

Present: Council: President Mercer; President Pro-Tem Briggs; Members: Burry, Kelly, LaFerriere and Oen

Planning Board: Chairperson Jensen; Vice-Chair Ostrowski; Members: Abboud, Borowski, Freedman, Peddie, Ruprich, Stempien and Westerlund.

Absent: Council Member Mooney

Also Present: Village Manager, Wilson
Planning Consultant, Brad Strader

Chairman Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road. He welcomed members of Council to the joint meeting.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA/APPROVE AGENDA

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

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

REPORTS – SIGNS

The Planning Commission's purpose is to upgrade the quality of signs Village-wide by prescription. The first step is to amend five sections of the existing ordinance. The second step is to fully update the entire sign ordinance.

Stempien reviewed that a subcommittee of the Planning Commission including Abboud, Borowski, and Westerlund along with an LSL Planning representative has been meeting over the past year to revise the current sign ordinance. The updated sign ordinance draft is organized into five sections: Purpose and Intent, Definitions, Prohibited Signs, Sign Standards for all signs, and a Table for Sign Standards. The subcommittee reviewed present signage in the Village as well as signs that they would like to see in the community to create a unique sense of place for Beverly Hills. The idea was to generally improve the quality of signage in the Village that has been allowed for many years under the current ordinance.

At the request of the Planning Commission, the Village Council has declared a temporary moratorium on sign permits that would require Planning Commission review. The 180-day moratorium will conclude on February 18, 2013. A draft ordinance from LSL Planning will be ready for review by the end of this week. The Planning Commission has held its public hearing on the proposed sign ordinance amendments. Council will be required to hold a public hearing and schedule a first and second reading of the ordinance before it can be adopted.

Stempien narrated a slide show presentation to give Council an idea of what the Village has now in terms of signage along the Southfield Road corridor and what is proposed as far as regulating signs in the business district. He outlined existing sign requirements versus proposed sign area

and height requirements for each type of signage including wall signs, ground signs and window signage. A significant change is that the ordinance will eliminate pole signs. The amount of square footage for wall signs has been reduced. The amount of internal illumination will be limited to 30 percent under the new sign ordinance. Temporary signage cannot be mounted to permanent signage. Types of signs that are not allowed are inflatable, LED screens, banner flags, trailer signs and mascots. The presentation included examples of unique signs that depict what could be achieved by promoting creativity.

It was clarified that a business owner would not be required to remove a nonconforming sign following adoption of the revised sign ordinance. The sign would be allowed to remain but would have to be brought into compliance if it was replaced or if the property came before the Village for site plan approval. Questions and comments from Council and Commission members were addressed by Stempien.

Stempien indicated that the Planning Commission plans to update sections of the current ordinance and blend the new text with the existing ordinance format in order to bring the sign ordinance to a functional level so that applications can be processed and addressed under standards that are more in line with the direction of the Village. The second step would be for the Planning Commission to update the remainder of the sign ordinance and consider adopting it as a stand-alone ordinance.

There followed discussion on how to proceed with the public hearings and adoption of the sign ordinance. Council members agreed to schedule its public hearing on the ordinance for the March 5, 2013 Council meeting. This would give members an opportunity to review the ordinance language prior to that time. Council will then hold a first and second reading of the sign ordinance amendments. Consideration will be given to extending the moratorium for 60 days to allow time for a first and second reading prior to Council approval of the sign ordinance. The Village has a draft sign ordinance and needs time to hear public comments and consider necessary modifications. Moratorium language would include the option for someone to appeal the moratorium and have their petition heard.

SOUTHFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR UPDATES

Westerlund presented a slide show updating Council on the Southfield Road Redevelopment Plan. He thanked subcommittee members Stempien, Ruprich, Ostrowski, and Abboud as well as LSL planning consultants for their hard work on this project. Westerlund began by talking about the vision for a Beverly Hills Town Center, which is “to promote the development of the Village’s unique character while enhancing its economic base by assisting in the retention and expansion of community valued businesses and encouraging new business to locate in Beverly Hills. Coordinating resources to create a “sense of place”, expand the tax base for the economic benefit of the community, and elevate the quality of life of each of our citizens.”

The process involved holding subcommittee meetings, a developer workshop with invitations extended to all business owners, and a public workshop. The Planning Commission is at a point where the redevelopment plan is close to being ready for implementation. The subcommittee will be reviewing a draft form-based code prepared by LSL Planning.

Westerlund reviewed that the Road Commission for Oakland County is studying a redesign of Southfield Road from the Lodge freeway to north of 13 Mile Road. This is vital to what the Village is trying to achieve in terms of planning for the Southfield Road business district. The County presented a number of design solutions including a plan that calls for a median in the middle of the roadway with a slip road on the west side, which would allow parking along store fronts. This design is being considered in areas of Lathrup Village and Southfield. The Planning Commission will want to talk about taking a joint stance with Council on a statement to the County indicating the Village's preferred design option for the Southfield Road corridor in Beverly Hills.

Planning consultant Strader suggested that the Council draft a resolution indicating their preference for a median design for Southfield Road including a slip road with parking. He added that some of the County alternative designs include roundabouts at major intersections. Council may want to take a position on roundabouts or indicate a willingness to explore this idea. Strader urged that the Village take an official position on their choice for the design of Southfield Road before April of 2013.

The Corridor Redevelopment Plan would incorporate taller mixed-use buildings, buildings closer to the street, better traffic flow, coordinated parking/access and green gathering spaces, and would be more pedestrian friendly. Westerlund referred to a slide showing a concept drawing of the redevelopment plan. The Thirteen Mile and Southfield Road intersection will be the entryway to the Village. The residential aspect of the Huntley Apartments is integral to the entire development. It is proposed to connect varying uses within the district.

There was discussion on how the redevelopment and retrofit of existing businesses could occur. Building height and parking were reviewed and how it would relate to the mixture of uses. Orientation of the building and setbacks close to the roadway will be promoted in lieu of parking in front of buildings.

A Design Guidelines document will address components that tie the entire district together including landscaping, lighting, signage, building materials, utilities, street furnishing, access/streets and parking lots/decks. Strader added that the Plan Document and Design Guidelines have been drafted and are being prepared for adoption.

LSL Planning has drafted a form-based code (FBC), which is ready for review by the subcommittee. A form-based code is a different way of regulation. Zoning deals with regulating of uses and setbacks; a form-based code attempts to tie the building, parking, use and design together to set forth elements of what the community wants to see. LSL Planning is drafting a Regulating Plan, which is a two or three-dimensional map/plan that designates areas where the different height and use standards apply. The FBC elements include a Standards section incorporating design standards for the building, landscaping and lighting. It contains charts and graphics. This section addresses incentives, such as parking reductions.

The Administration element is a key part of the ordinance that deals with applying the code. It is difficult to redevelop a built-up site. The Village has talked about adopting an overlay zoning district. The options for a developer would be to build under the current ordinance or build using

new code development standards that the Village would like to see. Another way to proceed would be for the Village to make it mandatory that new development comply with the form-based code. Strader commented on the pros and cons of the optional and mandatory alternatives or using an in-between alternative.

Strader related several implementation roadblocks: the redevelopment plan only transitions one of the four corners; a piecemeal lot-by-lot transition is complicated; determine triggers for use changes and expansions; connecting private drives is difficult; the first redevelopment opportunity is important.

There are incentives that the Village can consider when moving towards a Town Center development: promote the code with the business community; jumpstart the code with a new streetscape project; recruit developers; consider parking management; improvements through Southfield Road reconstruction; invest in infrastructure (T.I.F.A.); identify and promote incentives (additional building height; parking reductions; allowing mixture of uses; administrative/streamlined site reviews).

Council and Commission members discussed various aspects of the redevelopment plan including Southfield Road design and traffic flow, partnering with existing businesses, and the topic of roundabouts at intersections.

NEW ITEMS/OPEN DISCUSSION

Chairman Jensen introduced items to be considered and added to next year's work plan.

Update Zoning Ordinance

Parking: It has been suggested that Zoning Ordinance parking requirements should be updated. Strader remarked that he would prefer reserving that task until the Village completes the Form Based Code. Parking may be used as an incentive to develop property under the new code.

Zoning District Uses: Strader suggested reviewing the list of uses we want to see in the Village, which would eliminate the need for interpretation of uses.

Zoning Board of Appeals Section: This section of the ordinance is not consistent with the new Zoning Act in terms of public hearing notices, membership, and variance standards. Strader commented that there is standard language that could be applied resulting in a quick update.

Group Homes: Wilson noted that there have been changes in State law regarding group homes and day care facilities that should be reflected in the zoning ordinance. He suggested that LSL work with Administration and Tom Ryan to update the code.

Enforcement Issues/Building Department

Wilson reviewed that the Village eliminated its full-time building official position three years ago for financial and other reasons. Beverly Hills contracted with a part-time building official, who left over a year ago. The Village has since been contracting its building, mechanical and plumbing inspections through the City of Royal Oak. The City of Birmingham has been doing the Village's electrical inspections for over a year. The building official in Royal Oak is

currently acting as the building official for Beverly Hills. There have been discussions with Birmingham and Royal Oak about a complete merger of building department services. Wilson stated that the workload is increasing to the point where the Village needs to make a decision on whether it will formalize a contractual relationship for building department services or bring back a full-time building official.

Wilson related a conversation held at the Council strategic planning session last Saturday. He expressed the view that service levels suffer if the Village tries to do too much with not enough people. The approach should be to determine what level of service is needed to accomplish what needs to be done. If Beverly Hills is going to provide the full service of processing building and trade permits, we have to be honest about what kind of manpower is needed to do it effectively. The Village may decide to focus more on the customer service aspect of code enforcement and rental inspection, and have someone else who is already doing building and trade permits at a fully functional level to handle that service for Beverly Hills.

In response to an inquiry, Wilson stated that he is talking to representatives from both Birmingham and Royal Oak and has informed them that the Village needs formal proposals for building department service.

Official Response to OCRC regarding Southfield Road rehabilitation/ Roundabouts

Strader outlined options for the design of Southfield Road presented by the Road Commission for Oakland County. Some of the alternatives include a slip road and parking; some include a roundabout at the intersection. Strader suggested earlier in the meeting that a joint resolution from the Planning Commission and Council should request that the County Road Commission extend the Southfield Road Rehabilitation study to Beverly Road or even as far as 14 Mile Road.

Strader described how roundabouts function and mentioned the pros and cons of this method. The Road Commission favors roundabouts at certain intersections for the following reasons: crashes are reduced by 50-60%; speeds decrease; traffic calming occurs; delays are less. Disadvantages include the fact that some people are not familiar with roundabouts; they are not considered the best way for pedestrians to cross the street; they require more land area; they cost more to build than a regular intersection. Strader said that he is open minded about roundabouts but has mixed feelings about installing one at the 13 Mile and Southfield Road intersection.

Jensen suggested that the Planning Commission take this subject up at its next meeting on February 27 and provide a written position for discussion with Council and referral to the Road Commission for Oakland County.

Liquor License ordinance amendment

Wilson stated that there have been revisions by the State Liquor Control Board regarding the amount of input and approval municipalities will have over liquor license changes. It has not been as much of an issue in Beverly Hills as it has in other communities. The cities of Birmingham and Novi have drafted an ordinance to provide more local control over liquor licensing issues in their communities. Council may decide at some point that this is something that Attorney Ryan should address.

Discussion of the Village Master Plan

Strader stated that it is the recommendation of LSL that the Village Center Plan be adopted as a chapter of the Master Plan; he outlined the procedure for doing this. The Planning Act requires a community to update its Master Plan every five years. The Village will either need to readopt the Master Plan with the addition of the Town Center Plan or revisit and update other areas of the plan at the same time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob Walsh of 20655 Smallwood Court stated that he attended a Road Commission meeting in December at which time alternative designs for the Southfield Road corridor were reviewed. He commented on plans for a roundabout at Thirteen Mile and Southfield Road. Walsh mentioned that the Road Commission will have upcoming public information meetings on design and financing.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

Wilson acknowledged members of the Planning Commission and commended them for the time and effort they put into the sign and corridor redevelopment subcommittees. He thanked them for doing a remarkable job.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council members thanked the Planning Commission members for doing a great job on the sign ordinance amendments and the Town Center Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Abboud thanked Council for taking the time to attend this joint meeting. He expressed appreciation to resident Bob Walsh for his interest.

Motion by Abboud, second by Freedman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Motion passed.

David Jensen, Chair
Planning Board

Tim Mercer
President

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary