

CITY OF PONTIAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017
6:30 P.M.

Meeting before the Planning Commission, at
47450 Woodward Avenue, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers,
Pontiac, Michigan 48342.

BOARD COMMISSIONERS:

Dayne Thomas, Chairman
Ashley Fegley, Vice Chair
Mayor Deirdre Waterman, Commissioner
Mona Parlove, Commissioner
Christopher Northcross, Commissioner
Lucy Payne, Commissioner
Hazel Cadd, Commissioner

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Nicholas Lomako, City Planner
Jane Bais-DiSessa, Deputy Mayor

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ADDRESSING THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

Larry Bechard

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

Quentina R. Snowden, (CSR-5519)
Certified Shorthand Reporter

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Thomas called meeting to order at
6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Dayne Thomas, Chair
Ashley Fegley, Vice Chair
Lucy Payne, Commissioner
Mayor Deirdre Waterman, Commissioner
Hazel Cadd, Commissioner
Mona Parlove, Commissioner

LATE: Christopher Northcross, Commissioner

Mr. Lomako reported a quorum is present.

3. COMMUNICATIONS: (None.)

4. MINUTES FOR REVIEW: August 2, 2017.

Motion to approve by Parlove. Seconded by Cadd.

(All ayes to approve the minutes.)

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SITE PLAN REVIEWS:

- 5.1 PF (SPR) 17-31 Site Plan Review - Proposed
Office Warehouse Baldwin Avenue (Parcels 14-17-
4353-002 through 14-17-153-005

Property is located south of 988 Baldwin Avenue
on the east side of Baldwin Avenue

Treadstone, LLC

(Removed from agenda.)

- 5.2 PF (SPR) 17-50 Site Plan Review - Proposed
Fuel Cell Lobby Addition and Parking Lot
Expansion

895 Joslyn Avenue (Parcel 14-21-102-001)

Property is located at the General Motors
Powertrain Headquarters Complex at 777 Joslyn
Avenue.

General Motors Corporation

(Presentation of facts provided by Mr. Lomako.)

(Commissioner Christopher Northcross entered the chambers.)

(Chair Thomas invited the petitioner to address the Commission.)

Larry Bechard, Ghafari Associates, 17101 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, Michigan, a representative from General Motors and the AE, Owner and Contractor working on the project.

He indicated the project is fairly straightforward. He indicated with the addition of the fuel cell building, the lobby addition was deferred because of funding. He indicated the building has four employee entrances around the perimeter. He indicated the one at the northeast corner is being refurbished and expanded.

Mayor Waterman indicated the plan speaks for itself. She invited the petitioner to speak about what goes on at the facility.

Chair Thomas indicated this project is in the neighborhood where he grew up and where he is now trying to revitalize the neighborhood which was built by GM, for GM circa 1920. He indicated he considers this as about as high-tech as it can get, and it's right in the City of Pontiac, one of the quiet treasures. He indicated he's happy that they are expanding in Pontiac.

Mr. Bechard responded to Mayor Waterman's question. He indicated they are engaged by Barton Malow to build this phase of the project. He indicated the fuel cell lab that they are involved in is going to be state-of-the-art equipment. He indicated he's not fully up-to-speed on everything that is going in there, but he knows this is a very important component to the hydrogen lab area that's being operated. He indicated it's going to be a 24-hour, 7-day a week operation.

Commissioner Parlove made a motion to approve all the site improvements which are compliant with local zoning requirements accordingly it's recommended that the site plan approval be granted subject to the following conditions, compliance with standards for engineering, fire and building code and requirements of Water Resource Commissioner as may be applicable.

Seconded by Commissioner Northcross.

AYES: Thomas, Northcross, Fegley, Waterman,
Cadd, Payne, Parlove.

NAYS: (None.)

ABSTAIN: (None.)

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

6. NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion - a farm market proposed in a district zoned P-1 Parking.

Featherstone Street (Parcel 14-22-334-010) Property is located on a strip of land north of Featherstone Street and continuing north to University Drive.

(Presentation of facts provided by Mr. Lomako.)

Mr. Lomako discussed the Commission needs to judge whether or not they believe it's in the best public interest to allow this to be a permitted use on this property. Mr. Lomako believes that this is an administrative oversight, the P1 district and urban agriculture make sense. He indicated that a motion needs to come from the Commission tonight in agreement or not agreement with the opinion.

Chair Thomas indicated he believes this almost an unusable piece of parcel in any configuration. He indicated he believes it to be a derelict parking area with the Silverdome being gone.

Commissioner Northcross referenced the master plan, questioning whether P1 was mentioned in the master plan as being in the entrepreneurial area.

Mr. Lomako indicated the master plan did classify an entrepreneurial district, but also the master plan in terms of not looking at the map, but the policy statements within the map, supported entrepreneurial ventures, including these urban agricultural sites. He indicated when you look at the zoning code and look at where this is identified as being permitted, it's permitted everywhere except in the parking district. He indicated there isn't a column for the parking district in the uses permitted by

right, special exception, etc. He indicated he believes it was an administrative oversight. He indicated the categories between the master plan and the zoning ordinance aren't coincidentally, they're not necessarily identical. He indicated the master plan gives direction, and the zoning ordinance is the tools which allows the City to make their way towards that vision.

Commissioner Cadd questioned as to whether this is for all parking districts or just this one parcel in particular.

Mr. Lomako indicated he's talking no case in particular, just in general. He indicated the City still has oversight and the applicant would still have to come in to get a zoning compliance permit, site plan approval, etc., because it's all going to be site-dependent on whether or not they can function as an urban agricultural facility, depending upon the geometry and characteristics of the site.

Commissioner Cadd questioned whether it would require access to water, or would that all be part of the zoning variance request.

Mr. Lomako indicated normally it would, depending on what the applicants want to do. He indicated the ultimate goal is they want to grow some sort of product on the property that requires care. He indicated the issue came up with the petitioners and they are exploring ways with them, the best way to achieve a water supply, but that he doesn't have an answer at this time.

Mayor Waterman asked for clarification of what the consideration is, whether it is to declare this an administrative oversight or to do a rezoning of the particular parcel.

Mr. Lomako indicated he wants to fix an error in the zoning book that he believes was an oversight when it was being drafted and prepared. The motion he is asking for does not pertain to any particular submittal, project or application, they haven't received one yet; but in order to receive one, this issue needs to be clarified.

Chair Thomas pointed out that even if the Commission approves this, the petitioners still have to come back with a viable site plan, of which the Commission gets an opportunity to review and ask question and make sure it

comports with everything the City is looking for.

Commissioner Parlove indicated she was looking at the aerial and was surprised there was no vegetation on it. She questioned how long ago the picture was taken.

Mr. Lomako indicated the somewhere around the last event at the Silverdome.

Commissioner Parlove pointed out that maybe it is not intended to have agriculture where cars have been parking; that maybe there was a reason that that was omitted because something is being grown in the soil where there has been oil dripping, or who knows what. She indicated it could have been heavy industrial parking, as well. She indicated the Commission needs to be mindful of that as they are going forward. She indicated if this was going to be something organic, she doesn't know if the soil qualifies for it.

Chair Thomas indicated that they would have to qualify and do soil tests. He indicated his instinct is that if they're going to do this project the way they're talking about doing it, they're doing it in raised garden plots, which basically means they're bringing in their own soil. But they would still have to comply with licensing.

Commissioner Parlove inquired as to whether the Commission has levels of control.

Mr. Lomako responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Parlove asked for clarification of the definition of a parking district, is it just to park cars.

Mr. Lomako answered affirmatively, motorized vehicle parking.

Mayor Waterman questioned whether only the P1 is missing, or are there others that were also missing.

Mr. Lomako indicated he's speculating, but he believes when the zoning ordinance was being crafted originally, the parking district was just viewed as a special zone that could be established for vehicle parking that would support another primary use, whether it be a

church, a school, a commercial building, multiple-family complexes, etc. He indicated traditionally in urban-established communities, the parking zoning district was established to serve as a buffer use.

Commissioner Parlove requested Mr. Lomako to state how he believes the motion should be crafted.

Mr. Lomako indicated he is hoping that they can obtain a motion tonight that would support the Planning Commission's position that the P1 district is an appropriate district for urban agricultural uses, and that that should be identified as an administrative oversight in the existing zoning ordinance; and moving forward, from this point forward, urban agriculture would be a permitted use in the parking district.

Seconded by Commissioner Parlove.

Deputy Mayor Jane Bais-DiSessa was welcomed to the meeting and expressed her concern that there's been an interchange between calling it the zoning book or the zoning ordinances. She indicated that she believes there needs to be more discussion as it's going to change the ordinance in some fashion, and as the Mayor suggested, you may need to amend the ordinance and not just change it.

Mr. Lomako indicated he did not bring this before the Commission lightly, that it was given great thought by himself and other planners in the department, in talking about the best approach to do this. He indicated it just seemed to be commonsense that this was just an oversight.

He indicated that the City has an old zoning ordinance and that these changes need to be made to bring it closer to the master plan's vision.

Commissioner Payne discussed further the administrative oversight.

Mr. Lomako expressed that the zoning ordinance is a body of work that tries to anticipate a lot of different things in a lot of different situations.

Chair Thomas discussed the special exemption and permitted

uses.

Commissioner Parlove discussed the 19 categories that are listed on the matrix.

Mr. Lomako explained that this is only one page of three pages of permitted uses, so there are a lot more than 19, there are probably 60 land uses that have been identified in the zoning code.

Mayor Waterman inquired as to whether P1 is missing from all the pages.

Mr. Lomako answered affirmatively. He discussed that in the future they could determine if the P1 should allow a helipad, should allow outdoor storage, should allow temporary construction facility, things like that. He indicated that is for a different date, a different discussion.

Mayor Waterman expressed her concerns about setting a precedent.

Chair Thomas inquired as to whether it can be done conditionally.

Mr. Lomako indicated negatively. You would have to go through a full-blown 90-day amendment process to do that or just consider it an administrative oversight.

Chair Thomas discussed the parcel and how it is almost impossible to redevelop it.

Commissioner Parlove inquired of Mr. Lomako if other communities have P1 that would allow urban agriculture on it.

Mr. Lomako indicated he doesn't know that for a fact, and indicated most communities he works with are grappling with the idea of whether they want to have urban agriculture.

Commissioner Parlove inquired as to the size of the parcel.

Mr. Lomako indicated the Commission should not focus just on this parcel. He indicated he does not know what the parcel size is.

Chair Thomas called for a roll call.

AYES: Thomas, Northcross, Fegley, Waterman,
Cadd, Parlove.
NAYS: Payne.
ABSTAIN: (None.)

MOTION CARRIES 6-1-0

Commissioner Northcross discussed as a public comment that October 6th at St. George's at 6 p.m. there is a fundraiser for the NAACP. He also indicated on October 22nd at Newman AME Church at 4 p.m. there is a free music event. He further indicated October 17th is the instillation dinner for the Pontiac Optimist Club.

Mayor Waterman discussed she feels comfortable with the decisions they've made this evening. She mentioned that the P1 agenda item this evening raised the question in that there's some unfinished business, although she realizes that they have covered it for one of the Parking P1 districts, and brings to mind that the Commission need to cover the others too. So she would like to see that on the next agenda.

She indicated the first Pontiac Music Festival will be September 23rd, free to Pontiac residents.

Commissioners Parlove and Payne encouraged people to register to vote.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Waterman made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Northcross seconded. (All ayes.) Adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Minutes certified by:



/s/ Quentina Rochelle Snowden, CSR-5519
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