

Present: Vice-Chairperson Westerlund; Members: Borowski, Drummond, Grinnan, Jensen, Ruprich, and Stempien

Absent: Chairperson Ostrowski, Member Chegash

Also Present: Planning and Zoning Administrator, Wilks
Planning Consultant, Borden
Council Liaison, Abboud

Vice-Chairperson Westerlund called the regular Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Southfield Township Hall building at 18550 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA/APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Jensen, second by Drummond, to amend the agenda, removing “Discussion on proposal from Gibbs Planning Group for Southfield Corridor marketing plan” and approve the agenda as amended.

Motion passed.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF MEETING HELD APRIL 27, 2016.

Page two, paragraph one, line three, change to; “the landscaping DOES NOT meet the requirement”. Page three, paragraph one, final sentence should read; “A six-inch-high curb at the sidewalk could be put in to avoid any possible accidents.” Same page, paragraph eight, second sentence should read; “Westerlund suggested that MDOT may request...”

Motion by Westerlund, second by Borowski, that the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting held April 27, 2016, be approved as amended.

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL LAND USE REQUEST FOR ADDITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL FACILITY AND COMPLETION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS ROUTE FOR DETROIT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL, 22305 W 13 MILE ROAD

Sam Ashley, Vice-President, Cunningham-Limp, accompanied by Glen Shilling, Headmaster of Detroit Country Day School, presented the proposed addition to the existing middle school, extending off the existing structure. Additional parking will be added, as well as a mandatory fire lane. They wish to expand the middle school building to accommodate fifth grade, in addition to the current sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in the building. This change would take the student headcount to approximately 140. Ashley presented floor plans, elevation plans, and a campus map. He explained it is currently a three level building, with the lowest level built into the hill, and the

façade is made of the same materials as the existing school. Landscaping improvements have been incorporated into the plans.

Borden explained there are two components; special land use and review of the site plan. One of the special land use concerns would be mitigation of potential impact on residents to the west. He suggested there needs to be protection through landscaping or usage changes. The emergency access drive should only be used for emergency access and it needs to be ensured that it is only used for that purpose. He stated there is a potential for traffic increase due to an increase in students and faculty. A traffic study was done, and some modifications will need to be made to the Hillview and Lahser intersection. The final concern is that the large hill they will cut into is a flood plain, and they will need approval from MDEQ to grant permits for the flood plain activity.

Regarding the site plan; the height of the building from the walk out level is 42 feet high, this is not compliant with the Village ordinance. The original middle school building had to secure a variance for their building height, there may be a variance needed again. There are no issues with the volume of parking, however, it is suggested that if there is not clear access to the building for barrier free entrance at the upper lot, those spaces be moved to the lower lot. Regarding the emergency access loop; Detroit Country Day must ensure that this is used as an emergency access drive only and not used as a shortcut across the property. He stated there are buffer and screening requirements in the Village ordinance, the plans are not clear as to what vegetation is existing or will be added. There is a masonry wall requirement in the ordinance of four to six feet tall that matches the materials of the building. In the current plans it is proposed to continue an existing nine-foot wooden fence. The proposed lighting plan meets the Village ordinance and all zero out well before the west lot lines. He would like to see more details of the fixtures to ensure compliance. It appears there are no new signs or sign modifications, clarification is needed if there are any new or modified signs.

Vice Chairperson Westerlund opened the public hearing at 7:56 p.m.

Daniel Tatarian, 30166 Lincolnshire E., expressed concern that there is a piece of property zoned as residential that is being built on as commercial. He stated the ball field creates noise pollution and there is an area where they have built bike trenches in the wet lands that also generate noise pollution. He would like to see them build upward on the other side of the campus and move the playing fields to the center to protect the wet lands and ward off the noise pollution. He also suggested a nature walk along the river might be better suited than a bike bath.

Tyrone Henry, 22105 Hillview, said there is so much traffic from the athletic field it is difficult to get in and out of his home. People park on both sides of the street and he hears traffic noise at all hours of the day and night. He would like to see a change in access to his property by accessing it from the rear, which would help alleviate his problems.

Dave Ruby, 30120 Lincolnshire, shared photos of a dam that has grown over the last year and is causing erosion on the river bank. He felt the bike paths along the banks are not safe. Children are riding their bikes through the yards and along the paths, which is a potential liability. Children are climbing on the dam and it does not seem safe. He expressed concerns about the changes to the flow of water in the flood plain, causing the loss of several feet of river bank to erosion. He stated in the last few years the creation of more paved areas changes the run offs from the land; there are fewer

trees and less grass which increases the run off into the river. He also expressed concern that if the emergency access road becomes a south to north egress, the headlights from automobiles will shine directly into homes. There needs to be a screen as well as a fence.

Camille Fath, 30144 Lincolnshire, stated that the bike path has been deforested and all of the trees have been bulldozed and cut down, creating full visibility. She says there was a previous dam that was created from the trees along the shore line falling down, and it floods the river causing more erosion.

Stewart Mandell, 22601 Highbank Drive, stated that he really likes his neighborhood, but is very concerned about flooding in the area, noise pollution, light pollution, and increased traffic. He stated that he would like to see the neighborhood better protected in the future from encroachment and expansion.

Mary Ryan, 30444 Lincolnshire, suggested that Detroit Country Day look into staggered start times for their buildings. The softball field is behind her home, and she is aware of the noise, but is concerned about the families and children who walk through the property to school, and are now crossing that emergency road. She pointed out that there is noise at all hours for things like plowing and trash pick-up. She encouraged the Commission to remember that the residents are the taxpayers and they have been good neighbors to the school.

Dave Dulio, 22615 Highbank, stated that he was there in support of the neighbors and his neighborhood.

No one else wished to be heard, therefore, the public hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.

Ashley clarified that the emergency road is required by the state and will only be used as an emergency access road. The existing softball field is being moved away from residential properties, and there will be an expansion of the green space that creates a barrier. He stated he does not know anything about the bike paths or dams that were created, but agreed to look into the situation and problem solve dam removal and protection for the area. They are required by the county and the state to have permits for all drainage, and cannot get those permits without meeting specific requirements. There is a storm water retention area on the property which is maintained via an agreement with the Village. He stated they plan to comply with the suggestions made in the traffic study. He agreed to look into options to ensure the emergency road was only available to be used in emergency situations. He clarified that with the current barrier free parking arrangement there is easy access to nearby doors. He stated that they would not be using any new signage, and would include lighting specifics on the next plan submission. He agreed to survey the existing vegetation and review what improvements could be made. Regarding the height of the building, in previous years they have used an established grade.

REVIEW SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL LAND USE REQUEST FOR ADDITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL FACILITY AND COMPLETION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS ROUTE FOR DETROIT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL, 22305 W 13 MILE ROAD

Borowski expressed concern that Detroit Country Day is adding 48,000 square feet of space to accommodate the addition of 74 more students. This addition has the potential for a substantial increase in students.

Shilling explained they keep their class sizes in the mid-teens, and are currently utilizing the building at 100% capacity. There are teachers sharing rooms, and the goal is for each teacher to have their own room. There is a need for creative space, orchestra space, lab space, and builder space. Ashley explained that the addition would create a total of approximately 40 rooms, 30 of them for academics.

Motion by Jensen, second by Ruprich, to recommend approval on the request by Detroit Country Day for special land use at the middle school facility.

Roll Call Vote:

Motion passed (6-1)

Stempien clarified that the school is an R-1 Zone, and the current maximum height limitation is 30 feet from the established grade. Currently it is 30 feet at the lowest, and 42 at the highest. Based on this, the applicant would need to go before the Zoning Board for a height variance. Borden explained that the current plan does match the existing middle school design, and that a variance was granted at that time for the building. A copy of that previous variance decision could be made available to the Commission and Zoning Board.

Stempien reinforced the importance of creating harmony with the neighbors; suggesting that a well-planned green belt would be a solution that could meet the needs of both parties.

Grinnan stated she felt it is important to maintain the emergency road as an emergency road only. Westerlund suggested Ashley speak to the Public Safety about options for the road.

Jensen asked for clarification as to whose property the river is on and who is responsible for the river and the log jams created on it. It appears that the river is on both Detroit Country Day and private homeowner property; however the dam is located on Detroit Country Days property. He would like to see the issue of river maintenance and log issues addressed.

Homeowner Camille Fath explained that there are two creeks that come together and form the river, and now that there is so much more water flowing, it is eroding the banks, undercutting the trees and they fall into the river. When the water rises it rises up to her backyard.

Westerlund suggested that when they speak to MDEQ on the river flow and flood plain issues to include that information in their submission.

Borowski stated that he is concerned about the residents and impact of Detroit Country Day's practice over time. They have reached the saturation point of use for this property. He expressed

concern for the balance between property rights, and responsibilities to your neighbors. He felt that the residents pay taxes, and they have the right to have their property protected.

Jensen reminded everyone that five or six years ago, Detroit Country Day came before the board to clear a field for a baseball diamond. They listened to the concerns of residents and did not return to the board, but made a decision to build elsewhere on the property.

Westerlund stated that Hillview Lane is a private road, and the concern is the parking that happens there. There needs to be an improvement in the traffic problems and parking in that area. Measures need to be taken so that Hillview Lane is left open for driving. If the softball field is moved, the high netting should be discussed. There is a nine or ten-foot fence along the property line, and decisions would need to be made about the continuation of the fence by the Zoning Board.

Westerlund read a letter received from homeowner Elaine Galin, 30554 Lincolnshire, who expressed concern that the proposed emergency access road would be used for driving and increase the traffic along that road.

Ruprich stated concerns about the river and the steps taken to ensure its protection. He also would like to see measures put into place to maintain the emergency access road for emergency use only.

Drummond suggested that Detroit Country Day keep that road closed, and work with the neighbors, possibly push back plowing times.

Motion by Stempien, second by Grinnan, to table the decision on site plan approval until the applicant makes all plan modifications as requested tonight and submits an updated plan without beginning any work.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion passed (7-0)

REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF SIGN PERMITS FOR A GROUND SIGN AND A WALL SIGN AT VILLAGE OF BEVERLY HILLS MUNICIPAL OFFICES, 18500 W THIRTEEN MILE ROAD

Borden explained that this was a proposal for a new sign as part of the building renovations being performed. Westerlund stated that the ground sign seems very tall at eight feet.

Motion by Grinnan, second by Jensen for approval of sign permits for a ground sign and wall sign at the Village of Beverly Hills municipal offices.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion passed (7-0)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dan Nunez, Marguerite Street, asked the Commission how much of their personal time members spend outside of a meeting. The Commission explained that they individually review the packets for upcoming meetings, but they do not talk as a group.

LIAISON COMMENTS

Abboud stated that he supported the decision made previously regarding the BP Gas station, and appreciates the Commission's thoroughness in their effort to get everything correct.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

Wilks reminded the Commission that the Beverly Hills municipal office is under construction, and meetings will be held at the Southfield Township Hall for the rest of the year.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Grinnan asked Wilks for an update on the BP Gas Station project. Wilks reported that they were not in attendance at the Zoning Board meeting held in May, and have not submitted updated plans.

Westerlund reminded the Commission to review the tree ordinance for the upcoming meeting.

Motion by Borowski, second by Jensen, to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 pm.

Motion passed.

Patrick Westerlund
Planning Commission Vice-Chairperson

Ellen Marshall
Village Clerk

Elizabeth Lyons
Recording Secretary