

Present: Chairperson Jensen; Vice-Chair Ostrowski; Members: Abboud, Borowski, Freedman, Ruprich and Westerlund

Absent: Peddie and Stempien

Also Present: Village Manager, Chris Wilson
Planning consultants, Brian Borden and Brad Strader

Chairperson Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVE/AMEND AGENDA

Motion by Borowski, second by Ostrowski, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD OCTOBER 24, 2012

A correction was made on page 2, second paragraph under “Southfield Road Corridor Subcommittee Update”, line 3, to change word ‘element’ to ‘aspect’.

Motion by Borowski, second by Abboud, that the minutes of a Planning Commission meeting held October 24, 2012 be approved as amended.

Motion passed.

SIGN ORDINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF DRAFT AMENDMENTS

Planning consultant Brian Borden reported on the status and direction of the sign ordinance subcommittee in the absence of subcommittee chair Stempien. He estimated that the full draft is 80-90 percent complete. The remaining tasks include final review of draft regulations for temporary signage, finish amendments to non-conforming sign regulations, and amend political sign chapter. Borden proposed a review of the political sign chapter by Attorney Ryan following its completion to ensure that the content is consistent with recent case law and any other legal components.

Borden stated that he and Stempien will schedule another sign ordinance subcommittee meeting before the holidays to address the remaining tasks. The subcommittee may then be in position to present a full draft to the Planning Commission at its December 12 meeting, at which time the Commission could set a public hearing on the sign ordinance amendment for January, 2013. This would keep the Planning Commission within its goal to draft a sign ordinance, hold a public hearing, and recommend Council approval of the ordinance before the expiration of the moratorium.

SOUTHFIELD CORRIDOR SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE ON PROJECT STATUS

Planning consultant Brad Strader reported on the public workshop hosted by the Planning Commission and LSL Planning on Wednesday, November 14 at the former Border's property. Members of the public and business owners came to hear and view presentations prepared by the planning consultants and subcommittee members on the work accomplished to date on the Southfield Road corridor redevelopment plan.

Strader related that he and Pat Westerlund presented an overview directed towards explaining why the Village is proposing a town center for Beverly Hills and the concepts involved in redevelopment of the business corridor. Strader observed that most of the reaction from people in attendance was positive. He noted that the owner of Medical Village as well as other business owners on Southfield Road appeared to be incentivized by the proposal for revitalization of the corridor. There were enthusiastic responses from the public and excitement about plans for a walkable, viable commercial district in the Village. Strader noted that there were those who expressed the view that it was important to keep some of the locally owned business that people consider an asset of living in Beverly Hills.

LSL will be moving forward to complete the corridor plan and design guidelines. There will be a narrative to describe the modeling that was done. The planning consultants will work on drafting a code for an overlay district. The subcommittee should receive a draft plan by the end of the year or early January with the goal of bringing the plan to the Planning Commission at its January meeting.

Westerlund concurred that the comments were positive, but noted that there were people who said that they do not want Beverly Hills to be like Birmingham. Strader mentioned that height of buildings was a concern; however, the Southfield Road corridor has a smaller footprint than downtown Birmingham, which will dictate how much could happen in the area. The concept was viewed positively; the business mix will be decided by the market. Jensen added that a developer would determine what was economically feasible.

Ostrowski added that almost everyone wanted to see Southfield Road improved to increase safety and make it easier to navigate that area. Most people liked the idea of a median and reducing the number of lanes along Southfield Road. People suggested that the Village work with Southfield Township on updating The Corners shopping center so it looks like both sides of the street were included in the corridor plan.

Brad Strader stated that he and Westerlund met with the Road Commission for Oakland County several months ago. Strader recapped that the County had been planning a redesign of Southfield Road from the Lodge Freeway up to 13 Mile Road for years due to the high number of crashes, volume, and speed. The Road Commission completed a study and secured funding to start rebuilding the road from the Lodge up through Lathrup Village. In the meantime, Lathrup Village prepared a plan for its downtown and informed the Road Commission that they were no longer in agreement with what was planned for the design of Southfield Road. Lathrup wanted a more walkable urban core with on-street parking and other amenities. The Road Commission started their study again; the money set aside for the reconstruction was used on other county

projects. Upon completion of the revised study, the County will have to seek funding. This will delay construction of the Beverly Hills segment of the road.

A Road Commission staff member attended the November 14 Planning Commission workshop; he expressed interest in the corridor plan and was pleased with the timing. At this point, the Road Commission has prepared alternatives for the Southfield Road corridor from Mt. Vernon to 11 Mile Road; 11 Mile to 12 Mile Road; and 12 Mile Road to 13 Mile Road. The general alternatives include a narrow or a wide median; the narrow median may have roundabouts at intersections that are now signalized. For the Lathrup Village section, they are looking at on-street parking as an alternative.

Wilson distributed a handout consisting of six sheets depicting broad scale alternatives for the design of Southfield Road from Mt. Vernon to 13 Mile Road. The Road Commission has scheduled a public informational meeting for Monday, December 10 in Lathrup Village to review the alternate road designs. Strader thought it would be beneficial for Planning Commission members to attend the meeting and gain a further understanding of the concepts proposed by the Road Commission.

If the Village is going to take a position on the portion of Southfield Road between 13 and 14 Mile Road, conversation on alternative designs should take place. The County currently plans to stop at or just north of the 13 Mile Road intersection. Strader and Wilson have voiced their objection to treating the traffic serving business area different north of 13 Mile Road than what is planned for the roadway south of 13 Mile Road. One of the goals of the Village will be to persuade the Road Commission to extend their study at least to the end of the Beverly Hills business district.

Commission members discussed the elements of Alternatives 1 through 6 with Strader, weighing the pros and cons of various design concepts. They talked about the appropriate size of a median, the number of traffic lanes, possibility of a separated on-street parking lane, signalization, and the feasibility of constructing roundabouts. Shared access and the consolidation of driveways in the commercial district will be essential to the success of a median.

Strader said that LSL does not think that the County should be basing the future design of Southfield Road on a robust growth of traffic. It should be based on modest growth and what traffic looks like today, which means that fewer lanes would work.

The object will be to agree on an optimum design with the idea that the Planning Commission and Council will take an official position to present to the Road Commission for consideration in their overall plan for the Southfield Road reconstruction. Strader related that, once the County's plans are in place and the road is designed, plans will not change much even though it will take ten or more years to begin construction.

Planning Commission members were encouraged to attend the public information open house with the County Road Commission on December 10 from 3:30-7:00 p.m. at Lathrup Village Hall. Members could then discuss their views on the design of Southfield Road at the December 12 meeting and attempt to arrive at a consensus. It was suggested that the joint meeting with

Council in February would be a good time to take an official position on a design for the Southfield Road commercial district. Based on their review of the alternatives, the Planning Commission and Council could adopt a resolution stating that they have looked at reports, studied the issues, and have reached a consensus on the optimum design for Southfield Road along the Village commercial district.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Abboud brought up the topic of the Village Master Plan and the need for a comprehensive look at what is going on in the community and how that relates to the Southfield Road corridor plan. Borden mentioned that the Village's Master Plan does recommend the review and further study of the Southfield Road corridor. Beverly Hills is about due for a five year review of its Master Plan as required by state law. Incorporating the Southfield Road corridor sub-area plan into the Village Master Plan could be an agenda item for the joint meeting with Council in February.

Freedman referred to comments made by residents who attended the public workshop indicating that they did not want Beverly Hills to turn into Birmingham. She thought that downtown Birmingham was a success in terms of occupied business spaces and people walking on the streets.

Borowski referred to a letter to the Township Clerk from the County Board of Commissioners regarding the Southfield Township Master Plan amendment. He noted that 2010 census information indicates that the median household income for Southfield Township (including the three villages) was \$123,493.

Westerlund inquired about plans for the next meeting of the Southfield Road Corridor subcommittee. Borden responded that the goal of LSL Planning is to provide subcommittee members with refined materials by the end of the year. A follow up meeting will be scheduled in January.

Ostrowski thanked Brian Borden, Brad Strader and the rest of the subcommittee members for coordinating a successful public workshop. It was a positive event, and the corridor project is moving in the right direction.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

Manager Wilson commented that Council liaison Jon Oen sent his apologies for not being able to attend tonight's meeting due to family matters.

Wilson informed the Commission that Bob Bliven, long-time member of the Planning Board and part-time employee of the Village, will be retiring at the end of the year. He has done a tremendous amount of work for Beverly Hills as the designated cartographer and historian. There are drawers full of maps created from scratch by Bob Bliven. Council will present a proclamation to Mr. Bliven at its meeting of December 18. Bob Bliven was on the Planning Board for 15 years and served on the Birmingham Area Cable Board before that time. He has been a great asset to the Village.

There is an employee who is familiar with the software program used by Mr. Bliven and who will be available for small mapping projects. Hubbell Roth & Clark will be brought in to do work for the Village when needed.

PLANNING CONSULTANT COMMENTS

Borden thanked the members of the sign ordinance subcommittee and Southfield Road corridor subcommittee for their hard work in the past year on the two projects undertaken by the Planning Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Motion by Ostrowski, second by Borowski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Motion passed.

David Jensen
Planning Commission Chair

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary