



MASTER PLAN & ZONING COMMITTEE
City of Novi Planning Commission
April 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
Novi Civic Center – Conference Room C
45175 W. Ten Mile, Novi, MI 48375
(248) 347-0475

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Victor Cassis, Andy Gutman, Michael Lynch and Michael Meyer

Staff Support: Barbara McBeth, Deputy Director of Community Development; Mark Spencer, Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Member Cassis, seconded by Member Meyer:

VOICE VOTE ON AGENDA APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER CASSIS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER MEYER:

A motion to approve the April 2, 2009 Agenda. Motion carried 4-0.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

No one in the audience wished to speak. Mr. Spencer asked that this Agenda item remain open in the event that a particular business owner arrived at the meeting.

Later in the meeting:

- David Jankowski, owner of the property known as the Wisne or Pico property. He said that his current tenants are probably going to move out. He said this is not a good area for Industrial. He thought that a nice Class A apartment complex would be better for the site and for the City. He said that his next step is to perform a feasibility study. The Applicant was informed that a Residential zoning would require greater setbacks. Deputy Director Barbara McBeth said that because the site narrows in the south, that perhaps only the northerly two-thirds of the site is developable. With the setbacks, there would only be a narrow range on which to place Multiple Family Residential. The current industrial building extends almost the entire width of the site. The Committee suggested that the owner consider something else for the site, such as a self-storage facility. The owner responded that he was fairly certain that he wanted to pursue a Residential zoning for the site.

Mr. Spencer confirmed with Mr. Jankowski that he would consider special construction techniques that would compensate for the railroad proximity. Mr. Spencer said that the railroad company will encourage setbacks as much as one hundred feet in case there is an environmentally-sensitive spill on the tracks. This site ranges from 200 to 390 feet wide. Multiple Residential zoning setbacks would be 75 feet in the front and in the back.

Ms. McBeth told Mr. Jankowski that at the last meeting the Committee agreed that there should be a combination of Industrial and Office uses in the Study Area, with some retail along the Ten Mile frontage. The Light Industrial zoning is an accommodating district, which allows light industrial, manufacturing, general and medical office buildings. The Committee was inclined to leave Mr. Jankowski's property designated for Light Industrial uses. Mr. Jankowski confirmed that he could always come back for further discussion. Ms. McBeth said that a request for Residential would be inconsistent with the Master Plan and zoning, so he would have to come back in front of this Committee to further discuss his intentions. This could be done perhaps after Mr. Jankowski performs a feasibility study or designs a layout for the site. She said that the convenience to the railroad site lends credibility to the Committee's desire to maintain the Industrial designation on the site.

Mr. Spencer informed Mr. Jankowski that RM-1 offered a density of about seven dwellings per acre. RM-2 is higher. Ms. McBeth said there are RM-2 density calculations that are derived by counting the bedrooms. She told the property owner that there are Ordinance standards that require the buildings to be staggered in their design. Mr. Spencer noted that the neighboring apartments were built at 7.9 dwelling units per acre.

Mr. Jankowski thanked the Committee for its time.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Master Plan for Land Use Review

A. General Information

Planner Mark Spencer briefly described the various reviews that he prepared for the Committee's consideration.

1) *Retail Vacancy Rate Review*

Mr. Spencer said that many of the centers provided their vacancy numbers to the City, and a windshield survey was performed on those that did not. The City's data comes from February 2009; the Southeast Michigan data comes from the end of the second quarter 2008. The national data is from the end of the year. Generally, vacancy rates have increased and sales have been slower.

Local and community retail centers serve the Novi residents. Regional serving malls, lifestyle and power centers draw from the regional area.

Novi's local and community retail is running at a 10.9% vacancy rate, which is lower than southeast Michigan but slightly higher than the national level. Considering just the local-serving centers, the vacancy rate is about 18%. The Novi regional center vacancy rate is 9.3%, which is considerably worse than the southeast Michigan percentage of 3.9%. By removing Novi's two large centers with very high vacancy rates (Novi Town Center and Twelve Mile Crossing at Fountainwalk), then Novi's performance is in pretty good shape. The national regional statistic, with some adjustment to the category (Power centers comprise about 15-20% of the regional category) and averaging of the numbers, is probably about 4.5-5%. Stand-alone stores were not part of this survey, but nationally this number runs between the national power center and community retail numbers.

Mr. Spencer said that based on the City's low-end population forecast, the City has enough land to add 308,000 square feet of retail more than demand. This will increase if the Special Planning Area 1 is added to the City's commercial land bank. Mr. Spencer said that if the City's full population forecast was reached, an additional 5,700 homes would be added, and the corresponding need for retail would be about 66 more acres.

The Committee discussed the looming vacancies at the regional centers in the City and thought that the timing was right to consider opportunities to assist the existing centers. Perhaps a DDA or a Corridor Improvement Area should be considered. Mr. Spencer said that for the purpose of the Master Plan update, the Committee may wish to add a goal such as, "Promoting Novi retail businesses."

The Committee discussed whether the Novi Town Center would have been better served to install a corner fountain and pedestrian nodes rather than the recent addition of all the outlet buildings.

The Committee discussed the destination nature of an outlet mall. They discussed the concept of "category killing," and Mr. Spencer cited Best Buy as an electronics category killer. They discussed the cannibalism that occurs when there is too much retail space available, and how Main Street was badly hurt when Fountainwalk was introduced.

The Committee determined that there is probably enough Novi land designated for retail at this time. Providing more land for retail isn't prudent.

The Committee may add an objective to the Master Plan that states the City will seek creative means for revitalizing older retail centers.

2) Industrial & Office Floor Space Demand Forecast

Planner Mark Spencer said that an update of the data in The Chesapeake Group's 2007 Market Assessment served as the basis for this review. This forecast suggests that another 92-188 more acres are required and the build-out number would be 291 acres. In adding these acres to the existing 1200 available acres, the City has between 19 and 48 years worth of land. This is based on the capturing of twenty percent of the growth in Oakland County. These numbers are based on the estimated population growth as provided by The Chesapeake Group and are broken down per year. The demand for this space is based on workforce growth. Novi can have a larger workforce growth by adding more dwelling units: bring in more people and create a larger workforce.

Mr. Spencer said that latest trends show that the millennium generation is looking first for a place to live; then they are looking for a place to work. They want to live in urban areas that provide amenities. There has to be a "sense of place." This age group is 20-35 and is also called the echo boomers. Mr. Spencer said that one place to consider for this demographic is the Town Center Area: provide housing so that people live there and support the area. The Gateway Ordinance is a method with which the City offers a location for this style of development.

The 2035 Mass Transit Plan ends at Haggerty Road. Mr. Spencer said that the SMART busses also stop at Haggerty Road. It is important to connect destinations if the transit is going to be viable.

Mr. Spencer asked whether the Committee would like to include in this Master Plan update language stating that it appears the City has adequate office space at this time.

The Committee discussed whether Office-zoned land near the expressway could also be considered for high-rise Residential. Mr. Spencer said that perhaps Form-Based Zoning should be considered – whatever the use is, the buildings will basically look and function the same. Then the market can decide which zoning is appropriate at the right time.

The Committee members spoke emphatically about how a community feel must be brought to the Town Center and Main Street areas in order to make them vibrant areas. Should residential be added to the area? Should mass transit be brought into the City of Novi? Walkable communities attract people – should Novi invest in this concept?

Mr. Spencer said that he would research further into the mass transit opportunity.

3) Housing for the Elderly Introduction

This Agenda item will be added to the next Agenda.

B. Sections 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23 & 24 Discuss need for additional studies or future land use changes

This Agenda item will be added to the next Agenda.

MINUTES

Moved by Member Lynch, seconded by Member Meyer:

VOICE VOTE ON MINUTES APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER MEYER:

Motion to approve the March 19, 2009 Master Plan and Zoning Committee Minutes. Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURN

Moved by Member Meyer, seconded by Member Cassis:

Motion to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at or about 9:00 PM.

FUTURE MEETINGS

April 16, 2009

May 7, 2009

May 21, 2009

June 4, 2009

June 18, 2009

Transcribed by Jane L. Schimpf
Customer Service Representative

April 27, 2009

Date approved: