

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

Absent: Westerlund

Also Present: Village Manager, Wilson
Planning Consultant, Borden

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 FEBRUARY 27, 2013

A correction was made to change the support on approval of the amended agenda from ‘Peddie’ to ‘Abboud’.

Motion by Ostrowski, second by Abboud, that the minutes of a Planning Commission meeting held February 27, 2013 be approved as amended.

Motion passed.

UPDATE OF SOUTHFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR PROJECT

Planning consultant Brian Borden reported that the Southfield Road subcommittee met last week and reviewed LSL Planning’s second draft of the form based code, which is centered on the concept plan and design guidelines. LSL planner and code writing specialist Sherrin Hood worked on the code with input from Brad Strader. Hood went through the details with subcommittee members and explained how the code would work and what needs to be done to implement the concept plan.

Subcommittee member Ostrowski stated that he was pleased with the product presented in terms of form based code. The document touched on most of the material the Planning Commission has been talking about for several months. He asked Borden to outline a proposed new approach that may deviate from the original thinking with respect to the code.

Borden related that the tactic is moving away from the original idea of a voluntary overlay district to incorporate more of a mandatory approach to the new district. LSL did not feel that a 100% voluntary code would realistically result in reaching the design concept because the incentives are not there. The extra height, density, mixed uses, and parking reductions are not significant enough for developers to want to redevelop the study area into a town center.

In its current state, the form based code represents more of a mandatory approach with some ability for the Planning Commission to work with an applicant or a developer on a plan. A minor percentage of building expansion would not trigger the full code. This will still be an overlay district with the uses being dictated by the underlying zoning. Borden stated that the Village could also create a new district and apply it. Sites would no longer be zoned office and business; they may be zoned town center or another designation.

Commission members discussed ideas relative to the function of the form based code with Borden. There was a consensus that the goal is to implement the concept plan and the vision for the study area. The Village will get that done by adopting the concept plan, design guidelines and code.

Jensen proposed inviting urban planner Bob Gibbs to a Southfield Road subcommittee meeting. It would be interesting to receive his feedback on where he thinks Beverly Hills stands in this corridor redevelopment and establishment of a town center. The Commission as a whole was interested in having an opportunity to meet with Bob Gibbs.

Jensen will contact Mr. Gibbs to determine if he is available in April or May to attend a Planning Commission meeting to share his thoughts about the progress of the Southfield Road Corridor redevelopment plan. Borden will have the form based code presented to the Board as a whole next month prior to hearing Gibbs' input in April or May so that everyone present will have the same information.

Borden remarked that, at the joint meeting with Council, Brad Strader referred to an adoption process for the components of the corridor study. In order to provide a sound legal basis for the form based code, the Village will need to incorporate the design guidelines into its Master Plan. He mentioned that the Master Plan is up for its five-year review as required by the state.

Manager Wilson requested that LSL Planning prepare a quote on the Master Plan review for consideration in the Village's 2013-2014 FY budget. Borden will provide two estimates. One will involve a complete update of the master plan; the other will be to run the process to incorporate the Southfield Road corridor elements. He noted that items like demographics and zoning changes can be added to the plan; items that have been accomplished can be removed from the plan goals.

DISCUSSION/REVIEW DRAFT OF RESPONSE PROVIDING COUNCIL WITH A WRITTEN POSITION TO REFER TO THE OCRC REGARDING THE SOUTHFIELD ROAD REHABILITATION AND ROUNDABOUTS

Borden distributed a draft letter outlining a recommended joint position of the Planning Commission and Council to the Road Commission for Oakland County regarding the Village's preferred design option for Southfield Road redevelopment in Beverly Hills. The topic of roundabouts is addressed in the statement.

Commission members reviewed the letter, which includes a list of points discussed at the February Planning Commission meeting. Members considered taking action to forward this letter to Council for their review and approval.

Wilson related that work is continuing in terms of the Road Commission Environmental Assessment study; an updated report will be distributed in June. Wilson has received additional

feedback from the EA group. They are talking about combining aspects of design alternatives #4 and #6 and proposing another design. Wilson hopes to have something on that by next month.

The president of the City of Southfield Council is interested in hosting a meeting with the Beverly Hills Council and Lathrup Village Council to tackle this issue. A meeting has been proposed for April 8 but has yet to be formalized. Wilson will keep the Planning Commission advised.

Wilson noted that there was a meeting held on March 20 at the City of Southfield, which was attended by members Abboud and Westerlund and representatives from LSL Planning. Westerlund submitted a report on the Southfield Road discussion at this workshop. Wilson related that there may be a change in attitudes regarding what should occur on the corridor. The coordination of the three communities on this issue may be key.

Wilson requested that Brian Borden and Brad Strader review the recent feedback he received from the environmental assessment steering committee before finalizing the letter outlining the joint stance of the Planning Commission and Council on the Southfield Road design. There was agreement to receive input from the planning consultants and bring the letter back to the Planning Commission for action at next month's meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Abboud commented on the amount of traffic now on Southfield Road and future changes with the reconstruction of the road. He asked if it would be feasible for the Village to approach the Road Commission and ask for a fast track system in order to conduct a signal coordination study. Abboud would like to know if it's feasible to slow traffic down and increase safety.

Wilson stated that he will speak with someone from the Road Commission to determine what kind of coordination is available. He noted that the flow should be better during periods of low volume traffic.

Freedman referred to the minutes of last month's meeting, page 4, second paragraph from the bottom, when she commented to Brad Strader about whether or not a request for variance associated with a site plan should be heard by the ZBA before the site plan goes before the Planning Commission for review. The last sentence should read, "Freedman related that Strader concurred that this item should be addressed by the Village".

Borowski commended Robert Stempien on the sign ordinance presentation he made at the last Council meeting prior to a public hearing on sign ordinance amendments.

Stempien commented that the sign ordinance presentation was well received by Council. There were written comments made by resident Bob Smith, which will be addressed by Wilson. A resident present in the audience expressed concern about the maximum 8' height of address numbers on buildings. Stempien said that 8" is the currently allowed height for address numbers.

Ostrowski referred to the draft letter to the Road Commission and suggested pointing out facts to make a stronger case for a median on Southfield Road from Thirteen to Fourteen Mile Road.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

Wilson reported on the public hearing on the proposed sign ordinance amendments held at the March 19 Council meeting. Signs that are currently nonconforming with the existing ordinance

were a topic of discussion. Attorney Ryan recommended that the Village identify and compile an inventory of existing nonconforming signs prior to adoption of the revised ordinance and place those business owners on notice. Wilson has started that process with the code enforcement officer. Stempien has been the point person in some of the nonconforming sign issues. The intent is to make sure that there is nothing left outstanding before the sign ordinance changes.

Wilson referred to a letter submitted by Bob Smith on Birwood regarding the proposed sign ordinance. His concern had to do with the lighting of signs after hours, particularly on 14 Mile Road adjacent to residential areas. The language in the current draft (22.32.095 (4)f.) reads: “Any illuminated sign located on a lot abutting or across a street from a residentially zoned or occupied property shall not be illuminated between the hours of 9 pm and 7 am except that such sign may remain illuminated during such time as the activity to which the sign pertains is open for business.”

Wilson said that the intent was that a business sign can remain lit until 9 pm if the establishment is open for business. Mr. Smith asked that the language be clarified to say that a sign cannot be lit during those hours unless the business is open. The way it is now, the sign could remain lit until 9 pm if a business closes at 5 pm.

There followed extensive discussion on this section in an effort to address the issue. There was conversation regarding changing the wording of that section to require businesses adjacent to residential areas to turn their signs off if they closed prior to 9 pm. It was ultimately the recommendation of the Planning Commission not to change the draft language. It was pointed out that there are sections within the ordinance that deal with parking lot lighting but that apply to signs as well. There are remedies within the ordinance to address a sign if the lighting is projecting off of a parcel onto a neighbor’s parcel.

With regard to another matter raised at the public hearing, Wilson thought that EIFS is a known standard and did not require an ordinance definition.

Brian Borden stated that he will email information on upcoming planning and zoning seminars to members of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board and Council.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Motion by Freedman, 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