

CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, October 16, 2023

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Day at 7:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PRESENT:

Chairman: W. Day
Vice Chair: C. Tacy
Commission: R. Cousineau
S. Grossi
M. Helsom
M. Lada
A. Lawrence

Administration:

Assistant City Manager: D. Benson
Planning Consultant: D. Lewan

AGENDA CHANGES: (None)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Tacy had an amendment to her comments on page 3. Where she asked why Assistant City Manager Benson made the statement that the Planning Commission was not sure, she believed she said "we". When she said "we", she was referring to the room of the Joint Meeting, in terms of the number of people there that had stated that they felt the building should be no higher than three stories. There was only one person that felt four stories was acceptable. Of the people that talked, the consensus of the room was three. She said that was what she was referring to.

MOTION made and seconded by Commissioners Cousineau and Lada to approve the September 18, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes with the amendment to page 3.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE:

October 10, 2023 City Manager Update
The Charter Township of Commerce - Notice of Distribution of Draft Plan

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: (None)

OLD BUSINESS: (None)

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1.) SITE PLAN EXTENSION REQUEST SPR 08-013-18: LEONARDO’S MARBLE AND GRANITE, 29000 S. WIXOM ROAD, WIXOM, MI 48393:** The project entails a redevelopment of two parcels with construction of a 27,164 square foot office and showroom building; an 8,120 square foot workshop; two (2) new parking lots, redevelopment of two (2) existing buildings; and other site improvements. The property is zoned M-1, Light Industrial and is vacant. Light Industrial buildings including warehouses, showrooms, workshops and accessory office space, and are permitted uses in that district. The parcel number is 22-08-100-060.

Discussion:

Mr. Lewan explained that this was a request for a site plan extension. The original site plan approval goes back some time with the Planning Commission. Since the approval on October 5, 2020, the applicant had been working with CIB and HRC trying to address the conditions placed on the project. The minutes of October 5, 2020 were included in the packet and they listed 19 items to be addressed. Since that meeting, the City has received correspondence from CIB Planning indicating that all Planning Commission conditions on the approvals had been met. A review from Mike Darga of HRC indicated that the engineering items had been addressed; however, they have to request a pre-construction meeting. Their packets also included a copy of the site plan, various reviews, and a request from the applicant for a one-year extension. The Zoning Ordinance allows the applicant to ask for an extension of the site plan upon written application. They requested the extension on September 7, 2023, which meets the one-year expiration date. The Planning Commission may allow an extension of up to one year. That extension should be based on evidence from the applicant that development has a likelihood of commencing construction within the extension period. Mr. Lewan felt the applicant was ready to submit for building permits to begin this project. He did recommend approval of the site plan extension request for a period of one year.

Commissioner Cousineau confirmed that all of the outstanding items had been addressed. Mr. Lewan said that he has not personally checked those things but we have letters from CIB and HRC indicating that was the case.

Commissioner Helsom asked if the applicant was ready to submit building permits to begin this project and if they provided any type of estimated time that they would do so. Mr. Lewan said it was his understanding that they are ready to do that.

Fred Alvord, 10465 Citation Drive, Brighton, MI, stated that he worked with CIB and HRC and they got through the approval process. As they were approaching the deadline, there were multiple factors that came into play. They had a contractor on board that fell out last minute so they had to bring on a new contractor. The first thing the banking institution wanted was an estimate. They were ready to submit previously but he didn't think they would get in before the deadline. He thought they would be able to submit for permits by the end of this week.

Commissioner Cousineau asked Mr. Alvord if the outstanding items that were part of the original site plan had been addressed and he replied yes. Commissioner Cousineau commented that a one-year time period for a site plan has become very restrictive. The timing usually takes much longer than that to go from site plan approval to final engineering to construction. The process is very involved. He didn't think this was an unusual request and he supported it.

Chairman Day added that there was also a lack of available contractors. He supported this extension, as well.

MOTION: made and seconded by Commissioners Cousineau and Lada to approve the site plan extension for Leonardo's Marble and Granite, SPR 08-013-18 for a period of one year.

VOTE:**MOTION CARRIED****2.) SITE PLAN REVIEW SPR 22-007: 29180 S. WIXOM ROAD, WIXOM, MI 48393:**

The applicant is requesting site plan approval to develop a 16,199 square foot multi-tenant retail center with drive-through restaurant (29180 S. Wixom Road). The site contains 3.6 acres and is located on the east side of S. Wixom Road, north of Osman Drive (private road). The development is part of a two (2) parcel development with a separate parcel north of Osman Drive. The parcel number is 22-08-100-062.

Discussion:

Mr. Lewan stated that there were two different items on this agenda; they are almost mirror images of each other that are on either side of Osman Drive. We are looking at them separately because they are on separate parcels. This is a multi-use retail business in an area that is zoned B3 Business. This is a use permitted by right so this is an approval that has less discretion than we might see in other circumstances. If the applicant can meet the minimum standards, setbacks, parking, lighting, etc., the City is compelled to approve the project. He indicated that this report was reviewed twice, once in July and once in late September. There were no issues with the setbacks for the property. With regard to natural resources, we had previously asked the applicant to provide information on wetlands and flood plans and they did that. The driveways were actually closer to Wixom Road and we had them move them further to the east to provide a little more queuing that could leave the site without impacting those driveway locations. There was a review from HRC in the packet regarding to central facility and services. They met the standards for the parking and loading section. Additional parking is acceptable as planned, but the Planning Commission does have discretion in this case. If the applicant is proposing more than 20% of the required parking, the additional parking has to be approved by the Planning Commission. They are requesting approximately 22% more parking than was required. The applicant believes they need that extra parking based on peak use periods. With regard to site access and circulation, the City engineer has reviewed the site plan and the Road Commission for Oakland County has provided a preliminary review of the site plan. They are looking for additional information on easements for

Osman Drive to make sure this site continues to have access as well as the trucking facility to the east of the site. Mr. Lewan said that both CIB and his office believed there should be some pedestrian connection across Osman Drive. The applicant didn't believe that was necessary, but we would like to see some effort of cross-connection. He said we have no issues with the drive-through. They have the required number of stacking spaces, it is in the right location for a drive-through and they are meeting all of the drive-through requirements. The applicant did a nice job with the landscaping revision. If there are any utility locations on the ground, they should be screened in accordance with City standards. There were no issues with lighting and signage would be addressed separately. The floor plans and elevations meet the exterior design standards found in the City's Zoning Ordinance. Although there are a few issues to be addressed, he said we were recommending approval with the following four conditions:

- Additional parking to be found acceptable by the Planning Commission.
- The City Engineer, Road Commission and other outside agency approvals be granted prior to the start of construction.
- Additional pedestrian access be provided between the two development sites.
- If there are any utility, HVAC equipment, etc., that is not currently shown on the site plan and added later, it needs to be properly screened.

Mr. Lewan noted the memo from Daryl Hunt and Ken Pike, the City's plan reviewers and Building Officials, who raised some building code issues that will have to be verified at the time of the building permit application. There was also a letter from Fire Chief Geistler who provided a conditional approval for this project. He had some concern that the project on the south had not started yet and that the rear hydrants would not have proper water supply. That would have to be addressed prior to the start of construction. Mr. Lewan said one other issue was that the developer's traffic study indicates a traffic signal should be located at Osman Drive and Wixom Road. The Road Commission is saying that is not necessary. This is a preliminary review on the part of the Road Commission so as they provide their final review and as this moves toward a preconstruction meeting, we will have to have a final decision from the Road Commission. Mr. Lewan said he was not a traffic engineer, but he saw some need for having a traffic signal at this location, particularly for vehicles leaving the site. If there is no traffic signal there, it could cause difficulties for vehicles trying to make a left turn out of the site. That remains outstanding and it will have to be addressed before this project begins construction.

Chairman Day asked if the applicant wanted to pay for signalization. Mr. Lewan said it was their desire to put a signal there at their expense. In regard to the pedestrian connection, Chairman Day thought if the situation were that the project on the south were to be developed by the applicant now and the current applicant didn't have the site on the north and there was nothing on the north, we wouldn't be concerned about pedestrian connection. If a year later, a different applicant comes in and wants to build something on the north, he questioned what would be our basis for making the applicant on the north connect to the one on the south. Mr. Lewan said that as long as they were building what was approved, the approved site plan has the affect of the Zoning Ordinance. They would be required to do that. Chairman Day said if we

had two different applicants at two different times coming to us with site plans, he didn't know where we would have the basis to require a pedestrian connection between the two developments. He thought this situation was unique since we have the same applicant. Mr. Lewan agreed it was unique. This was an opportunity where we do have that situation so we can ask for it. It is a good thing to have pedestrian access. Even if it were separate owners, we would probably still try to ask for it, but we probably couldn't require it. Chairman Day said he was very much in favor of a pedestrian connection. He was questioning how we have the authority to require it. He also asked if the one detention pond would serve both properties. Mr. Benson replied yes. Through the engineering review, that single pond should be sufficient for both sites. Chairman Day asked if there was some sort of easement agreement that would have to be executed. Mr. Benson said that we would require that during the engineering review process.

Commissioner Lada commented that it was his understanding we weren't approving drive throughs. Chairman Day said that we weren't approving them in the GPUD, which was on the other side of Wixom Road. Commissioner Lada questioned the zoning of the property behind this property. Mr. Lewan replied that it was Industrial, M1. Commissioner Lada felt that would lead toward wanting some type of pedestrian crossing if there would be some kind of industrial use there.

Commissioner Tacy noted that the readout for 22-002 to be north of Osman Drive and the information calls that parcel of land south. She thought the writeups got flipped because the parcel ID numbers were out of whack. Mr. Benson clarified that the parcel that ends in 061 is to the north and the parcel that ends in 062 is to the south of Osman Drive.

Commissioner Lada wanted to make sure that we weren't talking about a sidewalk at the front of the property but rather a crossing near the buildings when we talked about the pedestrian crossing. Mr. Lewan replied yes and added that it would be closer to the buildings with curb cuts and markings to show it was a pedestrian crossing. Commissioner Lada asked if there was anything required behind the business to separate them from the M-1 area, like shrubbery. Mr. Lewan didn't think so as they met all of the landscaping requirements. Mr. Benson added that more often than not, it was screening on the industrial user that would need screening against a commercial user like this. The screening was not raised as a concern.

Commissioner Cousineau was concerned with respect to the traffic study and signalization on Wixom Road. He understood that the applicant's traffic engineer did recommend a signalization at this intersection and the Road Commission has said no. He understood since we would probably want to minimize the traffic signals along Wixom Road. He saw a couple of suggested solutions in lieu of a traffic signal, like restricting traffic movements and restricting left turn onto Wixom Road to certain times of day. He would like to know if we would have a signal or not. He noticed we have a 20-inch water main out of Wixom Road. They were proposing two hydrant connections off of that service to the buildings, but at the same time, they were connecting to a 12-inch water main at the rear of the buildings and extending that north and south. The hydrant feeds off of that, as well as service lines to the buildings

off of that 12-inch line. He also noticed the 12-inch was a dead-end stub. He wondered if anyone had taken a look at water pressures and flows and if it would accommodate hydrants and sprinkling of the buildings. Mr. Benson indicated there have been frequent conversations regarding extending water lines through newer developments like this. Stubbing was not uncommon, but it was not desirable. It was ultimately part of the larger plan of trying to build out the entire network. While not entirely ideal from a pressure or water quality standpoint, it was deemed acceptable for this point in terms of what this applicant can control and contribute toward their development and how it will feed into the larger system. The Fire Department didn't have a problem with it. The Fire Chief's approval was conditional. He noted that all of the details haven't been worked out.

Commissioner Cousineau commented that in looking at the south side of Osman Road, the rear portion calls for future development. The north side has the detention basin but the south side has an available area for future development. Also, he agreed with the other Commissioners' comments with respect to linking the two parcels together with a pedestrian access.

Chairman Day said he could understand why the applicant would want the signalization. They don't want people having a hard time getting out of their site because it will prevent people from going into their site. It appears to be the Road Commission's call.

Mr. Benson stated that we did have HRC and their traffic department review this. They did recommend conditional approval of the site plan subject to the RCOC approval. From the City's standpoint, he thought we should be in favor of the traffic signal; however, it is a County road and they have the jurisdiction. Chairman Day said he could understand why they wouldn't want to have too many lights, but if they are timed correctly, it shouldn't interrupt traffic flow.

Commissioner Helsom echoed the other Commissioners' opinions regarding the traffic study. Especially during high traffic hours and for the general welfare of everybody concerned, they have submitted for 20% more additional parking than currently required. It was an exciting piece and he was excited for it, but he felt we should make sure we get this right. He reminded the applicant that there would be two-way traffic on Osman Drive with trucks and he wondered why the applicant wouldn't want to have a pedestrian crossing.

Chairman Day commented that this property was immediately next to where Leonardo was putting their showroom so it will generate more traffic.

Jeff Klatt, 2120 East Eleven Mile, said he was here with the project team, as well as the owners, Mary and Setrak Janjanian. He thanked Mr. Lewan for his excellent report. He wanted to address some of the comments that were mentioned. He said they were open to a pedestrian connection and they could add that. They would work with City staff to make sure it was located in the proper direction. In regards to the extra parking, they don't know the tenant use yet but they were planning for the

highest use. They wanted to make sure they didn't have a parking shortage. He said that they would screen any of the utilities.

Chairman Day asked if there could be four restaurants total, two at each site. Mr. Klatt said they were not 100% sure yet.

Commissioner Cousineau asked if they had any tenants yet. Mr. Klatt replied no.

Jill Bauer, 49500 Mackenzie Avenue, Novi, MI, said that with their traffic study, they found during the afternoon peak hour, there were issues with people being able to turn left. The gaps just aren't there on Wixom Road. The Road Commission's opinion was that Wixom Road traffic was moving just fine. People were able to get onto the site just fine. Their preliminary review was to keep the traffic moving on Wixom Road. She said they could go back to have further conversations with them about getting the traffic off-site and not creating an unsafe situation where there were vehicles getting into the left turn lane. She noted that I-96 has been under construction so they were not able to gather any new traffic data. A lot of the data was older and pre-Covid. One of the things they could look at was once they are in the construction phase and I-96 was back to normal was doing some actual traffic counts to review again. Maybe traffic patterns were changing and not meeting the warrant. She said that right now with the information they have with restaurant and retail traffic, they were forecasting a traffic signal to be warranted there.

Chairman Day said that it appears the I-96 construction would be going on for another year. It was also very likely that both the westbound exit and entrance would end up being closed during the next construction season.

Commissioner Cousineau confirmed Ms. Bauer was using pre-Covid traffic counts. She said that there was a development proposed and under construction on the west side of Wixom Road. Our traffic engineer provided some information that they used on that site. It included considerations for Covid and pre-construction on I-96. Commissioner Cousineau asked if they made any adjustments to come to the current counts when they used the pre-Covid data. Ms. Bauer said that they did make adjustments for growth in the area. He then asked about the level of service at that intersection with and without a traffic signal. She said Wixom Road was operating at a level of service A with and without the signal. In the morning, the eastbound approach was a level of service D and left turns were a level of service E. The mornings might make more sense to have that signal flashing and that would be dependent on the kind of restaurant uses. During the pm peak hour, it was a level of service F for the left turns. There were over 200 minutes of delay. That was when people make unsafe decisions.

Commissioner Cousineau wanted to hear from the applicant regarding the tenants.

Setrak Janjanian, owner of the two properties, thought they would have two restaurants on each property but they weren't sure. Some people want stores there, but they weren't ready. He said he didn't know how long the process would take. He

didn't have any tenants lined up yet. Construction was taking a long time and there were a lot of other issues. He said it was tough to get loans from the bank.

Commissioner Cousineau asked about the timing of the construction. He asked if they intended to build both at the same time. Mr. Janjanian said it was cheaper to do them both at the same time than one at a time. Commissioner Cousineau asked if he had an issue with respect to the pedestrian crossing connecting the two sites and Mr. Janjanian said he had to problem with that.

Commissioner Tacy commended Mr. Janjanian on the beautiful development. She liked the amount of brick they were using and she thought it was a very classy set of buildings.

Chairman Day was very pleased with the detail in the plans and the amount of color renderings to show what this will look like. He then asked if any of the Planning Commissioners had issues with the additional parking and no one had a problem with it.

MOTION: made and seconded by Commissioners Cousineau and Lada to approve SPR 22-007, 29180 S. Wixom Road, the north parcel, subject to the following four conditions:

- Additional parking is acceptable as planned.
- The City Engineer, Road Commission of Oakland County and other outside agency approvals.
- Construction of additional pedestrian connections between the two development sites.
- Provide utility locations and screening, or they will be subject to review by City staff prior to building occupancy.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

3.) SITE PLAN REVIEW SPR 22-008: 29290 S. WIXOM ROAD, WIXOM, MI 48393:

The applicant is requesting site plan approval to develop a 16,199 square foot multi-tenant retail center with drive-through restaurant (29290 S. Wixom Road). The site contains 3.6 acres and is located on the east side of S. Wixom Road, south of Osman Drive (private road). The development is part of a two (2) parcel development with a separate parcel south of Osman Drive. The parcel number is 22-08-100-061.

Discussion:

Mr. Lewan commented that there were no differences with this site plan compared to the last one just discussed.

MOTION: made and seconded by Commissioners Cousineau and Lada to approve SPR 22-008, 29290 S. Wixom Road, the south parcel, subject to the following four conditions:

- Additional parking is acceptable as planned.
- The City Engineer, Road Commission of Oakland County and other outside agency approvals.
- Construction of additional pedestrian connections between the two development sites.
- Provide utility locations and screening, or they will be subject to review by City staff prior to building occupancy.

VOTE:**MOTION CARRIED**

Commissioner Cousineau commented that we discussed the traffic study, the signal or no signal, and he thought the Planning Commission should hear what the final decision was.

Chairman Day wanted it known that the Planning Commission feels serious consideration should be given to the signalization at that intersection. Mr. Benson confirmed that the minutes of this meeting would be included with the applicant's future submissions to the RCOC. We have been a part of those conversations as well, so we can move that consideration forward and advocate for that.

Commissioner Lada felt that area of Wixom Road was getting nickel and dimed as far as additional traffic. The west side keeps adding just a little bit, but not enough. And the same for the east side. At some point, something will be triggered where there is an extra southbound lane or something like that. Mr. Benson thought that with the Wixom Assembly Park, this new development, the I-96 project and the work they are doing on Grand River, there would be a normalization where we will be able to observe conditions. It will take a little bit of time, but he believed some of these considerations will go from being hypothetical to being a reality. He said he meets with the Road Commission on a regular basis to keep them abreast of the developments that we are seeing, but also the traffic concerns that we have. We have conditions with the Wixom Assembly Park where they have to make certain improvements if they meet certain thresholds. He said they weren't anxious to make those improvements but we have made it clear to them that we have the ability and right under the development agreement to conduct our own reviews (traffic counts, traffic studies). We do have some enforcement-ability on that. There will be some remediation and this was not an issue that would go away overnight or even in the next few years.

Chairman Day said that if the signal isn't put in now and in two or three years it is determined that a signal is necessary, that will fall to the taxpayers. Mr. Benson wasn't sure about that. There may be ways to work around that.

Commissioner Tacy asked when it hits critical mass and they finally decide a traffic signal is warranted there, what type of a length of time are we looking at to see that come to fruition. She wondered if they could fast-track it. Mr. Benson thought that was a good question. A lot of these things become a critical mass of discussion when we can demonstrate certain needs to the Road Commission (for any type of

City project). Given the development timeline that was in place here, he thought there would be many opportunities to reinforce that point before the project breaks ground.

Commissioner Cousineau said it was a real process unless the applicant wants to write a check. It is different if the Road Commission has to fund the project. They look at accidents and fatalities.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: (None)

STAFF COMMENTS:

Mr. Benson said that he took the revised RFQ for the Renton redevelopment to City Council on October 10, 2023 and they granted authorization to City management to move forward. We are planning a larger marketing effort and publicity behind the development opportunity that the City will be putting out there soon. He thought there was still work to be done in terms of having a cohesive vision between the Planning Commission, DDA and City Council on what the outcome will be. There are a wide range of opinions and a lot of people involved. He anticipated additional legwork ahead of time to convene a proposal review committee or build a structure around how those proposals will be reviewed and moved forward in a timely way.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Lada thanked the four young adults who were in attendance at this meeting. He said he was absent when the Planning Commission talked about the property downtown. He wanted to go on record for saying we are missing the ball if we do not put a family public restroom [there at the Renton Redevelopment Area](#). It is necessary for any town that wants a vibrant downtown to have a restroom available for people who are not going to a specific restaurant but to be participants downtown. He also thanked the City for sponsoring the Commissioners who attended the Planning Commission Conference in Traverse City. He felt it was insightful.

Chairman Day also thanked the City for the opportunity to attend that Conference. He found it very helpful. He attended a session on Friday morning by Saginaw Township about how they maintain a vibrant and healthy community by having bi-monthly meetings of Fire, Police and Code Enforcement in order to prevent blight. Sometimes the Code Enforcement Officer wouldn't know what was going on from a Police perspective, the Police Officer wouldn't know what he could do from a Code Enforcement perspective. He thought that was an excellent suggestion. The other thing he thought was interesting was a session on battery storage of electricity and what a good value that was in terms of being able to put it in out of the way places. There is a high tax value for the amount of real estate taken up and he thought this was something the City should be open to. They want it to be within three miles of the nearest sub-station but that will change over time.

Commissioner Helsom echoed his fellow Commissioners' comments regarding the Planning Commission Conference. He felt he learned a lot and it was nice to see other people in a similar boat. He thought we needed to start talking about new and exciting ideas and what type of infrastructure we could be bringing to our City. Other towns

are looking into charging network stations and this might be an idea we can discuss with the DDA. In regard to the Renton project, he said we want to make sure we all have one vision and that we get it right.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Catherine Buck
City Clerk