



MASTER PLANNING & ZONING
City of Novi Planning Commission
September 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
Novi Civic Center – Mayor’s Conference Room
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

Absent: Michael Meyer

Alternate: David Greco

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS AMENDED

Moved by Member Cassis, seconded by Member Lynch – **Motion passed 3-0**

**VOICE VOTE ON AMENDED AGENDA APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER CASSIS AND
SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH**

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

Planner Spencer stated that staff received a letter from Olde Towne Office Village (Mr. Heyn) could not be here tonight. Planner Spencer reviewed the letter. Mr. Heyn request is that he would like to see OSC zoning for his properties and some of the properties nearby. He believes the OSC zoning matches very well with his property and Mr. Heyn has submitted to staff that OSC zoning has a greater flexibility with a larger basket of uses in order to plan a smarter and more creative development. Planner Spencer stated that Mr. Heyn’s Olde Town development is located south of Grand River east of Aladdin Heating & Cooling in the Grand River and Beck Road study area. The Planning Commission approved a site plan for three office buildings on the site.

Member Cassis asked about the suggestion of a ring road being done. Planner Spencer answered yes that Mr. Heyn does show a ring road on the western edge of his property. Mr. Spencer stated that his proposed ring road would change the dynamics on the opposite side of Grand River it also pushes it away from the intersection and that is something we would like our traffic consultants to look at. Mr. Spencer also said the way Mr. Heyn has it drawn is that it keeps the eastern lots [in the Study Area] close to I-96 from being accessed by the service road. That is one of the reasons Birchler Arroyo drew the proposed road where they did.

Planner Spencer stated that staff had proposed a retail service drive configuration, an access point at the end of the Ward property. Planner Spencer also said that one of the things when we look at the Birchler Arroyo original idea of where to put the collector road with the wetland complex that is in place on the Heyn property it would be very difficult to put the road there you would have to bend way into his property.

Mr. Cassis asked how that would affect Mr. Blair Bowman’s proposal for the retail service station. Mr. Bowman stated that he had talked to Mr. Heyn about the issue. Mr. Bowman has a couple of thoughts about the collector road one being would they be able to get a signal that close to Grand River and Beck Road? The other concern is on the south side of road that retail collector road that goes around the Ward property he thinks that from a development standpoint it will be a burden on the development. Planner Spencer stated that the proposal is not for a road on this property but driveways. Mr. Spencer said the idea is not to have a road there. Mr. Spencer also stated the ring road is proposed further south.

No one in the audience wished to speak at this time.

Staff Report

Planner Spencer stated no staff report today.

Matters for Discussion

Item 1

Master Plan for Land Use Review

a) Grand River Avenue and Beck Road Study Area

Agenda modified to discuss property owner input. Planner Spencer started the discussion stating that planning staff sent out a letter to eleven property owners and managers in the Grand River Avenue and Beck Road study area inviting them to meet with the Planning staff to discuss potential future land uses. Eight of the eleven property owners and managers responded. Staff met with two property owners and had phone conversations with three other property owners. Staff received positive feedback regarding the process and also regarding some of the material presented to the Master Plan & Zoning Committee. Planner Spencer indicated he listed specific comments that we received from the property owners [in packet] most of the conversations were questions and answers about different issues.

Planner Spencer stated some of the comments from the property owners are they would like to see a sit down restaurant along Beck Road north of the bank, no gas station along Beck Road. They would like anything that would enhance the area. Agrees with adding a mid rise residential overlay, would like to see some mixed uses with office and retail along Grand River. Additional basket of uses would be good. OSC could work along Grand River. Uses need to compliment the Rock Financial Showplace. Provide for expansion of Rock Financial Showplace. Do not go back to straight office, OST much better. They would like the city of Novi to make the area more marketable. Manufacturing with office is ok and medical is acceptable. Mr. Spencer also indicated that they informed the property owners and managers of the committee meetings and that there will be an open house and some public hearings in the future.

Chairman Gutman asked for any comments before moving on.

Mr. John Stalmack [in the audience from Wixom Ready Mix] had a comment. He stated he comes out on the road by the proposed car wash. There are a lot of heavy trucks that travel that road which is a class A all weather route. The roadway must be able to carry those trucks also the safety of the street side is an issue. If there are two entrances and exits to the properties on Beck it would make sense, otherwise it is very crowded and dangerous at Beck Road now.

b) Potential Office and Light Industrial Changes

Removed from the agenda.

c) Open House Alternatives and Displays

Removed from the agenda.

d) Potential Regional Rapid Transit Objectives and Strategies

Planner Spencer discussed the potential of rapid transit in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Mr. Spencer indicated that rapid transit is one of the amenities that the 21st century workforce is looking for when they decide to locate to a new community. At this time Detroit is the largest metropolitan area without a high capacity rapid transit system either in place or in development. Planner Spencer said there are a few rapid transit projects that are in various stages of planning throughout the region. Mr. Spencer indicated that some of these plans do bring high speed transit to the edge of the city but not into the city. The planning staff felt if we could be part of a high speed rapid transit system in the Detroit Metropolitan area we could possibly be a hub for that system, it could help stimulate increased economic development in the city. Staff thinks that by including language in the city's master plan that encourages the placement of regional rapid transit hub in the City that this could be a starting point for the city to development plans within the region, or to promote the idea that we want to be

connected to the system and be a major destination for the system. Planner Spencer suggested some language for that purpose. Mr. Spencer proposes that the committee place it under the current master plans economic and fiscal goal that will ensure that the City of Novi will continue to be a desirable place to do business.

Chairman Gutman asked why Novi would not be part of the system. Planner Spencer said for different reasons he stated people look for different routes for places to go. Chairman Gutman stated he thought Novi would be a logical place for the system being that we are between Detroit and Ann Arbor. Chairman Gutman asked Planner Spencer if there would be any disadvantages to having the system. Planner Spencer stated the disadvantage that could come up as far as being connected to the rapid transit system would be that you would need a mass transit infrastructure network to support the system. You would need either parking facilities, dense residential or office development to have ridership. Mr. Spencer also said you may need right of way for the system and possibility have feeder transit systems supplying it [with passengers].

Mr. Blair Bowman questioned why they aren't looking at the existing right of way infrastructure that is currently there. He said he realizes that they are used, but they aren't used as heavily as you might think and it does offer an opportunity to overcome some of the critical road blocks that you would think of when you have to construct a new mass transit system. Mr. Bowman asked if anyone has looked at using the existing rail system.

Planner Spencer indicated that there has been talk about using the existing rail facilities including the use of the CSX tracks in Novi. The Detroit Metropolitan Airport commuter train would be using the existing tracks. Mr. Spencer also stated that they are looking at new tracks for the Woodward Light Rail and the M1Concept Light Rail.

Chairman Gutman asked if anyone on City Council is looking at this issue. Planner Spencer indicated that the Walkable Novi Committee has some interest in this idea. Mr. Spencer also stated that growing communities in the country do have rapid transit and have pedestrian communities located along the transit system.

Chairman Gutman asked Planner Spencer what is Oakland County's position on rapid transit. Mr. Spencer and Barb McBeth stated that they have not received any feedback on rapid transit from Oakland County.

Chairman Gutman stated to Planner Spencer that the language he has proposed is a very good starting point for the committee. The committee agreed.

Member Cassis suggests that when the committee drafts this proposal and presents it to the City Council and say to the council that we need this type of rapid transit system. Chairman Gutman's point is that the committee will be left out, his suggestion is to have someone on council representing these ideas and proposals.

e) Potential Housing Goals, Objectives and implementation Strategies

Planner Spencer stated that staff and the Master Plan & Zoning Committee have expressed an interest in including goals and objections and implementation strategies [in the Master plan] that will strengthen the city's commitment toward existing residential neighborhoods and that promote increased housing opportunities for families, first time homebuyers and the elderly. Planner Spencer indicated that he developed a proposed set of goals and objections and implementation strategies. Mr. Spencer stated that in the current master plan there are already some strategies and objectives in place for housing.

Planner Spencer reviewed his proposal. First is including a goal to create, preserve and enhance quality residential areas in the city. Mr. Spencer said it's an overall general statement that residents want quality housing.

Member Lynch asked Planner Spencer if the statement could include value. Planner Spencer stated that you have to be careful how you go about wording to protect value because if you are looking at trying to provide housing to a broad spectrum of type of housing you have to be careful not to run contrary to providing certain segments of housing.

Member Lynch stated that he disagrees with that statement. He understands what Mr. Spencer is talking about, but he stated that we need to be careful in taking the high value property and turn it into low property value. Mr. Lynch asked if the things we are doing, if they are improving the value of the commercial and residential properties.

Planner Spencer indicated that the Master Plan & Zoning ordinances are in place to protect the value of the community and provide the right planning decisions to better the community.

Ms. McBeth stated that staff can add something in the statement regarding property values. Chairman Gutman stated he wasn't talking about adding more he was trying to shrink it to make it simple. Committee went on to discuss the statement by Planner Spencer further. Chairman Gutman indicated that the statement was well written, and he understands what Planner Spencer is trying to do, but he feels there are ways as a committee we can improve the verbiage on the statement and take a look at it in the future. In general the committee agreed it was a good start.

Planner Spencer stated that as a committee we can go through the objectives one by one and have a discussion. Committee agreed.

Planner Spencer started with the first objective which is to develop and improve strategies to preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods. Some of the things that are not now specifically mentioned are the City of Novi Minor Home Repair Grant program for example. The need to continue to provide top quality maintenance for public streets and utilities. Continued public investment in new and existing pathways, sidewalks, street trees and parks to improve the quality of life in existing neighborhoods. Investigate and develop programs that encourage private investment in new and existing private neighborhood recreation facilities. Consider ordinance changes that require commercial uses near residential areas to incorporate residential characteristics in the building design. Continue to support neighborhood associations.

Member Cassis mentioned that we should be very careful with that last objective. He stated that someone could come in for example and want commercial near residential and say that we advocated that we should have commercial uses by residential. Planner Spencer agreed with Member Cassis.

Chairman Gutman asked if Member Cassis was talking about Singh Development. Member Cassis answered yes. Member Cassis stated that Planner Spencer might want to change the word "require" in the statement to "allow" or something to that effect. Committee agreed that the word "require" is not a good word in that last objective.

Planner Spencer stated the next proposed objective is to attract new residents to the city by providing a full range of quality housing opportunities that meet the housing needs of all demographic groups including singles, couples, first time homebuyers, families and the elderly. Committee decided to add to the statement "including but not limited to" to not leave anyone out.

Planner Spencer's first proposed implementation strategy would be to continue to provide land area for new residential development. Next, consider policies and programs to encourage affordable housing options. Mr. Spencer stated that he took the information straight from the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults.

Member Lynch talked about the foreclosures in the city and what could the city do to help property owners who pay their bills on time from keeping their property values from going down.

Planner Spencer stated he couldn't think of any specific goals at the moment. Mr. Spencer said that he knows the City has been working with the county on some programs to reduce the number of foreclosures.

Member Lynch indicated he is not looking to ask for anything from anybody, no federal or county grant money. He also stated he would like to know what Novi can do he stated, if you look at the broader picture we want our tax base to go up we want property values to go up because the city gets more money. With all the foreclosures out there the city will have a hard time raising taxes.

Planner Spencer said that could be another implementation strategy to reduce or eliminate foreclosures.

Planner Spencer asked the committee if they had any other ideas for affordable housing. No comments were made.

Planner Spencer went on to the next objective which is to consider a policy and programs to make housing more accessible for the elderly and mobility challenged individuals. Mr. Spencer stated that there are people looking for accessibility standards, the biggest one they would like to see is for all dwellings to be visitable. Committee discussed objective and all agreed with this objective.

Mr. Spencer went on to the next proposed objective which is to consider ordinance changes to permit accessory dwelling units including granny flats with single family homes. Planner Spencer indicated that the ordinance allows one dwelling unit per single family residential lot.

Mr. Cassis asked the committee to consider making the objective to not include separate units [non-detached units]. Member Lynch stated he would like to think about this objective more.

Mr. Wizinski [in the audience] stated that some communities do have language that we could look at. He stated that Cherry Hill Village has specific language for secondary dwelling, he doesn't know if it would meet our guidelines or not.

Ms. McBeth indicated that staff could provide some of that language at the next Committee meeting.

Chairman Gutman stated that most of these implementations and objectives that Planner Spencer is presenting are for the committee to consider as suggestions, not necessarily to agree with tonight. Member Gutman also said considering these objectives are well worth doing if it sparks great conversation.

Planner Spencer stated the next proposed objective which is to continue to provide and improve alternative methods of transportation to serve residential areas.

Committee agreed with that objective. No discussion.

Planner Spencer went to the next objective which is to consider ordinance changes to permit smaller single family homes.

Mr. Winisky [in audience] indicated that smaller houses are the trend, more energy efficient.

Planner Spencer indicated that we do have minimum standards which are 1000 sq. ft for a two bedroom home, 1200 sq. ft for a three bedroom house.

Member Lynch stated this objective is something we should consider. Committee agreed.

Mr. Bill Bowen Sr. had a comment that we haven't provided any information regarding duplexes, triplexes and quad plexus.

Planner Spencer indicated that we do allow those with one of our development options called the cluster option.

Mr. Bill Bowman suggested that it would be very simple to take our duplex ordinance and permit tri plexus and quad plexus. He also stated that would fit better with the 4.88 units per acre.

Member Lynch asked Mr. Bowman when he is talking about a quad plex are these 4 separate units. Mr. Bowman answered that the units are attached.

Committee went on to discuss the areas that have four plexus in the City of Novi and the different types of four plexus.

Committee agreed to change the objective to consider "ordinance changes to permit smaller single family homes and expanded opportunities for attached single family housing."

Chairman Gutman asked Mr. Bowman if he agreed with the objective. He answered yes.

Planner Spencer stated the next proposed objective in this group is to investigate and develop programs to facilitate the development of new public senior housing facilities.

Planner Spencer mentioned our public senior housing facility here in the city and how it always has a waiting list.

Mr. Bill Bowman Sr. mentioned about the Eleven Mile Road program on the south side of Eleven Mile regarding the density in that area. He stated that there is potential for senior housing along that area and also the potential of the north side backing up to Providence Hospital with those uses. Mr. Bowman stated that he is trying to look at whether or not there is any higher density with senior housing he said with the 7.8 units it does not reach the level of high enough density to sponsor senior housing.

Member Cassis asked Mr. Bill Bowman Sr. if the city has to be in a certain income level to be able to draw on federal or state funds for senior housing.

Mr. Bowman responded by mentioning HUD funds and the State and Housing Authority are reasonably active.

Planner Spencer stated he will ask our senior housing director if they have investigated this possibility of expanding.

The next objective by Planner Spencer is to encourage residential developments that promote healthy lifestyles. Planner Spencer indicated that we have done a lot of things towards this already to promote this objective. Mr. Spencer also stated that one of the strategies could be to strengthen current ordinances and ensure all residential developments are walkable and bikeable and connected to the cities non-motorized transportation system.

Chairman Gutman expressed the statement might be a little too strong. He stated that having our ordinances to that is a requirement that is a tremendous amount of cost to our developers and his thought is to consider what else we could do to strengthen this statement.

Planner Spencer will change statement to "encourage and strengthen."

Member Cassis stated to add after strengthen to "where possible."

Mr. Wizinsky [in audience] stated smaller communities have approved golf carts.

Planner Spencer stated that it could become a problem when you involve the traffic then you have conflict between them and the pedestrians. If they are on the roadway the uniform traffic code states that they would need to be licensed and operated as a motorized vehicle.

Planner Spencer stated we could further provide incentives for including passive and active recreational facilities in new residential developments.

Committee agreed with that statement.

Chairman Gutman commented to Planner Spencer that the presentation was very well put together.

MINUTES

Moved by Member Lynch , seconded by Member Cassis:

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

A motion to approve the August 5, 2009 minutes. Motion carried 3-0

ADJOURN

Moved by Member Lynch, seconded by Member Cassis:

VOICE VOTE ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER CASSIS:

A motion to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM

Future Meetings

Possible September 16, 2009 @ 6:00 pm
September 23, 2009
October 7, 2009
October 21, 2009

Transcribed by Bonnie S. Shrader
Customer Service Representative
September 28, 2009
Date Approved: