



**Regular Meeting
LANSING PLANNING BOARD
January 5, 2016
6:30 p.m., Conference Room
Neighborhood Empowerment Center
600 W. Maple Street**

MINUTES

1. OPENING SESSION

Chairman Ruge called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

- a. Present: John Ruge, Beth Graham, Tony Cox & Marta Cerna
- b. Absent: Lynne Martinez, Alisande Henry & Josh Hovey
- c. Staff: Bill Rieske & Susan Stachowiak

Ms. Henry made a motion, seconded by Ms. Graham to grant excused absences for Mr. Cox and Ms. Martinez. On a voice vote (6-0), the motion carried unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Chairman Ruge approved the agenda by unanimous consent.

3. COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. HEARINGS

A. Z-6-2015, Rezoning, 203 S. Clippert Street

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is a request by Ferguson/Continental Lansing, LLC to rezone the north 35.3 acres of the property at 203 S. Clippert Street, being the former Red Cedar Golf Course, from "A" Residential District to "E-1" Apartment Shop District. The purpose of the rezoning is to permit future mixed use (residential, office, commercial) development of the property. Ms. Stachowiak said that the property to be rezoned is the north 35.3 acres of the former Red Cedar Golf Course. The entire Red Cedar Golf Course parcel is in the 100 year floodplain. The line separating the property to be rezoned from the remainder of the property is line of the floodway. The property within the floodway is not part of this rezoning and no construction is planned for this area of the site. The current proposal is to utilize the floodway area of the site for a drainage project by the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office.

Ms. Stachowiak said that there is no specific proposal for redevelopment of the site at this time. The purpose of the rezoning is to permit development of the site in accordance with the Design Lansing Master Plan which designates the subject property for a mix of residential, office and commercial uses. The proposed "E-1" zoning is the most appropriate designation to facilitate such development since it permits a mix of uses, allows residential use to the density of the "DM-4" district (up to 87 dwelling units per acre) and allows a building height of 100 feet. Ms. Stachowiak said that the proposed "Sky Vue" development to the north was also recently zoned "E-1" Apartment Shop district to allow for that mixed use development.

Ms. Stachowiak said that staff is recommending approval of the rezoning based upon its consistency with the zoning and land use patterns already established in the area. She said that it is the most appropriate zoning designation to accommodate the type of mixed-use development being advanced in the Master Plans. She also said that no adverse impacts on vehicular and pedestrian traffic, the environment or future patterns of development are anticipated to result from approval of this rezoning.

Steve Willobee, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, stated that the property is currently owned by the City of Lansing. The applicant, Ferguson/Continental Lansing, LLC, is the potential purchaser/developer of the property. Mr. Willobee said that there are a number of steps that would still need to take place before any development of the site could occur.

Mr. Ruge asked about parking and whether it would all be surface parking or if a ramp would be constructed. He also said that the "E-1" Apartment Shop district seems a bit intense for this property given the allowable density.

Ms. Stachowiak said that there will likely be a combination of surface and ramp parking but the parking needs/requirements would be determined once a more specific development plan is provided. She also said that the "E-1" district permits the maximum density allowed under the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Stachowiak said that the same density is permitted within the E. Michigan Overlay district which extends from the downtown to LaSalle Blvd. She said that the allowable density is still considered to be low for an urban environment which is why several new developments over the past few years have needed variances to allow greater density.

Jason Hockstok, Ferguson/Continental Lansing, LLC, stated that this will be a mixed use project and they are not anticipating a need for a density variance. He said that a parking ramp will likely need to be constructed. Mr. Hockstok said that they anticipate having a more detailed plan for the development within the next month or two.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the site is located within the 100 year floodplain and therefore, a special land use permit will be required. She said that a more detailed plan with floor elevations would need to be provided before a special land use permit can be processed. Ms. Stachowiak said that a floodplain special land use permit is a technical review and does not require a public hearing.

Chairman Ruge opened the public hearing.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, Chairman Ruge closed the public hearing.

B. SLU-6-2015, 830 & 836 E. Jolly Road, Parking Lot

Ms. Stachowiak said that this is a request by Community Mental Health Authority for a Special Land Use to construct a parking lot at 830 & 836 E. Jolly Road. Parking lots are permitted in the "A" Residential district, which is the zoning designation of the subject property, if a Special Land Use permit is approved by

the Lansing City Council. Ms. Stachowiak said that staff is recommending approval of the request, with the condition that the parking lot lights are limited to 20 feet in height and shielded to prevent glare onto adjoining properties.

Ms. Stachowiak said that staff still has some concerns about the basic "land use" aspect of the case. Placing a parking lot directly adjacent to residential homes is generally not a good land use practice, however, a substantial landscape, screening and buffering plan will help to mitigate any negative impacts on the adjacent residential neighbors. She said that such landscape, screening and buffering must be adequate to effectively protect the adjoining property owners from any negative effects that could be caused by the parking lot such as noise, light glare and unsightly views. Additionally, there is already a strong non-residential presence in the area. Ms. Stachowiak said that as evidenced by the attached aerial photo and zoning map, the majority of the residential properties in the area already adjoin a nonresidential use. She said that given the land use pattern that already exists in the area, the proposed parking lot will not be out of character with other properties in the vicinity in which it will be located.

Ms. Cerna asked if the properties are vacant.

John Peiffer, Community Mental Health Authority, 812 E. Jolly Road, said that the houses are still on the properties but they are vacant and are not in real good shape. He said that CMHA owns both lots.

Ms. Graham said that they have been in foreclosure a few times.

Mr. Ruge stated that he would prefer to see a berm along the east and south property lines as a screening mechanism rather than a fence, wall or just plant materials.

Ms. Stachowiak said that a berm on such a small lot would be impractical. She said that a 6 foot high berm with a 3 on 1 slope consumes 36 feet of lot area. Ms. Stachowiak suggested that CMHA meet with the adjoining neighbors to determine what they would like to see in terms of landscape, screening and buffering. She said that the ordinance requires a certain amount of plant materials along the east and south property lines. The number of plant materials can be reduced if a screen wall or fence is installed along those property lines.

Mr. Peiffer said that CMHA is its own authority. He said that they have 330 employees and provided services to a lot of people on a daily basis. Mr. Peiffer said that the County 911 building is located just to the west and there are other county facilities to the west as well. He stated that they are adding 40,000 square feet to the building and the intent is to consolidate all CMHA services into this site so that they do not have to continue leasing space elsewhere. Mr. Peiffer said that the proposed parking is needed to accommodate the additional employees and the additional services that will be provided on the site.

Mr. Ruge asked if there is a long range plan for future expansion of the facilities. He also asked if they collaborate with the other county facilities to the west in terms of planning for the future

Ms. Cerna said that when all is said and done, there will be about 400 employees on the site which is a 30% increase over what is there right now..

Alan Goschka, Bergmann Associates, 7050 W. Saginaw Highway, stated that they conducted a study to determine what would be in the best interest of the neighborhood. They felt that it would be best to put the building addition on the south side of the existing building with the parking to the east as it would be less obtrusive to the neighborhood to have a parking lot close by as opposed to a large building.

Mr. Peiffer said that they have a 5-10 year plan. He said that it is hard to project beyond that because they don't know what services they will need to provide and what funding will be available. Mr. Peiffer also said that they collaborate with the County facilities to the west to a certain degree but CMHA is not necessarily part of the County as it is its own taxing authority.

Mr. Ruge said that there is a lot of surface parking on the site. He asked if there are any plans to construct a ramp to make better use of the limited space for parking.

Chairman Ruge opened the public hearing.

Alex Dion, 807 Sims Court, expressed concerns about the impact that the proposed parking lot may have on his property values and the quality of life for he and his family. He said that the parking lot will generate noise and light glare and will diminish his privacy. Mr. Dion showed photographs to the Board of what the site looks like now. He said that he has maintained the area behind his property. Mr. Dion said that his biggest concern is safety and security because CMH has dropped certain programs due to budget cuts.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Ruge closed the public hearing.

C. SLU-7-2015, 1434 E. Jolly Road, Parking Lot

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is a request by Brian Stiles of Stiles Landscaping for a Special Land Use to construct a parking lot/loading/storage area at 1434 E. Jolly Road. A parking lot/loading/storage area, as part of a landscape center, is permitted in the "A" Residential district, which is the zoning designation of the area of the site upon which it would be located, if a Special Land Use permit is approved by the Lansing City Council. Ms. Stachowiak said that staff is recommending approval of the request, with the condition that the parking lot lights are limited to 30 feet in height and shielded to prevent glare onto adjoining properties.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the subject property is the site of the former Lansing Gardens and is now being used by Stiles Landscaping. The majority of the property is zoned "A" Residential. The northwest, approximately 540' x 680' of the site, is zoned "H" Light Industrial. With the exception of the westernmost greenhouse and associated parking, all of the existing buildings and parking lots are confined within the area of the site that is zoned "H" Light Industrial. She said

that the applicant's proposal is to permit the construction of a new parking/storage/loading area just west of the westernmost greenhouse on the site. The proposal primarily includes numerous concrete block storage bins that would hold various landscape products such as mulch, rocks, patio stones, wood chips, etc. Ms. Stachowiak said that the area to be improved extends 273 feet west of the existing parking lot in front of the westernmost greenhouse. This will leave approximately 300 feet between the storage/parking lot and the nearest residential properties to the west. A detention basin will be located west of the proposed storage/parking area. She said that given the distance between the proposed storage/parking lot and the residential neighborhood to the west, it is not anticipated that the proposed special land use will have any negative impacts on the surrounding area.

Brian Stiles, Stiles Landscaping, 1434 E. Jolly Road, spoke in support of his request. He said that they have done a lot with the property in the short amount of time that they have owned it. The farm area will continue to be farmed and they will participate in educational farming programs with the schools. Mr. Stiles said that they want to be good neighbors and will go above and beyond what is required in terms of landscaping. They have also provided an area for the neighbors to continue to deposit natural debris.

Rich Baker, Project Manager, stated that the facility gets very busy and the new parking/storage facility will help to get overflow traffic off of Jolly Road. He also said that they will not be adding any new curb cuts to the site.

Mr. Stiles said that they will be moving the operations from their facility on Aurelius Road to the new location on Jolly Road.

Chairman Ruge opened the public hearing.

Sara Jaruzel, 5012 Devonshire Avenue, said that she can see the facility from her house and the new parking/storage area will change the character of the area. Ms. Jaruzel said that the neighborhood to the west is struggling and does not need any more negative impacts. She also said that they are glad that Stiles Landscaping is there rather than a Walmart but they are concerned about house the new parking/storage area may impact their property values.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the new parking/storage facility will be located approximately 300 feet from the neighborhood to the west. She said that 300 feet is approximately the length of a city block. Ms. Stachowiak said that it will also be very well landscaped to soften its view.

Julee Rodocker, 4909 Devonshire Avenue, spoke in support of the request. She said that she grew up this neighborhood and is very pleased that Stiles Landscaping has taken over the property. Ms. Rodocker stated that the farm has never looked as good as it does right now. She also said that she is very glad that the south end of Lansing has a landscape supply company. Ms. Rodocker asked if there is any way to stipulate that the parking/storage area would need to be removed if Stiles no longer occupies the site.

Ms. Stachowiak said that zoning approvals cannot be tied to ownership of the property.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Ruge closed the public hearing.

5. **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE** - None

6. **RECESS** – None.

7. **BUSINESS**

A. Consent Items

1. **Minutes for approval:** December 1, 2015. APPROVED as written without objection.
2. **Z-6-2015:** North 35.3 acres of 203 S. Clippert Street, Rezoning from “A” Residential to “E-1” Apartment Shop District. APPROVED without objection.

B. New Business

1. **Act-6-2015, Adado Riverfront Park Zip Line Proposal**

Mr. Rieske said that Jarl Brey, of Capitol Zip, LLC, proposes to install and operate a three-story permanent ropes course and zip line in Adado Riverfront Park. This portion of the Park straddles the Grand River north of Saginaw and south of Madison St. In doing so, he proposes to lease portions of Adado Riverfront Park (33-01-01-09-452-004 and 33-01-01-09-453-082) on each side of the Grand River for a period of ten (10) years. He also plans on providing employment opportunities for MSU and LCC students.

Mr. Rieske said that the zip line will be about 350 in length, and run across the Grand River and back. The east side will be the focus of the operation. The ropes course will be located on the east side, as well as the Rivertrail and a small parking lot. The applicant is pursuing the lease of the property at 711 Center Street for additional parking (approx. 50 spaces), restroom facilities, and a small office/retail space (all permitted in the “H” Light Industrial district), plus an access easement across the Conrail Property between the two locations.

Mr. Rieske said that the 3-story zip line and rope course will occupy a small part of the Park’s 28 acres. He said that staff is recommending approval of the request based on the following findings that the zip line will:

- Enhance the list of attractions in downtown Lansing.
- Enhance the public park system by offering additional recreational opportunities in downtown Lansing
- Create a new revenue stream for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Offset existing City expenses by leasing the parcels for ten (10) years.
- Provide an exciting destination along the City’s bike path.

Mr. Rieske said that the applicant also includes the following benefits as part of the application:

- Partnering with MSU and LCC, to offer (new) full and part-time employment opportunities.

- A free program to Lansing Public Schools designed around leadership development and team building.

Mr. Rieske said that the City has used license agreements as the mechanism for approving private projects in City parks. The agreement will specify the area of the park covered by the license, and that area will be no larger than necessary.

Jarl Brey, Capitol Zip, LLC, stated that he is looking forward to bringing excitement to the downtown area. He said that they will provide several programs and will be working with the schools and the City to enhance some of the recreation programs that already exist. Mr. Brey said that the zip line will bring some new employment opportunities and will result in the rehabilitation of a vacant older building.

Jane Timmer, Capitol Zip, LLC, stated that there are a lot of opportunities to work with kids and develop partnerships with the schools. She said that it is about leadership in that overcoming fear builds confidence. Ms. Timmer said that 60-80 people per hour can go through the zip line. She also said that going over a watercourse makes this particular zip line unique.

Mr. Brey said that the zip line will bring more people to the downtown. He said that the capitol will be visible from the top of the zip line, there will not be any additional curb cuts, adequate parking will be provided and none of the existing infrastructure will be interrupted. Mr. Brey said that the site is in the floodplain and although it will be elevated above the base flood elevation, it can also be removed at any time. He said that he is in the process of securing funding for the project through investments. Once the funding is in place, it will take about 6-8 weeks to erect the structure. Mr. Brey said that the proposal is for a 10 year lease with an option to extend it for an additional 5 years. He said that while these zip lines and rope courses are installed all over the world, this will be the first of its kind in Michigan as it will cross over the river.

Mr. Cox stated that the ropes course would be an amazing experience and this is a great project for Lansing.

Ms. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cox to recommend approval of Act-6-2015, to authorize a license agreement to install and operate a three-story permanent ropes course and zip line in Adado Riverfront Park. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

2. SLU-6-2015, 830 & 836 E. Jolly Road, Parking Lot

Mr. Ruge said that CMH should work with the neighborhood on the landscape, screening and buffering and whether it should be located on the north or south side of the detention basin.

Mr. Peiffer said that he will work with the neighbors.

Mr. Ruge also said that the complex is growing and there needs to be some long range planning, similar to what Sparrow Hospital did years ago, so that each new parking lot or building addition is not put up haphazardly.

Mr. Cox said that he appreciates Mr. Dion's comments and he encouraged CMH to be good neighbors and work with Mr. Dion to address his concerns.

Ms. Graham made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cerna to recommend approval of SLU-6-2015, a Special Land Use permit to construct a parking lot at 830 & 836 E. Jolly Road, based upon the findings of fact as outlined in the staff report, with the condition that parking lot lights do not exceed a height of 20 feet and are shielded to prevent glare onto adjacent properties. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

3. SLU-7-2015, 1434 E. Jolly Road, Parking Lot

Mr. Cox stated that Stiles Landscaping has done a beautiful job with the property thus far and is looking forward to seeing the final product.

Ms. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cox to recommend approval of SLU-7-2015, a Special Land Use permit to construct a parking lot at 1434 E. Jolly Road, based upon the findings of fact as outlined in this staff report, with the condition that parking lot lights do not exceed a height of 30 feet and are shielded to prevent glare onto adjacent properties. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

4. 2016 Planning Board Meeting Schedule

Mr. Rieske said that he would like to schedule a special meeting for January 12, 2016 to discuss the Form Based-Code project prior to scheduling a public hearing.

It was determined that January 12, 2016 would not be possible but that staff would work with the Planning Board to establish a date for a special meeting sometime this month.

C. Old Business – None.

D. Report from Planning Manager

Mr. Rieske said that we are trying to finalize Phases 1 and 2 of the Form-Based Code project. It has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office and their comments have been addressed in the Code. Mr. Rieske said that the Code will be provided to the Planning Board prior to the special meeting. He also said that the City's consultant is currently working on Phase 3 of the Form-Based Code.

9. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None.

10. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS - None

11. PENDING ITEMS: FUTURE ACTION REQUIRED – None.

12. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.