The Charter Township of Orion Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 7:05 p.m. at the Orion Township Municipal Complex Board Room 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:
Don Walker, PC Rep to ZBA
Kim Urbanowski, BOT Rep to PC
Joe St. Henry, Secretary
Jessica Gingell, Commissioner

Scott Reynolds, Chairman
Don Gross, Vice-Chairman
Derek Brackon, Commissioner

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:
None

CONSULTANTS PRESENT:
Matt Wojciechowski, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Mark Landis (Township Engineer) of OHM Advisors
Tammy Girling, Township Planning & Zoning Director

OTHERS PRESENT:
Scott Gabriel

PC-2022-09, Grand Square of Orion, Special Land Use Request for a drive-thru restaurant, located on a vacant parcel, west of 637 Brown Rd. (Sidwell #09-32-400-099).

Chairman Reynolds asked the applicant to make a brief presentation.

Mr. Ronald Chiesa with R.A. Chiesa Architects presented. Mr. Chiesa stated that they were here in 2020 they got the site plan approved for three hotels and two restaurants in the front of the property. The property is 13.26-acres and is zoning sections A, C, & D (BIZ District). During the timing of this, the restaurant building “A” has changed its user, so they are there tonight with a new restaurant use for that. They have a 4,450-sq. ft. restaurant that will be taking that site that was previously approved for an 8,000-sq. ft. restaurant. The use with this particular restaurant will require a drive-thru lane. They have designed the building and it has been approved by the corporate office.

Mr. Chiesa said getting into the standards the sit-down dining restaurant is compatible with the site because they had a restaurant that was previously approved for this it just changed what type of restaurant that would be moving into the space. Vehicular circulation on the site is still the same they just dropped it into the same area that the previous restaurant was approved. No approaches are changed, none of the circulations has changed, interconnecting the site with one another.

Mr. Chiesa stated that the dumpster and loading area is located internally so it is not visible from Brown Rd. It is screened with plant material, it is designed on the north side of the building, it is in amongst the parking area for this site. This is for a Culvers that would be moving in. The visual impact is very similar to the adjacent restaurant that was there, as well, as what was going to happen with the 8,000-sq. ft. restaurant. The business hours, the typical Culvers, are 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. seven days a week and would be the hours that this building is in operation. They can verify if there needs to be any amendment with the actual operator and owner who are present tonight.

Mr. Chiesa said that the building itself is designed very similarly to what was approved on some of the things that they presented earlier. It has some stone and fiber cement, they have that on the hotels, and both restaurants had various forms of that material, so they are consistent with that. The footprint has some variations to it, it is staggered it is not just a rectangular box. That is something that is in their ordinance to try to have something that has a little bit of deviation to the façade. They also have some
awnings on the building, which is their standard branding, again, that is something that their ordinance speaks to that they like to see those types of building treatments.

Mr. Chiesa noted that the purpose of their Zoning Ordinance they do meet that with the drive-thru. It is an allowed use, it is a Special Land Use, it is allowed in the A & C sections for which they have gotten approval, for this project. A Special Land Use is typical in every community once they have a restaurant with a drive-thru.

Mr. Chiesa said that the public services in the facilities necessary for this building are not a problem. The use is actually smaller than what was proposed here prior. Everything is basically falling along the same lines with the previous building that was designed, as far as, what its intent is, and their design goals for the project.

Mr. Chiesa stated that their proximity to their major thoroughfares, there are no changes here, it is in the same area as the previous restaurant.

Mr. Chiesa said as far as traffic generated this project should have less traffic generated or be very comparable. The previous restaurant would have had two and a half times the seating capacity of this building. Again, even though there is a drive-thru the actual volume should actually be less than what they anticipated originally.

Mr. Chiesa said their site distances nothing has changed going in and out of the project, that has not been changed. Their service road that runs around the complex has not been altered or changed, so the onsite activity still maintains the same. Their vehicular circulation throughout the site, as well as their parking areas is very similar it is all landscaped. They have screening and trees placed wherever they could. They have some decorative lighting also carried on around this site that they have maintained on the other buildings on the property.

Mr. Chiesa noted that the pedestrian circulation they have a walk that still runs, they have a sign monument structure that is off of Brown Rd. that brings people in from the city sidewalk underneath the structure and they can fan out in 45-degree angles to circulate through walk paths on the site that actually take them from front to back, that hasn’t changed they just modified it to fit with this configuration.

Mr. Chiesa stated that the building itself possesses no detrimental effects on public safety, health, or welfare. It is the same type of use they had prior there should be less activity actually because the seating capacity is two and a half times less than what they originally anticipated.

Mr. Chiesa said, as far as, noise from the order stations the ordinance says nothing more than 60-decibels at the property line or 160-ft. from the property line on the east side, or 270-ft. from the right-of-way which is the street line. Typical speakers are set from the manufacturer at 80-decibels, 60-decibels are a basic conversation at a conference-type room just to give them an idea. They should have probably 0-decibels of anything at the road, as well as, at the east property line.

Mr. Chiesa stated that as far as, the consideration that was given to landscaping and other amenities the site plan again as he has stated they have a smaller restaurant so that gave them the luxury of having more green areas around this. Again, this is defining this, it is not like they have in some locations they see out-lots and they are just dropped into a sea of pavement, so this has landscaping around it, it is a very defined area.

Mr. Chiesa said that one of the criteria, the enhancements of the surrounding environment, is speaking to with the character of the materials on the building, they use fiber cement and stone, which is very consistent with what was previously approved as he has stated earlier.
Mr. Chiesa stated that the Special Land Use they feel is consistent and compatible with the existing BIZ development. Obviously, it is allowed in the BIZ District, and they are consistent with what is going on in that area.

Chairman Reynolds asked if there were any citizens that would like to make any comments?

Mr. Scott Gabriel 941Joslyn stated that he was a retired General Manager of The Rainforest Café. He asked that if they are going to put a restaurant in these days and this environment, they have to have a drive-thru. He has no relation, but they have to have a drive-thru. His only concern would be is how many cars can be in that drive-thru before it comes onto the road. He thought that Culvers was a great company and have a reputation for treating their employees great, and thought that they would be a good business partner.

Chairman asked the Planning Commissioners if they had any thoughts or concerns during the Public Hearing portion? There were none.

Chairman Reynolds asked the applicant if stacking had been considered? Mr. Chiesa said that was prevalent in the design that they did for this. Stacking is actually to the north side of the building it is internal on the site, it has its own lane, there is no cross-conflict with any traffic. It is not going behind parking spaces that would block circulation and there is really a very limited chance if stacking would go beyond the limits of the property as they have it designed. They thought 12 or 13 stacking spaces, and the way the site is aligned depending on how the cars are coming in they have room for probably half of a dozen or more on top of that number.

Chairman Reynolds closed the public hearing at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Debra Walton
PC/ZBA Recording Secretary
Charter Township of Orion

April 6, 2022

Planning Commission Approval Date