

CITY OF HUNTINGTON WOODS
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 28, 2022
7:00 p.m.
In Person Meeting – Huntington Woods Commission Room

Vice Chairman Rick Polan called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

PRESENT: Sheldon Kohn, Todd Sperl, Rick Polan, Jill Ingber, Chris Golembiewski,
Gail Linden

ABSENT: Blake Moore (excused), Mike Wright (excused), Bob Paul (excused).

City Staff Present: Zoning Administrator, Hank Berry.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to amend the agenda to include the Priority List for the Master Plan.

**Moved by Sheldon Kohn and seconded by Gail Linden to approve
the February 28, 2022, agenda.**

Ayes: Golembiewski, Linden, Wright, Kohn, Sperl, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent: Moore (excused), Paul (excused), Wright (excused).

The Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chairman Polan called for approval of the January 24, 2022 Minutes.

Todd Sperl pointed out on page six of the minutes that it stated he made a motion and then seconded it. Gail Linden made the motion, and Todd Sperl seconded it.

Berry: The correction was reflected in the minutes.

Motion to accept the minutes as revised by Todd Seconded by Chris.

Ayes: Golembiewski, Linden, Wright, Kohn, Sperl, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent: Moore (excused), Paul (excused), Wright (excused).

The Motion Carried.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Matter of Site Plan Review for a new dental office by Gross Huntington Woods Real Estate at 26125 Woodward.

Dr. Gross: I purchased the building with a plan that you see before you. There was some confusion about the spaces upfront and Mr. Berry explained that these are controlled by MDOT and do not count in the equation. The parking requirements, while I understand the concerns, reflect way more people that would ever be in the building. There would only be four at most and I would think that there is plenty of parking.

Berry: The plan calls for treatment rooms and observation rooms for which parking requirements are clearly noted in the code. The concern is not to have overflow into the city streets if Dr. Gross' expectations are exceeded. The plan calls for interior renovations and some window relocation. There aren't any exterior renovations shown at this time. Concord is a tight road and the lot ingress/egress is from Concord. You have the authority to waive requirements. Additionally a shared parking agreement with the next door business which Dr. Gross was exploring does not appear to be coming to fruition. Signage would also require a separate permit.

Vice-Chairman Polan called for Public Participation.

Trish Stewart, 26138 York: I am concerned about the parking. I really don't want all the people from this business taking all the parking on my corner of York.

Berry: You can't stop people from parking on public streets but it would be helpful if Dr. Gross could direct his employees to use the MDOT or other parking and not create a nuisance for residents.

Jules Olsman, 26341 Hendrie : I feel that this is a good project and a good use of the property. I would think that MDOT has no plans to rescind those parking places and this should be fine.

Seeing no others wishing to speak the Vice Chair closed Public Participation.

Ingber: Will there be any exterior improvements? This is a chance to significantly upgrade our Woodward frontage.

Dr. Gross: Not at this time but we will be maintaining it significantly better.

Linden: I use that road all the time for egress. That stop sign can be backed up. I have gone through that parking lot. Because you're the only parking lot on that corner, that comes in off of concord. My concern to you is: are you redoing the lot with your building plan? I don't have a problem with the number of spaces that you need based

upon the kind of clientele that you have. Jill made a good point in talking about trying to beautify our buildings, so that is why I ask about if you're going to redo the parking lot and if you are going to do anything with landscaping, etc. I wonder what your lighting situation is going to be in regards to the neighbors. Are you going to have lights on only during your hours, or after hours as well? How will that affect the nearby residents?

Dr. Gross: Those are legitimate concerns. It is in my best interest to make it as aesthetically pleasing from the street side and as approachable as possible. We are redoing the parking lot. I have no intention of bothering the neighbors with lights.

Polan: are there no parking signs adjacent to the building?

Berry: On Concord yes.

Polan: How far does that stretch?

Linden; There is only one on each side.

Berry: That is for the length of that block as I understand it.

Polan: Can you make sure that proper signage is out there?

Berry: Absolutely. I will let Public Safety know and decide what is appropriate.

Polan: I just want to make sure that you know that it is not the city's responsibility to maintain MDOT's parking and that we don't want you calling the city asking for potholes to be filled or anything. It Is MDOTs full responsibility.

Motion to approve the site plan for Gross Dental at 26125 Woodward Ave. as presented.

Moved by Sheldon Kohn and seconded by Chris Golembiewski to approve the site plan for Gross Dental at 26125 Woodward Ave. as presented

Ayes: Golembiewski, Linden, Wright, Kohn, Sperl, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent: Moore (excused), Paul (excused), Wright (excused).

The Motion Carried.

Matter of Review of Priority List for The Master Plan

Berry: The goal of this is to figure out the order of events for how we are going to achieve our goals for the Master Plan. 9 items out of 50 were picked as focal points because the ability to complete 50 action items in one year is not reasonable. The 9 items picked come based off of suggestions. This does not mean that they cannot be moved around, it does not mean that some cannot be taken out, it does not mean some cannot be added. This is just a framework for what can be started with. It can also be adjusted throughout the course of the year, as needs may change.

At the highest priority is the safe routes to school. The community has a high interest in it, and it is very important. We would ask the City Commission to facilitate and fund a study to get empirical data as to what we could do with that idea. It potentially looks like crosswalks, traffic lights, push buttons to indicate a crossing. That is part of a study for options for the planning commission to recommend to the city commission for approval. The financial aspect will be analyzed as well.

Another potentially high priority item is stormwater runoff standards. It could be private or public, maintained on new houses within their property, or a road diet on 11 mile with Berkley, and potentially explore some use of the extra space for stormwater management. All of this is going to require a study, documentation, and information brought to the commission.

Another item is to adopt the proposed improvements to the Woodward Corridor. Adopting the resolution and recommending the to City Commission, then partners Huntington Woods with all of the other Woodward communities (Berkley, Royal Oak, Birmingham), and that could give MDOT the push they need to make the changes all at once for all of the communities that are requesting it. Berry was told by MDOT that they have nothing in the pipe for the next 10 years for the Huntington Woods location.

In the medium category, one of the items was rezone the southwest corner of 11 Mile Road and Woodward to transitional district (TD). Currently Thrifty Florist is in the business district. Changing this to TD makes it more consistent with the rest of Woodward, as the rest of Woodward is TD. It also gives them more options if they choose to sell their property at any point, it allows for more options for what can go in that space for future use.

Another medium level item is to continue to research anti-monotony standards for designs, whether it is commercial or residential. Regular check ins with neighboring communities to see what is happening in their neighborhoods. Another option is enhance pedestrian crossings throughout the whole city, not just on 11 Mile Rd.

Lower on the list, but still important is to develop visual guidelines for community character. This would provide contractors and designers who come in, a framework of what the city expects, and is looking for. This would be public on city websites, and approved by the planning commission.

An item that was originally lower on the list, but that is gaining traction is electric charging stations publicly available. The city would look for grant money to fund these chargers.

Linden: One of the suggestions I had from the previous meeting, is programs and workshops about universal design. I wonder whether that has been put into the plan before it goes to the commissioners, and it's not anywhere on here.

Berry: It is not on here because this is the priority list of what we are looking to do, to accomplish first off the list. I have a copy of the final master plan that has all of the suggestions and feedback from our last meeting, and that document I do not have yet, so I cannot speak to that. It is approved, so it should be incorporated. That could be incorporated into the action item that talks about design books, and the visual guidelines for what the city expects from contractors and designers.

Kohn: How many of these items require a consultant or an engineer?

Berry: I am not sure yet, since we do not know what the revised version of the priority list will look like. The safe routes to school will require funding from the city commission so I have to have a document to send to them with an idea of what the budget is and that puts it on my plate that there needs to be a study done, and it is going to cost x amount of dollars, and then that goes to the commission, and it is discussed – then I can have an actual idea about what is a ballpark cost for this.

Kohn: It seems to me that the safe routes, the stormwater, needed improvements on Woodward, anti-monotony – it seems to me that some of these are design professionals, and some of them are engineering things. With word from MDOT that there is nothing on the table for our section of Woodward for at least 10 years, seems kind of pointless to me to focus on Woodward's proposed improvements. My own view is that the Safe Routes to School overlaps considerably with enhanced pedestrian crossings. I'm willing to be convinced to the contrary but I don't see a problem internal to the city involved with crossings. The other thing that I would like to commission to consider putting on the list in some fashion reconfiguring the city campus. Are we going to do something about it or not? It seems to me that we would need a substantial development consultant in order to present something that an investor might consider, in terms of making a financial investment that has a reasonable return on it. I would like to see something other than conversation going on about this. I want to see something concrete that we can put in front of the city commission, because we've been talking about it for years.

Ingber: It says here on the list that it is of a high priority.

Berry: That is already well underway. That's ordered by the city commission, so the planning commission is not the one to decide whether or not this area is redeveloped.

Kohn: So we don't have a role in that?

Berry: You will have a role when they bring in the building or proposal for that. There has been loose conversations about this for years. The biggest step we've made is putting it in the Master Plan, so that it puts it out there that we are looking for offers. We are also looking at Main Street Oakland County for assistance and other available programs that may entice buyers/developers..

Kohn: Are you telling me that this is off our plate?

Berry: I am saying as soon as this hits the city commission, and we have a document – by sending this to the city commission, you have said that this is what you want them to take a look at. This is the direction that the public, and the planning commission want for the city moving forward. But like it has previously been stated, there has to be funding in order for any of this to happen with the city campus. I'd like to pick one or two items so that we can get our feet on the ground, and get the plan moving.

Sperl: I'd like to recommend reconfiguring the whole list from highest priority down to the lowest priority. What I would propose is an impact effort matrix. From a high priority item, what is the impact on the community or the area? And what would be the effort?

Berry: If you would like, I can purify this list by what planning commission would have a role in. Something that the commission can have a distilled list with the rankings that were out there. I can present that to you via email, and you can come in next month with your ideas on that and discuss that. I am guessing if you have 9 people looking at the list, 7 of you are going to have some overlap.

Sperl: Is it safe to say the priority list is the average of what we all input?

Berry: It is the Planning Commissions input, plus public input. The reality of it is that the public has put a lot of input into this. This is what everyone's list has been distilled to, and now it's time to pick something to work on.

Linden: If we are going to get a revised list, and then you'll email it to us and then is it your goal that if we picked 9 and ranked them, the top 3 would be high, medium, low, etc. Is the goal to compile our lists and see what we all came up with in each importance level?

Berry: That would be the goal in some format like that. What will happen is you'll pick one that will be important, and it is able to be started. While that high priority is in place, the goal is to have a lower priority item going on simultaneously.

Polan: I am going to back up Sheldon in that I am going to push very hard for the city campus, considering the condition of our buildings and that one building is currently condemned, and we are still using it – and we have a tent as another building.

Berry: We need to look at it like do we want all of this done at once, or do we want to break down the buildings in terms of their needs? There is no doubt that the public safety building is in the worst shape.

Kohn: I think those are all details. That is not what we are talking about.

Berry: You prioritize in the way you feel and then I will get my direction from the City Manager and from the city commission. If you want to send a resolution to the city commission urging something to get done, then we will do that. Your voices will be heard on this matter.

Polan: So next steps are to identify what the priorities are, and then after that we will look at what items will require some level of consulting, cost, etc. and start addressing it.

Berry: it could be as simple as a resolution to the city commission from the planning commission to the city of Huntington Woods has expressed a great interest in upgrading the public safety department and to the extent that the Planning Commission can play a part in that, they would like to. There is also budget concerns that Finance will have to address.

Matter of Election of Officer - Secretary

Gail Linden nominated Jill Ingber for the position of Planning Commission Secretary. Todd Sperl seconded the nomination. Jill Ingber accepted the nomination.

Ayes: Golembiewski, Linden, Wright, Kohn, Sperl, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent: Moore (excused), Paul (excused), Wright (excused).

The Motion Carried.

Berry: The Master Plan is completed. We are waiting for one photo swap to take place, and once that document is completed it enters a 63 day review period. It will go to Royal Oak, Berkley, Oak Park – I can't distribute it until I have the final copy of it. It also goes to Oakland County to be approved. It is looking at a timeline of being adopted early this summer.

The meeting was opened and closed for public participation as there was no public wishing to speak.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Jill Ingber and seconded by Gail Linden to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting.

Ayes: Golembiewski, Linden, Wright, Kohn, Sperl, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent: Moore (excused), Paul (excused), Wright (excused).

The Motion Carried, meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Submitted

Amy Berry - Recorder