined in Section 34-3.20 of Chapter 34, Zoning Ordinance, with the following conditions:

1. Cross access agreements to 31519 Twelve Mile, 27745 Orchard Lake, and 27701 Orchard Lake from the subject site be provided.
2. Up to 10 parking spaces be permitted to be used to make up for parking spaces removed on 31519 Twelve Mile and 27745 Orchard Lake Road as a result of the cross connections to those properties being constructed in the future.
3. The landscape plan be revised in the area of the new Orchard Lake access point
4. The existing parking lot lights along the western property line are either relocated, or shielding is provided
5. Signs be approved under separate permits
6. The plans be revised to address the items identified in the May 14, 2021 Giffels Webster review report
7. Exterior façade samples and color renderings of the buildings be provided for review by City Council

Discussion focused on whether to require the applicants to return with more complete color renderings and description of façade materials. Commissioner Orr did not want to include these things in the motion since the Commission had not seen them.

Mr. Seidell said the intention was to create an aesthetic presence much like Manor Senior Living's building in Sterling Heights. They would strip off any materials that are decaying such as the vinyl siding. He pointed out that the existing EIFS is good shape, and they saw no reason to remove it. They would enhance the primary focus sides (street side facades), with cultured stone as shown on the black and white elevations. They will present a color scheme that is peaceful and calming. They could have a package showing all finished materials and colors for the next meeting.

City Planner Stec advised that if the Commission did not feel comfortable moving this application to City Council without seeing the design package, the applicants could be asked to return to the Commission with those items.

Commissioner Countegan said he was comfortable with the level of information received tonight, and with the detail and elevations depicted. He was also comfortable with the public benefit this development gives to the community. While in the past the Commission had endorsed certain materials and appearances, in this case he was comfortable with the review that was done, and he did not feel the Commission needed to see the materials. Rather the applicants should submit those materials to Council; if Council did not like the color or some other aspect of the materials, it could be dealt with at that time.

Commissioner Schwartz agreed. He also thought the applicants should take the building materials and renderings to Council for their approval. However, in the big picture the City was avoiding having a vacant building in the heart of the City for a number of years to come. This was a logical use that reduces the traffic in one of the worst intersections in the county. The applicants have shown the areas on the building where stone will be added. He did not want to delay this project from moving forward; it was a great re-use of a difficult property.

Roll call vote:

Yeas:	Brickner, Countegan, Mantey, Orr, Schwartz, Stimson, Trafelet, Turner, Varga,
Nays:	None
Absent:	None
Abstentions:	None

MOTION carried 9-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES None

PUBLIC COMMENT None

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Schwartz noted that the City was in line to receive \$18-20M from the American Rescue Plan, and while acknowledging that there will be certain restrictions on how the money can be used, he strongly suggested reviewing the CIP with city administration, in order to make recommendations to City Council as to how the money should be spent. This was a unique, once in a lifetime opportunity to get some important projects completed. He asked that this be brought up at the upcoming joint meeting on June 14, since he would not be able to attend.

Commissioner Schwartz also commented on the very positive progress being made on the new construction at 12 Mile and Drake Roads.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Trafelet, support by Brickner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm.

Roll call vote:

Yeas:	Brickner, Countegan, Mantey, Orr, Schwartz, Stimson, Trafelet, Turner, Varga
Nays:	None

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Absent: Mantey
Abstentions: None

MOTION carried 9-0

Respectfully Submitted,
John Trafelet
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved as published 06/17-2021

/cem