

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
Planning Commission
February 16, 2016
Northville City Hall – Lower Level, Meeting Room A

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Steve Kirk
Carol Maise
Dave Mielock
Christopher Miller
Matthew Mowers
Mark Russell
Anne Smith
Jeff Snyder

Absent: Jay Wendt (excused)

Also present: Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant
Patrick Sullivan, City Manager
James Gallogly, Public Works Director

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Mielock asked to have the agenda amended so that item 7 would be Discussion: Residential Driveways and item 8 would be PUD Eligibility: Stonecrest of Downtown Northville – 456 E. Cady.

**Motion by Mielock, support Russell, to approve the agenda as amended.
Motion carried unanimously.**

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: January 19, 2016

Planning Consultant Elmiger asked that the minutes be amended as follows:

- P. 4, last sentence in 1st narrative paragraph under *Building Heights*: Illustrations had been added to show how stories and basements were determined ~~including~~ on a sloped lot.

**Motion by Mielock, support Mowers, to approve the January 19, 2016 meeting minutes as amended.
Motion carried unanimously.**

5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None.

6. REPORTS:

A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: None.

B. CITY COUNCIL: None.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION: None.

D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: None

7. DISCUSSION: RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAYS

Planning Consultant Elmiger gave the background for this agenda item, explaining that Carlisle/Wortman had provided modified language based on last month's Planning Commission conversation. New changes were shown in blue text. The new language clearly prohibited parking in the front yard except in a driveway. The new language also prohibited parking on the grass in the front yard. They had also clarified zoning requirements for a 20-foot wide driveway; this did not apply to single family or two family dwellings. Also, Director of Public Works Gallogly had provided a memo discussing the rationale behind the driveway widths in the Manual of Uniform Criteria.

Commissioner Snyder wondered if a property owner could add width to a driveway so that a portion of the driveway functioned as a parking pad? A driveway could be widened at the street and narrowed as it approached the dwelling. He was not necessarily opposed to this; he just wondered if the ordinance would allow it.

Commissioner Smith thought the proposed language was not yet clear.

Commissioner Mowers wondered how parking pads were permitted under the current language of Section 17.01. It seemed that anyone who put a pad in place was already in violation of this section and should be enforced against. While new language might clarify this further, the existing language also seemed very clear. He asked if the Building Inspector could be asked why parking pads were being allowed.

Planning Consultant Elmiger noted that this issue had not come before the Historic District Commission.

Commissioner Mowers said his concern was the reduction of green space on zoning lots; it seemed people were paving their front yards. Commissioner Snyder said the addition of parking pads was a recent phenomenon. Planning Consultant Elmiger asked that she be provided with addresses where this was happening. Vice Chair Kirk said that there were situations where a parking pad created a T-turnaround, making it safer way for a car to exit a lot, especially on to a busy street. Commissioner Maise agreed, but also thought it was a matter of requiring someone to seek a variance or whether the ordinance should allow this under certain circumstances. Commissioner Smith listed several locations where pads had been constructed.

Commissioner Mielock asked Public Works Director Gallogly to check with the Building Inspector regarding whether or not driveways and pads actually did need permits. If they did not need permits, any violations would have to be caught in the field. Commissioner Russell wondered what ordinance or permit requirement would be referenced, should enforcement occur.

Commissioner Russell continued that impervious coverage was not currently calculated. This was something the Planning Commission had been talking about for a long time. Commissioner Russell thought this should be a cumulative total.

Commissioner Russell wondered why the right-of-way was called out in Section 17.01.10, since the prohibition against parking in the front yard would include the right-of-way (the portion between the curb line and property line). Planning Consultant Elmiger agreed with this comment, saying that even the addition *Parked vehicles shall not block a public sidewalk* was also redundant, since any vehicles blocking a sidewalk would by definition be parked in the front yard.

It was noted that prohibiting parking in the front yard without calling out the right-of-way was also somewhat confusing. When the right-of-way was gravel, people sometimes parked there.

Commissioner Russell said that the point of the discussion was to curtail the proliferation of parking pads. The prohibition of parking in the front yard needed to be clear. However, the lot coverage ordinance also needed to be revisited, to see if hardscaped surfaces could be included in that ordinance. If hardscaped surfaces could be included, issues with massing, front yard parking, etc., could be thus addressed.

Planning Consultant Elmiger summarized the discussion as follows:

- The intent was to curb the expansion of parking pads in the front yards.
- Public Works Director Gallogly would follow up with Building Inspector Strong as to how Strong interpreted construction of the parking pads, whether they were inspected, and whether or not approval was required.
- Language allowing for some flexibility for safety situations on busy roads might be considered.
- Language could be added that if parking a parking pad was allowed, it must go through the permit process.

Commissioner Smith asked how circular driveways were treated.

Vice-Chair Kirk noted that circular driveways were often used on corner lots. He also noted that Public Works Director Gallogly's February 2, 2016 memo regarding Driveway Standards has closed by saying that 1999 standards *were established to keep most private vehicles parked on private property and not on our public streets where they can negatively impact the safety of these streets*. Mr. Kirk was concerned that by limiting parking on private property, more cars would be parked on the streets.

Commissioner Russell said that if the City did allow some parking pads, perhaps they should be required to be constructed to city standards as established in the 1999 Manual of Uniform Criteria and Design Standards for Construction. This might keep people from installing landscape pavers and using these as parking pads. Methodology should be included.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Kirk, Director of Public Works Gallogly said gravel driveways would not be allowed for new construction.

Seeing that discussion had ended, Vice Chair Kirk called a brief recess at 7:53 p.m. so that City Manager Sullivan could be invited to join the meeting. Vice Chair Kirk recalled the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Commissioner Snyder noted that he might have a conflict of interest with the PUD proposal being discussed this evening.

MOTION by Mielock, support by Russell, to recuse Commission Snyder from this portion of the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Snyder left the Commission to join the audience.

8. PUD ELIGIBILITY: STONECREST OF DOWNTOWN NORTHVILLE – 456 E. CADY

Planning Consultant Elmiger gave the review for this PUD request. She explained that a PUD was being requested by the applicant because they would like to deviate from the ordinance (Cady Street Overlay District, Zoned PR-1) regarding:

- Use.
- Having residential uses on the first floor.
- Building height would be slightly taller than that normally allowed.

Tonight the Planning Commission would hear the proposal and determine whether this project was PUD eligible. Did this project provide community benefit? Also, tonight the Planning Commission could schedule a public hearing, at which meeting the PUD and the site plan could be evaluated in detail, in preparation for making a recommendation to City Council. City Council would then make a final determination as to whether the PUD would move forward.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said that they did not consider the use to be consistent with the Master Plan, which called for creative mixed use in this area. However, the project did include a river walk, farmers market area, and high quality architecture, all items called out in the Master Plan.

Regarding the public benefits, there were similar items: the river walk and the farmers market, along with environmental cleanup. As the project moved forward the river walk and the farmers market would need to be specifically identified on the plans as public uses, and would need to be sufficiently detailed so that the City could be sure that they would function properly. Specifically, regarding the farmers market, the amount of parking and the way traffic circulated through the site needed to be sufficient to serve the market.

As part of this process, the modifications to the site would require an approval by the Historic District Commission. Only a portion of the site was within the HDC's purview; this included the existing building.

The applicant needed to address the need for emergency services. As there would be no medical services provided on site, if anyone needed a doctor in an emergency, an ambulance would need to be called.

In summary, Planning Consultant Elmiger said they believed the redevelopment project had merit in terms of architectural quality and the opportunity to reclaim this vacant industrial property. The Planning Commission would need to determine if the proposed development was consistent with the City's high standards for neighborhood compatibility and that it would provide community benefit.

Dan Thies, Stonecrest Senior Living, 5015 NW Canal Street, Ste 200, Riverside MO 64150, was present on behalf of this application. Jed Momot and Bill Biermann, Stonecrest Senior Living, were also present.

Referring to the packet in the Commissioners' packets, and referencing their letter of January 22, 2016, Mr. Thies explained that the site was approximately 4.7 acres. The 76,743 square-foot building was proposed to have 84 units, and would include high quality assisted living and memory care. They were not a skilled nursing facility or an independent living facility. There would be a nurse on staff; they would give residents their medicines but would not provide other medical treatment on site. In emergency situations an ambulance would be called.

The building would have a café, movie theater/chapel/religious room, exercise room, and community room. Approximately 50 parking spaces would be provided. The average age of the residents was 85, the average stay was about 2.5 years. 75% of the residents were women.

Referring to the site plan in the packet, Mr. Thies pointed out that the building was located a distance from Main Street in order to accommodate an existing sewer line easement. The sewer line was the main line for all of Northville. Therefore that portion of the property was pretty much unusable except to be used as a greenspace as shown on the site plan. They were developing the greenspace with trails for residents.

The building was a 3-story building; a rendering was included in the packet. The architecture demonstrated an urban style and was actually the most expensive building that they had in their portfolio.

Mr. Thies noted three things they wanted to do:

1. Improve the Rouge River waterfront with a river trail with an area for park benches and a playground that overlooked the river. Historic markers highlighting the history of the site or other aspects of Northville would be included along the trail.
2. Include the farmers market as shown on the site plan. They had met with the Chamber of Commerce; this had been a good meeting. Initially the applicants had wanted to put grass in the farmers market area but the Chamber had said this actually needed to be paved.
3. Clean up the environmental contamination. They had done a Phase 1 and were ready to move forward with Phase 2.

Commissioner Maise reviewed ordinance requirements in order to qualify as a PUD project. Section 20.03 listed several criteria, all of which had to be met in order to qualify. (e) required that *The proposed planned unit development shall not result in an unreasonable negative economic impact upon surrounding properties*. The Carlisle/Wortman review letter (February 9, 2016) said that the *The proposed development should incur a positive impact on taxable value for the City*. The applicant's response (letter dated January 22, 2016) mainly spoke to the architecture of the proposed building, which seemed to miss the point.

Mr. Thies said that he had interpreted this requirement to mean the development would not negatively impact neighboring property values. This would be a high-end building that would not decrease the neighboring property values.

Commissioner Maise said that she wanted to know the economic impact to the City for this use as compared to uses mentioned in the Master Plan for this site. The Cady Street Overlay District had called for a *unique mix of land uses designed to serve the commercial and residential needs of the community in an attractive, well-designed and functional environment*.

Commissioner Maise was also concerned regarding (b) which required that the proposed development should not result in *an unreasonable increase in the need for or burden upon public services*. She asked how much of a burden would be placed on the City's ambulatory services, for instance.

Mr. Thies said that typically there would be 8 ambulance runs per month. There was nothing in the City that compared to this specific facility in terms of use.

City Manager Sullivan said 8 runs a month would not stress City services. The City would take the calls but Community EMS would do the runs. What would be affected was the City's share of costs. Northville and Plymouth split the cost of the Fire Department based on the number of runs each City had. Adding 100 runs a year would change Northville's percentage of runs on the whole.

Commissioner Maise said this was the kind of information the Commission was seeking. The City needed some measurable benefits, especially because the use was inconsistent with the Master Plan. One of the requirements for a PUD was that it not be used simply as (i) *an attempt by the applicant to circumvent the strict application of zoning standards*. She was seeking the highest and best use.

Mr. Thies pointed out that the project would clean up and use a vacant, contaminated site. There would be 50 employees who would use stores and restaurants in the City. Additionally visiting families would similarly use stores and restaurants in the City. This was what appealed to the applicants, as opposed to the traditional practice of placing senior housing on a major thoroughfare somewhere else.

Commissioner Maise pointed out that anyone developing the site would have to clean up the contamination. She emphasized she wanted some measurables in order to compare this use against the uses suggested in the Master Plan and in the preamble of the Cady Street Overlay District. Were there tax revenue benefits? Was there a measurable benefit from the farmers market? Were there any other ways to use the farmers market section more often than 1 day a week?

Mr. Thies said they would work with the Chamber of Commerce regarding other programming for the farmers market space.

In response to a question from Mr. Thies, City Manager Sullivan said the City would receive about 11 mills per \$1,000 of taxable value. Mr. Thies said this would be a \$25 million project, just in the building alone. City Manager Sullivan said he could provide an estimate of tax revenue if Mr. Thies could more specifically provide the value of the finished product.

Commissioner Maise asked that the City Assessor be asked to run an analysis of two or three different uses in terms of tax revenue to the City, including tonight's proposed use and other uses listed in the Master Plan.

Commissioner Mowers asked about first floor retail uses. Mr. Thies said there was a first floor plan in the packets. The first floor commercial area was oriented toward Cady Street, including a bistro with a door to Cady Street. The restaurant would also have a door to Cady Street. Discovery of the sewer easement had changed what they could do on the site, making the storefront space smaller.

Commissioner Miller said that he felt the farmers market was being forced onto this site. Had there been any consideration of a 2nd building front to the west, thus creating the desired density along Cady Street, along with a visual and physical link to the river walk amenity? As Commissioner Maise had stated, the question was if the City was getting the best use from the project for this site. Forcing the farmers market into a too small space might not have the desired results.

Mr. Thies said they did think there was enough space for the farmers market. It was one of the first things called out in the Cady Street Overlay District, and offered a unique opportunity for this site. Again, they would like to program more uses than just one day a week. This site was not in the middle of downtown, and they wanted something that would draw people into the downtown area. It would be great for their

residents and great for Northville. It would give their residents an opportunity to interact with the greater community. The applicants really loved the idea of a farmers market there.

~~Community~~ Commissioner Mielock asked if they had any other projects they were working on in the area. Mr. Thies said they were scheduled to begin construction on a property on Livernois, in Troy. That property had a dog park next door. They were also working on a site in Rochester Hills. These properties were similar in size to the one being proposed this evening. Examples of the architecture for these other 2 projects were in the packets.

Commissioner Mielock asked if the applicants had ever developed or sold property here or anywhere else in the country. Mr. Thies said he had developed and sold property but never to a non-profit. They would be happy to condition the development of this PUD on some qualification that if the property were ever sold to a for-profit or a non-profit, they would still have to pay real estate taxes.

Commissioner Mielock said that he felt this use did not fit the Master Plan. Had they explored other sites or options in the area?

Mr. Thies said they were exploring another option, but this was their first choice. The other option would not have the farmers market, and was not as much a part of downtown Northville. Their main goal was to be within downtown Northville. There was a demand for this type of facility in Northville.

Commissioner Mielock said that he agreed with Commissioner Miller in that the farmers market seemed to be “candified” or shoved in to the plan in order to help qualify the plan for a PUD. He was not sure that the farmers market worked here from a safety or infrastructure standpoint. It needed further development in order for him to believe the market would work at this location.

Mr. Thies said they liked the farmers market. Additionally, they had toured the building that was in the Historic District and they felt that the front of the building toward Cady Street – the part of the building that was considered most historic – could be used as part of the farmers market, if it could be saved. That portion of the building had 15 x 15 stalls and rafters – details that leant themselves to a farmers market.

Commissioner Russell spoke to the requirement that the applicants would have to appear before the HDC. It was difficult to go forward with a determination of eligibility until the HDC reaction was known to whatever the plans were for the old Foundry Flask building. Also, the originally planned green space for the farmers market was more appealing than the hard space now being proposed. While the flexibility of the hard space now planned was something to consider, what was now being offered was a piece of concrete for the farmers market and it was not really appealing to look at a piece of concrete for 6 months of the year. He would like to see something more dynamic and creative during periods of inclement weather. Perhaps using the historic structure as part of the farmers market would help, much like the way the Eastern Market was designed.

Commissioner Russell said that he agreed with those who spoke about the Overlay District and the Master Plan not including senior housing as a desired use in this area. However, PUDs did allow for circumventing the ordinance. He questioned the utilities; would this use tax the capacity of the current infrastructure? If this proposal went forward the applicants would need to perform any necessary upgrades on sewer, etc.

Commissioner Russell remained concerned about placing the farmers market at this location. People would park everywhere during farmers market hours. Currently farmers market vendors parked in the

Downs area. Would they still have recourse to something like that? The farmers market would tax the whole circulation and parking system as laid out on the site plan for the employees, residents and visitors to the facility. The farmers market needed more study and more assurances that the site would actually work for this very busy and popular amenity while still accommodating the facility's users.

Commissioner Russell was not convinced the public would use the Bistro or Dining Room. While he liked the project, there were still many questions regarding this site.

Mr. Thies said that if the farmers market were marketed correctly, having the bistro right by the farmers market could be a real advantage.

Commissioner Russell said that he had worked on facilities like this one in the past, and the reality was it was not an inviting public space. The outdoor patio would have to be fenced and thus would be used from the inside out. A portion of the park would have to be fenced for residents in memory care; these things should be shown on the plan.

Commissioner Russell concluded that he liked the use but was not sure this was the correct location for this use. He liked the river walk amenity, though anyone who came in would have to offer a similar amenity. He thought the farmers market would be too congested for the space. He would like to see more detail before moving forward.

Commissioner Smith said that she appreciated the applicant's desire to be in the City of Northville and she liked the project. However, Northville was 2 square miles, and she was not sure that this location was the right place for this project. She was concerned with the overall economic impact and the fact that this use was not consistent with the goals of the Master Plan. Commissioner Smith did not think this represented the highest and best use of the land.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Kirk, Mr. Thies said 1% of their residents on average had a vehicle.

Vice Chair Kirk commented that the need for the proposed use was very evident. Mr. Thies agreed, saying that that they were only at the tip of the iceberg, and there were not going to be as many facilities like this one as were needed 10, 15 years from now. Specifically in the Detroit market, the elderly stayed close by. They did not want to leave to relocate to other communities.

Vice Chair Kirk agreed that parking for the farmers market would go into whatever space was available, including spaces reserved for the use itself. Vice Chair Kirk also spoke to curb and site distance issues.

Mr. Thies said that they were trying to conform to the Ordinance regarding location of the building, which had a 10-foot setback, highlighting the urban nature of this site.

Commissioner Mowers said that while this use was not in line with the Master Plan, he was impressed with the applicant's desire to be located within the City property, and not off a main thoroughfare. The Commission had heard people speak to the need of being able to stay within Northville after they had become empty nesters, etc. It seemed like a natural to include this project in this location or somewhere else in the downtown area that would be a logical next step for people who wanted to age within the City. If the City were to look at something outside the Master Plan, this would be something to look at. He agreed that perhaps the farmers market should not be at this location. This was an undeveloped area so perhaps this use could be used as an anchor point to build back into the City and downtown area. With the

Corner House and perhaps some loft-style apartments, you could almost see a generational move as you were working back in to the City.

Mr. Thies said that any project at this location was going to have serious challenges including the sewer easement, which was not economically feasible to move. The site was contaminated. There was a historically significant building on site, and if it was deemed the building could not be torn down and had to be saved, this added significant cost. Many developers would find that there was very little left to develop and the costs were prohibitive.

Commissioner Maise said this type of argument was exactly what needed to be fully fleshed out with quantitative markers.

Mr. Momot mentioned there was also a 100-year flood plain on the site. This could hold parking, but could not be built on. Other uses were going to find this site very difficult.

Commissioner Russell suggested eliminating the farmers market, which still seemed forced. Public benefit could be created by the park area on the east side and the river walk. Interactions between the residents and the public could still occur within these benefits. He would like to see the front portion of the Foundry Flask building engage the street and be built into the project as a unique draw for the public, such as a year round vendor. The City was building Cady Street from the east side toward the west. Perhaps this was an acceptable use; they wanted senior housing within the City.

Vice Chair Kirk said the Master Plan did call for the farmers market at this location.

In response to a question from Commissioner Maise, Planning Consultant Elmiger said senior housing was allowed in the R-3 and R-4 Districts, but was not included in the master plan for this area.

Commissioner Maise asked if there were other public uses that might be involved in the farmers market planning for this area, especially if the building were saved and also used for this purpose. Perhaps something more with a commercial edge might be offered, such as a restaurant, brewery, etc.

Commissioner Maise addressed parking issues of the proposed use, especially on farmers market days. Mr. Thies said that the largest shift of employees would include 25 people, during the daytime hours.

Commissioner Mielock said there were Historic District issues that could not be addressed by the Planning Commission.

Planning Consultant Elmiger explained process. The Planning Commission should first decide whether the project was PUD eligible before the applicants appeared before the HDC.

Further discussion was held regarding overall process and PUD eligibility criteria.

Commissioner Maise thought that, as discussed this evening, further information was needed regarding several of the criteria. Commissioner Russell said in order to be PUD eligible, all the criteria had to be met; he did not feel that all were met.

Discussion was held as to whether not including senior housing for this area was an oversight in the Master Plan.

Mr. Biermann pointed out that the Master Plan was a guide, but the City did have the ability to make decisions different than the Master Plan. They had built projects in other cities where the use was not contemplated in the Master Plan; often the use was simply unrecognized. There was a need to figure out how to make this use work and still operate within the rules.

Commissioner Maise pointed out that criterion (g) read *The proposed planned unit development shall be consistent with the goals and policies of the City Master Plan*. The Master Plan designated this property for creative mixed-use development.

Mr. Biermann argued that the project did fit within the Master Plan; they were working to include those things the Master Plan envisioned.

Commissioner Maise again directed the applicants to bring back further information regarding providing more of a “commercial edge” and also show more completely the restrictions on the property itself (sewer, flood plain, etc.).

Seeing that there was no further discussion, Vice Chair Kirk brought the matter back to the Commission.

Commissioner Mowers indicated he was ready to offer a motion.

MOTION by Mowers, support Miller, that the proposed Stonecrest Senior Living project for 456 E Cady Street (former Foundry Flask site) be designated PUD eligible.

Planning Consultant Elmiger suggested adding setting a public hearing to the motion. Commissioner Mowers said he interpreted the ordinance to require 2 discrete steps: 1) preliminary site plan review and then 2) public hearing. He did not interpret that these had to occur together. He felt it was appropriate to grant PUD eligibility, set a Planning Commission meeting to review preliminary plans, and then set a public hearing after that.

Commissioner Mielock also noted that the ordinance included an item in the process called *Neighborhood Review*, which encouraged the applicant to meet with Neighborhood Associations and surrounding land owners prior to submittal of preliminary plans to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Thies said they be happy to meet with neighbors.

Planning Consultant Elmiger reviewed process as outlined in Article 20. Section 20.07 required a review of the preliminary site plan after a determination of eligibility; this required a public hearing.

Commissioner Mowers argued that this could be done in the 2 discrete steps as noted above. He did not feel a public hearing had to be set until the preliminary site plan was reviewed.

Vice Chair Kirk asked for a roll call vote:

Kirk	yes
Maise	yes
Mielock	no
Miller	yes
Mowers	yes
Russell	yes

Smith no

Motion carried 5-2.

Commissioner Snyder rejoined the Commission.

9. ADJOURN

As there was no further discussion, Vice Chair Kirk asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION Mowers, support Mielock, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as amended 4/5/16