

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024**

**APPROVED
MAY 8, 2024**

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Day of the Planning Commission at 7:02 p.m. at which time allegiance was pledged to the American flag.

PRESENT: William Day (Chairman), Cheryl Tacy (Vice Chairperson), Commissioners: Ray Cousineau, Mark Lada, Anthony Lawrence

ABSENT: Excused: Sandro Grossi; Mark Helsom

OTHERS: Matteo Passalaqua (Carlisle Wortman Associates), Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager; and Mona Freiburger (Recording Secretary)

Determination of a Quorum:

A quorum of the Planning Commission was present for this meeting.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION made and seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and Commissioner Lada to approve the March 18, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, as submitted.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Call to the Public: (Limited to 5 minutes per speakers, addressing Agenda items on Agenda only)

No public comments.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. **PUBLIC HEARING FOR SPECIAL LAND USE – SLU 24-001: 46921 ENTERPRISE COURT, WIXOM, MI. 48393:** The applicant is seeking Special Land Use approval pursuant to Section 18.09.020, Schedule of Uses, to allow an instructional volleyball center as a commercial recreation use in an existing facility located at 46921 Enterprise Court. The property is zoned M-1 – Light Industrial and the parcel identification number is 22-09-302-003.

Discussion:

The applicant is requesting special land use approval for a commercial recreation use to occupy an existing facility located at 46921 Enterprise Court in the former Pak Rite location. The applicant notes they plan to relocate from their current location in Novi and utilize this location as an instructional volleyball center. The applicant is proposing six (6) volleyball courts for the open floor area and retaining the current office and restroom facilities. No exterior modifications are proposed. Parcel ID: 22-09-302-003.

The business would operate from 4:00 PM – 10:00 PM on weeknights and from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM on weekends. We note that being a location with predominantly day time light industrial traffic, applicant traffic will likely be experienced during off hours from neighboring businesses. The applicant states that one (1) to eight (8) staff members will be onsite during operating hours. The site currently has seventy-six (76) parking spaces. Current plans are to utilize the main entrance circle drive to accommodate drop-off/pick-up traffic.

Recommendation: Carlisle Wortman Associates

Based upon the information provided by the applicant and the comments of our analysis, Carlisle Wortman Associates recommends approval of the special land use request for 46921 Enterprise Court – Commercial Recreation – with the following conditions:

1. The applicant provides a statement clarifying if the space will be used for training only or will host events, as well;

2. The applicant provides peak parking requirements for employees and patrons for all types of operations for the site (training and/or events);
3. The applicant provides a statement regarding whether refreshments beyond vending machines will be offered onsite;
4. Improvements and modifications as determined by the Building and Fire Departments;
5. Review and approval of other departments, consultants, and agencies.

Mr. Passalaqua reviewed the applicant's information and application for Special Land use of commercial in an M-1 district which is light industrial to the Commission.

Mr. Passalaqua stated their review does not note any major issues with the proposed use. Carlisle Wortman Associates indicated they were looking for more information and clarity on whether the site would be strictly for training purposes or whether it would host events, which would have a parking implication. The applicant has stated there is more than enough parking for their proposed use. The applicant would need to provide more information regarding whether refreshments beyond vending machines would be offered onsite.

Commissioner Lada wanted to clarify on the refreshments, that's only if they are selling the food; the participants who bring in their own food to feed the team would not have to go through any inspections. Mr. Passalaqua stated that was correct.

Mr. Brian Lidstrom, 1255 Lake Jason Drive, White Lake, MI. Currently, the applicant has two buildings; one in Novi and one in Sterling Heights. To address the parking issues, they would be moving into a building where there are 35 more parking spaces than they, currently, have at the Novi facility. They run a youth league through their own club. This facility would have six courts, as opposed to four at their Novi facility; probably an additional 20 members. The applicant will not be selling food. There are two Gatorade vending machines which will be transferred.

Mr. Lidstrom gave some background information. They started in 2006 running from Walled Lake Community Schools. They were able to expand to their building in Novi and one in Rochester and moved. Their lease is up in Novi, and they found a great location; the cul-de-sac is perfect for them especially for the drop off with the parents. At any given time, there are approximately 50 athletes from 8 years old to 18 years old. The older athletes tend to drive themselves to practices; the parents drop off their kids

and run errands. The applicant will keep the same hours of operation from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., and the game plan is to continue these hours.

Chairman Day inquired to the applicant if they were planning on hosting any massive events. Mr. Lidstrom stated there will not host tournaments from other clubs coming into their building; everything they do is in-house. Sunday nights, they have a men's and women's recreation league, with a total of 40 people. They have been a training facility only with private lessons. Their goal is not to run any type of events with outside teams coming in from other States or other locations to come play in a tournament.

Chairman Day commented the space seemed like a good use, and the hours of operation are perfect.

No public comments.

MOTION made and seconded by Commissioner Lada and Commissioner Lawrence to approve **SPECIAL LAND USE – SLU 24-001: 46921 ENTERPRISE COURT, WIXOM, MI. 48393:** to allow an instructional volleyball center as a commercial recreation use in an existing facility located at 46921 Enterprise Court. The property is zoned M-1 – Light Industrial and the parcel identification number is 22-09-302-003; with the following conditions:

1. Improvements and modifications as determined by the Building and Fire Departments; and
2. Review and approval of other departments, consultants, and agencies, as required.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Motion passes.

All in favor.

2. **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW DISCUSSION: 3015 W. MAPLE ROAD, WIXOM, MI. 48393:** The applicant is seeking feedback prior to a formal application for a single-family residential site condominium development at 3015 W. Maple. The property is zoned Village Center Area – Low-Intensity, VCA-LI. The parcel identification number is 17-32-176-017.

Discussion:

Assistant City Manager Benson introduced the topic, noting that 3015 W. Maple is a 13.5-acre parcel zoned VCA-Low Intensity that is currently used as a residential home, with a history as a horse farm. This property sits on the opposite side of the ITC lines from the Cambridge Lane Site Condos, as well as the Milana Estates Site Condominiums. Both projects are single family residential.

Over the years, the City has received multiple inquiries from interested developers with a variety of housing options, most recently with Shafer Development in 2022 for a single-story attached housing project prior to the mass-rezoning and ordinance updates within the Village Center Area zoning district that more directly clarified the City's intentions for the outer areas of the VCA district, including rezoning this property from VCA to VCA-Low Intensity (VCA-LI).

In recent months, the property has gone under contract with a different development group, and they are now proposing a single-family site condominium project, similar to the neighborhoods to the west. Attached to this report is a letter requesting a conceptual review with the Planning Commission along with concept site plans and proposed elevations.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented this is the first potential proposal for this piece of property since the change in zoning and the clarifications of the intent of various aspects of the VCA zoning district.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he would defer to the applicants to better introduce their concept. He stated the main notes, they did not see anything necessarily with the site itself that was overly concerning but in past conversations about architectural features, the Commission may have some questions about the garages.

Mr. Mike Noles, Umlor Group, representing Pulte Homes of Michigan for the Cavallaro property. Mr. Noles indicated he would review additional photographs from what is already included in tonight's packet.

Mr. Noles stated the site is in the VCA, Low Intensity zoning district area. The applicant is proposing 43 units on 55' x 100' foot lots; 5,500 square foot lots. It is a 13.5-acre property. The features of the property are 20% open space which would create walkability that the Commission is trying to create in the VCA district. The applicant has added the stub street to the future connection to Gunnar Mettala Park, which would help improve circulation, pedestrian connectivity to the park. They will provide a street connection to Theodore Street through the ITC Corridor through an existing easement that permits a street connection. They are also proposing a sidewalk connection on both sides of the street to the Michigan Air Line Trail. Mr. Noles indicated he knew one of the big goals of

the VCA is to have a walkable, downtown community and they think they are achieving this goal through this plan.

Mr. Noles commented he appreciated the City of Wixom having the conceptual feedback sessions because there is only one component, they do not comply with the five-foot setback requirement between the garage and the front of the house. All the setbacks comply with the district requirements. Mr. Noles stated he would like to discuss and show the Commission the features and aspects of the existing homes in the VCA district. One of the ideas is having homes closer to the street with front porches to create the walkable community and saying hello to your neighbors in downtown Wixom. Mr. Noles indicated he would like to get the Commission's feedback on the proposed plan.

Mr. Noles presented actual photographs that Pulte has built in Michigan with the welcoming front porch and very modern look. The first home is the Continental. The Continental has four or five different elevations. The only issue is that the garage door is not setback five feet from the front of the house. The Waverly home has a welcoming front porch with a lot of classic details; but again, the front porch does stick out past the garage, but it is the required setback. The Newberry home is the one where the garage is past the front porch. This is the only house where the garage is past the front porch on all the models, but it does have a welcoming front porch. The Mercer home is a great looking home with lots of brick, architectural details, various types of siding, masonry, comforting front porch; but it doesn't have the required setback.

Mr. Noles included photographs of the homes existing in the VCA. He indicated the house is nice, and stepped forward ahead of the garage, although it doesn't really create the front porch sitting area. Mr. Noles stated he tried to get a mix of photographs of homes. He stated there was not a single house that they could find in there except for the one on the bottom left-hand corner where the garage was actually past the porch. In some cases, it looked like the porch was tacked on almost as an afterthought to meet the five-foot requirement. Although, Mr. Noles noted that the neighborhood does look fantastic where people were out walking and sitting on their porches.

Mr. Noles asked the Commission if the product that they saw tonight meets the intent of the VCA; is it something that they can live with or does the applicant need to go back to the drawing board that would achieve the offset for whatever purpose they may have?

Chairman Day commented the concept does not work for him. The fact that the garages are setback is what makes the neighbors see each other out on their porch. The porches look like they are hidden back behind the garage; it is not like you walk down the street and see people out on their porches in front of their house. Chairman Day also indicated the elevations do not work, and do not meet the intent of the ordinance of the intention of the Commission's vision for the VCA, as far as he was concerned.

Vice Chair Tacy commented she liked all the architectural features, but she agreed with Chairman Day regarding the garage forward. The intent was to avoid the look of the 90's where you would look down the street and see nothing but garages jetting out. Originally, they were looking at recreating the traditional neighborhood, having detached garages in alleys behind the houses. Vice Chair Tacy stated she was thrilled with the renderings in terms of what the applicant has to offer; don't lose the shutters, don't lose gables, but push the garages back.

Vice Chair Tacy asked the applicant, why no single floor ranches? Single floor ranches are needed in Wixom. Mr. Noles stated it all comes down to market demographics; families need more space. The single floor ranch is usually an empty nester product. They don't think that is their target at this location. Vice Chair Tacy commented there are a lot of families, who are empty nesters, and getting ready to make that next move into a one floor home. There are not enough of one-story homes in Wixom that meets this requirement. Vice Chair Tacy stated in terms of Pulte, she has been to the Bluffs at Spring Hill in Brighton and Turtle Creek, those products are top notch.

Commissioner Lawrence commented this concept is a great improvement over the previous proposal that came in front of the Commission about a year ago. He also supported Chairman Day's and Vice Chair Tacy's comments on the garage setback issue. Commissioner Lawrence stated the condos he resides in vary in sizes with one and two stories, and all have a first-floor master which makes them extremely attractive for the reasons stated by Vice Chair Tacy.

Commissioner Lawrence indicated he voiced this complaint the last time, he has a real problem with Theodore not going through. Mr. Noles stated it is proposed, not contemplated, poor choice of words. Commissioner Lawrence stated Theodore would give another way to go in and out of the subdivision. Mr. Noles stated that he agreed with Commissioner Lawrence. It makes great connectivity, great cross traffic, and great safety. It is a proposed connection.

Assistant City Manager Benson noted, the additional things were something that staff suggested as well on the Gunnar Mettala side. The connection to the park, itself, would be something that the City would have to handle at some point in the future, it is not currently budgeted, but it is contemplated in the most recent parks and recreation master plan, as well.

Commissioner Cousineau stated this is a very preliminary plan and asked the applicant if they had done a wetland survey. The applicant stated they have a wetland survey. Commissioner Cousineau indicated the property is surrounded by a detention basin, he assumed it is upward, with an outlet to, certainly, drain. Mr. Noles answered, that's correct.

Commissioner Cousineau agreed with Commissioner Lawrence, he was happy the applicant is not doing the plan from last year. He inquired if the houses would have basements. Mr. Noles answered yes. Mr. Noles stated he saw the plan from last year and didn't like it either. It was easy for the chief engineer to improve on that plan, and they think they have done that. It is a sharp looking plan, but they need to go back and think about the architecture a bit more to meet the requirements.

Assistant City Manager Benson wanted to clarify, there are some models that are proposed that the garage is flushed with the front façade of the house and there are some also set forward. Chairman Day commented that flush with the front façade doesn't work for him either. Vice Chair Tacy indicated to follow the ordinance.

Mr. Noles commented they understand the direction, they will take it back and make modifications to make this plan work. Mr. Noles stated they have met all the size requirements within the VCA district, setbacks, minimum lot size, and there are no deviations from the other requirements except this architectural issue.

Commissioner Cousineau asked the applicant regarding the price point of the homes. Mr. Joe Skore, Pulte Homes of Michigan, stated it is a little preliminary, but they expect the base prices to start in the \$400,000's, and then deliver with options, upgrades, premiums in the \$500,000's.

Call to the Public:

No public comments.

Staff Comments:

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the Commissioners noted some concerns about signage, specifically, downtown. Based on the past comments, Assistant City Manager Benson stated it would be worth a conversation to see if there are any edits that are worthwhile or some clarifications that we can do. Due to two Commissioners being absent tonight, and scheduling issues, it was agreed to schedule the signage discussion for the Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, May 8, 2024.

Commission Comments:

Chairman Day stated it would be his personal preference to have all VCA signage come before the Planning Commission. He feels whoever is approving these signs does not understand the spirit of Commission. Chairman Day gave a few examples of approved signage which did not meet the intent of the Commission and, the ordinance, specifically, bans. He indicated a lot of time and effort by the Commission was made when discussing guidelines for the VCA. Vice Chair Tacy echoed the same comments. She commented

on lighting which was approved and should not have been because the verbiage is clear and straightforward as far as what you can and can't have.

Vice Chair Tacy inquired if the Dough business sign is their final sign with the mounting boards that stick out on either side. Mr. Passalacqua stated yes, the sign has been approved; the mounting boards were not in the application, at least not visualized in the application that they reviewed and approved. A conversation should be had with the owner about the mounting boards. Assistant City Manager Benson stated they are aware of the mounting boards and have a code enforcement open on this.

Vice Chair Tacy agreed that she would rather have all signage come before the Planning Commission for approval to keep in character with a traditional downtown.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated he would like to discuss the language in the ordinance that they can hold people to, in terms of a regulatory perspective. They recognize the conflicts and inconsistency of application over the years. Vice Chair Tacy asked if it was possible to pull together verbiage from other communities that have a good, solid signage ordinances, in terms of what the Commission is looking for, to help guide them. Chairman Day stated he would also like to have the sign ordinance for the VCA sent to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Cousineau inquired about the Beck Road railroad track crossing, if there were any plans for improvement especially on the northbound lane. Assistant City Manager Benson stated he did not know of any specific upgrades, but, obviously, they can do things on the roadway portions. The City does have some contact with the Lake State Railway, which is certainly a conversation they can have with them. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated there is some interest at the State level in putting money together for grade separation improvements; although, they do not actually have any money into a pot, but it is something they have been advocating. Assistant City Manager Benson stated he was not making any promises there.

Commissioner Lawrence inquired about the widening of Grand River, if they were planning on making two left turn lanes onto Wixom Road such as Beck and Grand River Roads. Assistant City Manager Benson stated he could not confirm whether that was part of the final plan or not, although he could inquire. Commissioner Lawrence stated the Meijer property, ingress, and egress, is a nightmare and it is gridlock on Grand River in the middle of the day.

Commissioner Lada inquired if there is any movement on the closed Rite-Aid and Family Video area strip mall. Assistant City Manager Benson stated there are no formal submissions, but yes, there have been some conversations, specifically, for the former Rite-Aid space.

Commissioner Lada commented it was noticed going west on Maple Road, where it curves and turns to dirt, that the Wixom DPW installed some posts along the curve and the residents in the area appreciate it.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented they have been hearing less about the empty CVS space.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he had one other announcement. The City does have a proposal for a liquor license to be transferred into the City for a new restaurant that will be going into the Urban Gyro space. They anticipate City Council will consider that liquor license application. The restaurant will be sub-leasing to a different restaurant. It will be a sit-down concept and bringing in their own liquor license.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary