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Kenneth R. Daniels
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Ritchie Harrison
Lauren Hood, MCD
Gwen Lewis
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel Udabe

City Planning Commission Meeting

MINUTES
February 1, 2024
5:00 P.M.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:26 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Kenneth Daniels (5:30 p.m.), David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison, Lauren Hood
Gwen Lewis, Melanie Markowicz, Frederick Russell, Donovan Smith and Rachel Udabe

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

It was noted on the record that as written on the agenda the 5:15 PM public hearing is cancelled.

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Hood. Motion approved.

II. Meeting minutes of December 7, 2023

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Harrison. Motion approved.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

- A. **5:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING (CANCELLED)** – The request to amend the text of the Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code – to update definitions, regulations, and procedures relative to child care facilities for consistency with updated State law and to broaden the opportunities for such facilities on a by-right or conditional basis. **(RB, and the Office of Early Learning) (CANCELLED – This public hearing has been rescheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 6:30)**

- B. 6:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – The request of Parkstone Development Partners on behalf of Corktown Historic Developments, LLC to show a PD (Planned Development) zoning district where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district is currently shown on four parcels commonly known as 2099, 2087, 2081, and 2075 Vermont Street.
(JM)

This matter was heard after Unfinished Business.

Present: Jamie Murphy, CPC Staff
Petitioners: Drake Filippis and Nicole Rittenour

Jamie Murphy, CPC Staff, first continued this public hearing by presenting a brief summary of the request for a proposed map amendment via PowerPoint. The petitioners are seeking to rezone four parcels from R2 to PD to permit the development of an eight-unit residential building. The site is located in District 6 on the westside of Corktown south of Michigan Avenue between Rosa Parks and 14th Street. It is a mixed area with residential, industrial, recreation, vacant land, nearby train station and park. There are three existing newly renovated historic houses on the site, and the new eight-unit residential building is proposed to be built along the alley in the rear yard. Ms. Murphy displayed current site photos and reviewed the existing zoning map and Master Plan general future land use map. She explained Planning and Development Department (PDD) wrote that this proposed development is generally consistent with the Master Plan, and it will not change the general character of the area.

Ms. Murphy addressed the Commissioners' concerns mentioned at the first public hearing. (1) The concern of clear vision for traffic when cars are pulling out of the alley. She explained via diagram that a car can sit all the way out clear of the proposed building. There would be no trouble looking down the road to see on-coming traffic, and the building will not block the street view. A driver can see to the left with no problem as she demonstrated via PowerPoint. She acknowledged the probable concern is the view of the sidewalk, depending on the speed of the car. (2) She described other recent nearby Corktown, City development sites (the 11th and the Coachman) that are dense with pictures and slides. (3) Ms. Murphy provided a comparison of requirements and exceptions of R2 versus the current proposed PD through a detailed chart titled *Comparison of R2 Regulations to Proposed*.

Secondly, Nicole Rittenour presented the proposed site plan via PowerPoint. She described the details of the floor plans and elevations including an aerial view of the proposed new constructed building, massing of the area, 3D renderings, shadow study, and 1938 Sandborn map (revised 1954).

Next, Ms. Murphy relayed the slides and results from Ms. Stapleton's research on the analysis of available parking on Dalzelle and Vermont Streets. The displayed chart gave information on the site's on-street and off-street parking, needs of residents for parking, and an estimated parking surplus for each street.

Ms. Rittenour estimated that there were 18 available spaces at the property. This was in response to Commissioner Smith's parking inquiries.

Ms. Murphy indicated PDD's comments that the eight units' location access is from the alley; therefore, it would not add significant traffic or public problems. PDD expressed it fit with the scale of the area. This explanation was in response to Commissioner Harrison's questions.

Commissioner Udabe expressed concerns with this housing development being offered at market rate, out-of-towners being target renters, and no sustainability provisions.

Commissioner Udabe and Commissioner Markowicz expressed their concerns that this development is too large for the area.

Commissioner Markowicz shared her concerns and questions from the public, and she asked that the developers consider where dumpsters for the apartments will be located. Also, will there be dedicated parking for the construction workers?

Ms. Rittenour says there is a great deal of vacant land in that area. Also, Mr. Filippis stated that construction workers may park on the street closer to Michigan Avenue, and the daily construction work will begin at a reasonable morning hour. Mr. Filippis stated that a firm barrier will be in place to deter construction dust. He anticipates making weekly site visits, an information board with contact telephone number, a construction manager, and his partner Fabian will be available for the community. This was in response to Commissioner Markowicz's references to the public's concerns.

Ms. Rittenour mentioned that the development team discussed sustainability, but it is difficult due to being limited to Historic District Commission (HDC) standards. This was in response to Commissioners Udabe's and Markowicz's concerns.

Ms. Rittenour explained that Mr. Carpen owns a house and old service station near the site. They had discussion, and Mr. Carpen was noticed for the public hearings. She explained their relationship with Mr. Carpen and that the contractors were not able to schedule a meeting with him. This was in response to Commissioner Daniels' inquiries of addressing Mr. Carpen's written concerns.

Lastly, Ms. Murphy reviewed the process of events for this petitioner from 2021-2023.

Public Testimony

Ms. Tonya Karwana lives directly next door to the development. She mentioned that she attended all engagement meetings including HDC meetings. She expressed her concerns about parking, and the developers' estimated parking space availability is inaccurate. She commented displeasure in first experience with the developers during the historic homes construction project. Ms. Karwana stated she suffered property damage (photos available) to her fence multiple times, piles of mud in her yard and sewers. She fears this will repeat. The construction workers started between 7:15 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.

Mr. Arnold Carpen commented that during the previous renovations his properties were damaged, and he has been waiting for years for the contractors or developers to repair damages and resolve the issue. He believes the proposed property is too dense for the area. Ms. Rittenour has not contacted him. He is only aware about the process of the new project due to CPC notices received in the mail. He is concerned with insufficient parking.

Mr. Filippis said he has an email from Mr. Carpen to Fabian (Filippis' partner) confirming that Fabian met Mr. Carpen in person, and they discussed the plan and communicated with the contractor. Mr. Filippis admitted that the development team has learned from its prior mistakes, and they will try to do things differently for this project.

Director Todd stated since this project is awaiting data regarding utility issues with DTE Energy, there is no CPC Staff recommendation at this time.

Commissioner Daniels motioned that CPC table this matter until its next meeting, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. Motion Approved.

IV. Public Comment –

There was no public comment.

V. Unfinished Business –

This matter was heard earlier in the meeting after approval of the minutes.

- A.** Consideration of the request of INNOVO to amend Article XVII, Section 50-12-69, District Map No. 67 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a M2 (Restricted Industrial District) zoning classification or modify the provisions of an existing PD (Planned Development District) zoning classification currently shown on two parcels commonly known as 12701 and 12601 Southfield Road generally bounded by the residential area south of W. Davison Street to the north, Southfield Freeway to the east, Marquette Railroad to the south and Artesian Street to the west.
(CG) (TENTATIVE)

Present: Chris Gulock, CPC Staff

Petitioners: Trey Alman, Noah Birmelin and George Etheridge

Mr. Chris Gulock, presented via PowerPoint site plans, photos, and overview of the CPC report dated January 29, 2024, this request for rezoning and request for approval of recommendations to modifications to the PD buffer. The site is split zoning with M4 (majority), M2 (northern) and PD strip (northern), and it is located on Map No. 67 at the intersection of the northwest corner of the Jefferies Freeway and Southfield Freeway. The entire site is over 2,000 ft. long. The site is known as the Gateway Industrial Complex owned by INNOVO since 2019. The property has two addresses 12701 Southfield Road (westside) and 12601 Southfield Road (eastside). INNOVO has been renovating and expanding the site to retain their existing tenants and attract new tenants. They recently completed a large brand new industrial 426,000 square ft. building (summer 2023). Mr. Gulock provided a history of the site's Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) variance, 1990 PD ordinance and recent past. He mentioned that over the years the unmaintained PD buffer grew, but it provided substantial screening for the neighborhood to the north where 92 houses remain. INNOVO desires to redevelop the buffer and add storm water management; however, CPC Staff requested INNOVO not encroach into the buffer, since a PD has to go through City Council. Initially, one contractor pulled a permit to clear the buffer that should have been routed to CPC. The Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) inadvertently did not notice the split zoning and PD strip (created in 1990), and BSEED issued a permit. Therefore, the contractor for INNOVO installed a new 12 ft. high fence with barbed wire on top, new 35 ft. buffer on the INNOVO side, 317 new parking spaces, and new storm water management. Due to this error, they are circling back to get the appropriate CPC and City Council approval.

Presently, the address at 12701 Southfield Road is rented by Detroit Manufacturing System

(DMS), a certified minority enterprise providing auto parts for Ford Motor Company. The second matter to consider is that DMS has six days of three different work shifts (approximately 500 employees) without adequate employee parking. Many employees are compelled to park on the adjacent City residential streets. Currently, they have 392 parking spaces north of the building now and 87 spaces on the side. DMS went in separately and they saw the gravel parking lot with a need for more parking and just added. DMS called and CPC Staff advised that they need to go through City Council. They are asking that the 35 ft. buffer is reduced down to 10 ft. due to the urgent need for parking.

Further, Mr. Gulock stated INNOVO hired Activate Detroit to handle community outreach. They met with Grandmont Rosedale Improvement Association, Grandmont One Improvement Association, and Schoolcraft Improvement Association. The petitioners mentioned benefits for the community of hiring for new jobs, community clean-up, and regular trash pickup in the neighborhood. The Schoolcraft Association sent a letter of support of this PD modification. Mr. Gulock reviewed that during the CPC public hearing in April 2023, two residents raised concerns about dust, noise, and truck traffic. Neighbors expressed disappointment in the amount of generated dust and basement flooding with CPC. Rosedale Park complained about removal of the buffer, need for a wall, barbed wire and denser landscape. INNOVO has continued to do community outreach. Mr. Etheridge did a door to door survey with homes close to the fence without any expressed opposition. INNOVO's architect improved landscape plans including green mesh screening of the entire fence for a better buffer with evergreens and deciduous trees. Mr. Gulock explained the Master Plan designates this as the Brightmoor Area. PDD submitted an interpretation that the buffer and parking lot area are consistent with the Master Plan. Later, Mr. Gulock displayed via PowerPoint petitioner's slides and renderings of the short-term and long-term landscaping.

Mr. Etheridge explained the landscaping and improvements at 12601 Southfield Road were completed prior to April 6, 2023, and since that time no additional improvements have been made to the site. The slag was installed in the gravel parking lot, and additional parking spots encroach 4 ft. into the PD buffer. This was in response to Commissioner Esparza's inquiries.

Mr. Etheridge commented at the time of acquisition in 2019 the landscape buffer was completely overgrown, and they removed approximately 40 dumpsters of trash debris. There was an existing 12 ft. chained link fence with barbed wire, and with the BSEED permit they replaced it with the same type of fence in the same area right at the property line. This was in response to Commissioner Markowicz's inquiries.

Mr. Alman answered that the fencing is on the property due to tenant and lease requirements in response to Commissioner Markowicz's questions about the need for the fence.

Mr. Etheridge and Mr. Alman made statements that currently there are six occupied residential structures at the northern property line that are adjacent to the fence. They have been in constant contact with those neighbors. INNOVO has been partnering with DMS employees to do neighborhood clean-ups on the vacant land, so they have been maintaining the property. This was in response to Commissioner Russell's questions about property maintenance.

Mr. Etheridge agreed with Mr. Gulock that with the additional parking for the DMS portion there will be adequate parking for its work shifts. Next, Mr. Etheridge stated that they have socialized the plan, and the community is in support. There is one Ashton neighbor that would have preferred to have seen greater connectivity with the fence; however, that individual private property and INNOVO are not in the position to build upon that property. This was in response to Commissioner Daniels' questions.

Most Commissioners expressed their strong desire for removal of barbed wire in a residential neighborhood.

Mr. Gulock stated that Staff recommends approval of the PD modification with the three conditions listed as follows:

1. To allow the existing 12-foot-high chain link fence with barbed wire to remain and to require the addition of a green privacy screen with 90% blockage be installed and maintained. Once the proposed landscaping is able to provide adequate buffering, the property owner may petition the CPC to remove the green privacy screen;
2. That the landscaping plan be revised to show proposed evergreen spacing 10 to 15 ft. apart dependent on species, 5 ft. apart for arborvitae, and additional plantings be added where feasible, with the final landscaping plan, including the final selection of species, be subject to the review and approval by CPC staff; and
3. That the final site plans, elevations, lighting, landscaping, and signage plans be submitted by the developer to the staff of the CPC for review and approval prior to making application for applicable permits.

Commissioner Markowicz motioned to approve the recommendation of CPC Staff to allow the existing 12 ft. high chain link fence to remain with the addition of the 90% blockage screening to be installed and maintained in the color of green, but also to have the barbed wire removed as soon as possible. Also, the landscaping plan is revised to show the proposed evergreen spacing 10 – 15 ft. apart, dependent upon species and what that landscape architect determines best, 5 ft. apart for arborvitae and additional plantings added where feasible. The final landscaping plan including the final selection of the species be subject to review and approval of CPC Staff, and that the final site plans, elevations, lighting, landscaping, and signage plans be submitted by the developer to CPC Staff for review and approval prior to making application for the applicable permits with other departments, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion Approved.

VI. New Business – There was no new business.

VII. Committee Reports – Director Todd expressed the necessity for a CPC committee meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 3 p.m., and he proposed subsequent meetings to be held on March 6, 2024, and March 20, 2024, at 3 p.m.

VIII. Staff Report – Director Todd discussed the following matters:

- ❖ The updated CPC By-laws (stipend and quorum)
- ❖ CPC Commissioners expiration and renewal of terms of appointments (Commissioners

Lewis, Daniels, and Russell)

- ❖ CPC stipend status
- ❖ CPC's invitation to attend upcoming Mayor's State of the City in April 2024.
- ❖ The Mayor's budget address with City Council is scheduled for March 11, 2024.
- ❖ Michigan Department of Natural Resources proposal to demolish the Belle Isle Boathouse. He explained that due to the efforts of the Historic Designation Advisory Board (HDAB) Staff, City Council issued a resolution and directed HDAB to send a letter to the State asking authorities to reconsider demolition and seek other options.

Director Todd anticipates a meeting with the Law Department and Staff will obtain an accurate street map. He indicated that they agreed to appear for a formal CPC presentation on the solar initiative. This was in response to Commissioner Daniels question about the status of the detailed street map for the proposed solar panel sites.

- IX. Member Report** – Commissioner Hood announced that this was her last day serving on CPC, and she expressed her gratitude.

Commissioners replied with their sentiments of Commissioner Hood's departure.

Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Markowicz spoke to their enjoyment of attending the arranged tour of Gordy Howe Bridge and social dinner. All Commissioners would like more socials in the future.

- X. Communications** – Commissioner Smith inquired on the Master Plan status.

Director Todd stated that City Council formally approve the contract, and Staff has been working with PDD to begin the process formally. A formal notice will be mailed out to the adjacent communities as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. There will be several committees that will be established for the Master Plan.

Director Todd and Mr. Gulock mentioned that Staff was planning to apply for a special grant, yet Staff withdrew due to the Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) applying for the same grant first. A meeting has been planned to coordinate plans.

Director Todd says that a new CPC staff planner has been hired to start in March.

- XI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.