City of Ashland – Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Plan Commission was held on **Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.** via GoToMeeting.

Committee Members Present: Matt Mackenzie, John Beirl, Katie Gellatly, Laurie Gregor, Ana Tochterman, Mayor Lewis

Committee Members Absent: David Mettille

Staff Present: Megan McBride, Lucas Phillips

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by John Beirl, seconded by Matt Mackenzie. Passed unanimously.

2) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the minutes from the October 6, 2020 Plan Commission meeting by John Beirl. Seconded by Laurie Gregor. Passed unanimously.

3) Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None

4) Action Items

a) Review and approval of a Site Plan to construct a new veterinary clinic on parcel 201-04896-0000, zoned Future Development (FD). Applicant: Margaret Koosmann/Ashland Area Vet Clinic.

Megan McBride provided background regarding previous discussions with the site designer surrounding the Site Plan. She explained a few key considerations also laid out in the site plan, requiring 20 feet of buffer space between the commercial use and existing residential uses. She explained that existing trees will remain on the site to provide a sound and visual buffer. The location of outdoor kennels was identified as a concern by Commissioners in a previous Plan Commission meeting, and has been addressed in the site plan through its location behind the building, and maintaining existing trees to provide screening. She explained that a new fire hydrant will be installed on the site, as recommended by the fire department.

Matt Mackenzie requested clarification regarding the outdoor kenneling of animals, if these kennels would be attended at night, and if someone would be staying at the property. Tim Dykstra explained that the kennels are not used at night, and are closed up at 6:30. He explained that while there will be overnight boarding at the clinic, the animals are boarded indoors at night, and the indoor kennels are soundproofed so there will be a negligible impact on surrounding properties.

Mayor Lewis asked if this is the property that hosts the cross-country ski trails, and Tim Dykstra explained that there are trails running through the back of the property. The Mayor asked if these trails will remain open, and Tim Dykstra explained that they will likely remain open, pending information regarding insurance liability on the property. They stated that Dr. Margaret would like to keep them open, and Katie Gellatly explained that she has an easement on her property, and this might be a possibility for them to look into as well. Matt Mackenzie also suggested looking into the "berry picking law" that exists in Wisconsin that allows for limited liability for such uses on the property, and the clinic stated that they will look into that option.

Mayor Lewis requested clarification on the site lighting. Megan McBride explained that she has been working with C&S Design to make sure that the site meets all requirements for lighting, and that all conditions of the final site plans be met prior to issuance of building permits.

Matt Mackenzie requested clarification regarding the "future accessory building" listed on the site plan. Megan McBride stated that she does not know of the exact timeline for them building the accessory building, but she said that it will have to be structurally similar to the primary structure, and it will be located behind the principal structure. This would not require a site plan amendment if it is in the same location and same size as listed on the approved site plan as proposed. Trevor Provost stated that the accessory structure will likely be built in 3-5 years.

John Beirl requested to abstain from the voting due to a conflict of interest.

Motion to approve the Site Plan with conditions listed in the Staff Report by Matt Mackenzie. Seconded by Ana Tochterman. Passed 5-0, John Beirl abstained.

b) Review and recommendation of commercial proposal for redevelopment of the Timeless Timber site

Megan McBride provided background regarding the RFP process – the site had previously been marketed as one whole lot, but for this RFP it has been split into two pieces – the part adjacent to Hwy 2/Lake Shore Drive for commercial redevelopment, and is the site currently under consideration. The southern portion of the lot was marketed for residential development, and will be evaluated by the City Housing Committee at their October 21, 2020 meeting. Megan explained that this site is located within TID #9, which is struggling, so taxable value must remain a consideration for the City, in addition to the prime location on Highway 2.

The proposed development is located adjacent to the Highway 2 portion of the site, and would be a location for El Tarasco, featuring a large seating area, a private room for events, and an expanded bar area. The total estimated value is approximately

$1.181 million, and the taxable value will be based on final project costs. Megan explained that the a Development Agreement and Site Plan will still have to be approved in the future, and will both be reviewed by the Plan Commission.

Katie Gellatly asked if the developer has any connection to the new Mexican restaurant that opened on Highway 2 just west of Ashland. Jose Alvarez, appearing as the representative for El Tarasco, stated that he is not involved with the new restaurant in the former Link building, but that he is a part owner of El Dorado.

John Beirl asked if there was a staff recommendation for the proposal, and Megan McBride explained that past RFPs have not included a staff recommendation, so she has not provided one.

John Beirl requested clarification regarding the City's possibility of giving the land to the developer, and Megan McBride explained that was identified as a potential development incentive in the RFP, since the TID in which it is located is not financially able to provide any alternative types of development incentives. The failing TID #9, and ultimately all of the taxing entities (City, County, school district, WITC), will benefit from the increase in taxable value and the redevelopment of this idle site.

John Beirl asked if the City will incur any additional costs, and Megan McBride stated that they have considered this, and it will be addressed via a public-private partnership to expand the turn lane, for example. Any future development costs will be the responsibility of the developer, which was clearly stated in the RFP.

John Beirl requested that a reversionary clause be considered that would allow the city to reclaim the land if the development does not move forward within a certain period of time. Megan McBride answered that it is standard practice for past City contracts to include a reversionary clause, so this will be included in the Development Agreement.

Mayor Lewis asked when they are planning on starting construction, and Jose Alvarez answered that they are hoping to start construction in the spring, pending state approval.

Laurie Gregor asked how close the estimate is to the actual costs gained from contractors, with consideration to construction costs that have increased greatly in recent months. Jose Alvarez explained that the projected costs came from C&S Design, the architects, and that they have not spoken to contractors yet until they obtained concept plan approval from the city. He stated that he has spoken to a few plumbing and electrical companies, as well as a general contractor, and that there is interest in the project, but nothing has been determined yet. Jose Alvarez plans on hiring local contractors to support the local economy. Commission members expressed support for the project, especially given the current economic climate.

For context regarding the larger site, Mayor Lewis requested that Megan McBride quickly review the proposed development for the southern, housing portion of the site, which will be discussed by the Housing Committee. Megan McBride provided some information and designs of the proposed fifty (50) unit multi-family development.

Ana Tochterman asked for clarification regarding ingress/egress of the restaurant site, and Megan McBride showed on the site plan that traffic will be going out of the site on the existing portion of 23rd Ave E. There will not be additional ingress/egress requirements on Highway 2. This is the reason that the center turn lane which currently stops at Kwik Trip shall be extended to serve traffic turning left onto 23rd Ave E from Highway 2 as well.

Ana Tochterman requested more information regarding the parking requirements on this lot, and Megan McBride explained that the parking is required to be set behind the building, and that parking maximums are calculated based on the staff requirements of the business and the estimated maximum occupancy of the building.

Megan McBride stated that the commercial and residential parts of the site do not take up the entire site with buildings or parking, so that there will be plenty of green space on the sites, helping to mitigate stormwater concerns.

Ana Tochterman requested special consideration be given to the connection between the residential developments and commercial developments, as well as connections to existing pedestrian infrastructure. Megan McBride stated that she has discussed this with the developers and they are very excited to have connections to pedestrian infrastructure, and will work to ensure connectivity is prioritized in the site planning for each development.

Motion to approve the proposal for redevelopment and forward on to City Council by Ana Tochterman. Seconded by Katie Gellatly. Passed unanimously.

5) Announcements/Reports/Comments/Questions

Megan McBride announced that the RFP for the waterfront code updates has been released, and there has been a lot of interest in this. She also stated that the City has received an award from the American Planning Association for excellence in planning. She also announced that she presented last week at the American Planning Association – WI chapter conference.

6) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mayor Lewis. Seconded by John Beirl. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm. Minutes done by Lucas Phillips.