

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
Planning Commission
June 19, 2018
Northville City Hall – Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chair Russell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Carol Maise
Dave Mielock
Christopher Miller
Mark Russell
Ann Smith
Jeff Snyder
Donna Tinberg

Absent: Steve Kirk (excused)
One vacancy

Also present: Pat Sullivan, City Manager
Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant
Ken Roth, Mayor
Lori Ward, Downtown Development Authority Director

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION by Maise, support by Tinberg, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: June 5, 2018

Motion by Mielock, support by Maise, to approve the June 5, 2018 minutes as published.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

6. REPORTS:

A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: None.

B. PLANNING COMMISSION: None.

C. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: None.

7. SITE PLAN REVIEW: S4 Center, 107 N. Center Street

Since Commissioner Mielock was representing the applicant in this case, he asked to be recused.

MOTION by Tinberg, support by Maise, to recuse Commissioner Mielock from discussion regarding the Site Plan Review for S4 Center, 107 N. Center Street.

Motion carried unanimously.

Planning Consultant Elmiger gave the background to this request for Preliminary and Final Site Plan Review for a rooftop lounge, elevator and deck addition at 107 N. Center Street. This plan was a revision of one that was approved January 2017.

The Planning Commission had granted Site Plan Approval of the previous design, conditioned upon (1) receiving Historic District Commission approval, and (2) that the rooftop space only be used by the property owner or tenant, and not be rented out for parties or special events. Those conditions should be part of any approving motion tonight as well.

In tonight's design, the loft space was larger, but some of that space was replacing outdoor deck space in the previous design. The new design also relocated the elevator/stair addition to the opposite rear corner than the original design; they were now in the northwest corner.

The proposed barrier-free ramp on the north side and the rain gardens on the south side were located on the adjoining neighbors' properties. Any approval should be conditioned upon the City receiving signed agreements between the neighbors of this proposal before building permits were pulled. The agreement should include maintenance of both features.

Any approval should also be conditioned on the rain garden meeting the storm water requirements as approved by the Director of Public Works.

The proposed sidewalk mounted lights narrowed the sidewalk along the parking lot, making it too narrow for a wheelchair. However, there might be a different accessible route to the building's ramp. This situation should be evaluated by the Building Official.

The loft space contained sliding patio doors that overlooked the deck on the east side. The deck on that side was configured to go around existing mechanical equipment. There was no deck directly adjacent to sliding patio doors. Would there be some type of barrier between the loft interior space and the roof where the sliding doors opened?

If the applicant satisfactorily addressed the above items, Planning Consultant Elmiger recommended Final Site Plan approval.

Dave Mielock, Architect, 114 Rayson Street, Northville MI, and Andy Wozniak, Civil Engineer, 55800 Grand River Ave., Suite 100, New Hudson MI were present this evening on behalf of the application.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Mielock showed photographs of the existing building, along with the new site plan. Pointing out that the building was basically landlocked, Mr. Mielock showed further comparisons of existing 1st and 2nd floor plans with what was proposed. They were moving the stairs from the southwest corner in order to wrap it around the elevator at the northwest corner. The stairs were the only addition that added to the existing footprint.

The owner occupied the 2nd floor. For the new 3rd floor, they were proposing to bring the elevator up into an office area on the roof, with a walkout deck area.

Mr. Mielock showed the existing west elevation, and renderings that showed the new rooftop construction. The overall height would be 42 feet. If the northern property owner did not agree to the stairwell being within his property, they did have another plan that provided a little steeper slope with handrails. The neighbors to the south had given verbal approval for the applicants to make improvements to that area.

Mr. Mielock said that when the HDC approved the previous plan, they had wanted to keep the deck away from the front of the building that faced Center Street. The deck needed to be a minimum of 12 feet from the front of the building; the current proposal was 12.5-13 feet away from the building's front.

Mr. Mielock provided material samples of proposed colors, which were somewhat different than those previously approved, but which remained in the same family of olives and tans. Windows would mimic the proportions of the lower windows.

Mr. Mielock showed the line of sight of a 6-foot person looking up from the perspective of standing in front of Orin Jewelers, and also looking to the northwest from in front of Genetti's, along with renderings of the building from different viewpoints, including of the rear facing west into the parking lot.

Mr. Wozniak said that currently the southern ground area had seasonal flooding in the winter and during heavy rains. They were proposing to create a rain garden in two different areas to help alleviate the flooding. The rain gardens were sized to exceed Wayne County requirements for storm water detention. They would provide a landscape feature along the edge of the rain gardens, with a railing on the ramp.

Currently there was no barrier free access from the west side of the building. The changes would provide barrier free accessibility to the rear door, as well as adding the elevator to access all the floors.

Commissioner Miller asked if the rain gardens were in response to any regulatory requirements. Mr. Wozniak said the property was actually too small to be regulated by Wayne County.

Commissioner Snyder asked what would happen if the rain gardens overflowed. Mr. Wozniak said the overflow would go up over the sidewalk and into the parking lot, as it did currently.

City Manager Sullivan said that Planning Consultant Elmiger's review noted that since the plant material did the work in a rain garden, information about the plant material would need to be provided for evaluation by the Director of Public Works. Would there be information from a landscape architect regarding the plant material? Mr. Wozniak said they a landscape architect would provide that information.

Commissioner Snyder asked if an elevation from the north side facing south had been provided. Mr. Mielock said they had not provided that elevation. The building on the corner was the highest structure in the area.

Commissioner Snyder asked about the building materials on the east facing elevation. Mr. Mielock said cement-board tongue and groove siding would be used there. The HDC would need to approve the materials.

Mayor Roth asked if the elevation had been changed from the original proposal. The HDC had been very concerned about height and what was visible from the street. Mr. Mielock said the elevation would be about 2.5 feet higher on the east elevation than the original submittal, but no higher on the west elevation. The previous submission did not have a rendering of that elevation showing how much of the building would have been visible from the street. They would be before the HDC tomorrow night.

In response to a question from Commissioner Maise, Mr. Mielock said exterior lighting was downlit and shielded.

Referring to the butterfly design of the addition roof, Downtown Development Authority Director Ward asked how the roof would drain onto adjacent buildings. Mr. Mielock said all drainage would be via the subject building. Mr. Wozniak gave further details regarding storm water management, noting that they were not planning on tapping directly into the storm water drain.

Vice Chair Russell said his experience with rain gardens showed they needed an overflow drain, usually 6 inches higher than the topsoil.

Mr. Wozniak said water overflow would go over the sidewalk, as it did presently.

Vice Chair Russell commented that in the winter the overflow could create an ice situation on the sidewalk. Mr. Wozniak said that could be the case, but the situation should be improved over what it was currently.

If the site plan were approved, Chair Russell asked if the access easement and maintenance agreements with adjacent property owners would be recorded at Wayne County. Planning Consultant Elmiger said that could be required.

From the audience, Michelle Aniol asked why the applicants couldn't tap into the storm drain. Mr. Wozniak said the storm drain was in the middle of the traffic lane. They could research that possibility further.

Vice Chair Russell said the Director of Public Works had mentioned in his review that the proposed addition increased the vertical height of the building and could result in low water pressure in the third level of the building. Mr. Mielock said he thought that referred to fire suppression. The building was currently fully sprinklered, and that would be extended up to the 3rd level. Pressure tests would need to be run to ensure that pressure was adequate.

In response to a question from Commissioner Maise, Mr. Mielock said that the building owner to the south had given verbal agreement for the improvements that would be on their property. The building owner to the north had not yet agreed, so the applicants were showing alternative plans for the ramping system there.

In response to a question from Commissioner Tinberg, Planning Consultant Elmiger said the lighting would be addressed by the Building Official.

In response to a question from Commissioner Snyder, Mr. Mielock explained that there was a cable guardrail around the deck and a barrier would be provided by the sliding doors, to be approved by the Building Official.

Vice Chair Russell indicated he was ready to entertain a motion.

MOTION by Tinberg, support by Maise, that based on the information received from the applicant, and reflected in the minutes of this meeting, the Planning Commission finds that the Combined Preliminary/Final Site Plan proposed for 107 N. Center Street, dated May 25, 2018 meets the required standards and findings for Final Approval pursuant to Article 19 – Site Plan Procedural and Approval Process of the Zoning Ordinance, and approves the Combined Preliminary/Final Site Plan with the following conditions:

- A. Written agreements are created between all property owners to locate and maintain the barrier-free ramp and rain garden on their properties, and agreements are recorded with the County and provided to the City before building permits are issued.**
- B. Stormwater feature (rain garden) meets the storm water management requirements, as determined by the DPW Director.**
- C. The rooftop structure will be used for the property owner’s and/or tenant’s private use only.**
- D. Applicant seeks and receive Historic District Commission approval.**

Vice Chair Russell asked for a roll call vote.

Maise	yes
Miller	yes
Russell	yes
Smith	yes
Snyder	yes
Tinberg	yes

Motion carried 6-0-1 (Mielock recused)

8. DISCUSSION

Commissioner Mielock returned to the dais.

ROBERTSON BROS – NORTH RIVER STREET CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Commissioner Snyder asked to be recused from this discussion item, as he owned the property being discussed.

MOTION by Maise, support by Tinberg, that Commissioner Snyder be recused from participation in this discussion item: Robertson Bros – North River Street Conceptual Plan.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Snyder left the dais.

James V. Clarke, President, Robertson Brothers Homes, and Tim Loughrin, Director of Land Acquisitions for Robertson Brothers Homes, 6905 Telegraph Road, Suite, 200, Bloomfield Hills MI were present on behalf of this application. Greg Presley, 108 N. Center, Northville MI was also present.

Mr. Clarke said they had made changes in the site plan to address comments previously heard from the Commission:

- A 2-sided commercial development had been added to the development, fronting on Seven Mile Road and their interior road.
- The units facing Seven Mile Road had been reduced from 10 to 6.
- A 35-foot setback from the right of way had been added to Seven Mile Road, resulting in a 75-80 foot distance from Seven Mile Road, with a heavily landscaped buffer.
- They had not yet talked with Wayne County, as they were waiting to hear further direction from the City. However, Robertson Brothers had never built a development that changed the level of service in a community. They were proposing a boulevard at the intersection of Seven Mile and Northville Road.
- They had removed the pathway that made a connection to the pathway within the park.
- There was a shared entrance between the commercial and residential uses. There was also a second entrance off Seven Mile, which was a commitment Mr. Snyder had made when his property was developed.
- The unit count had been reduced from 60 to 37 units, with 23 internal parking spaces. There was also a reciprocal parking agreement with the existing commercial property.
- Additionally, two-car parking units were provided to every dwelling unit.
- Open space had been increased by the 35-foot buffer to the north along Seven Mile Road. They were also providing an uninterrupted 50-foot buffer to the Wayne County park.

Mr. Presley said they had changed to a larger Robertson Brothers product. Each unit had a two-car garage with storage and access to the upper level on the 1st floor. The 2nd level was living space, and the 3rd level provided bedrooms.

Mr. Presley commented that the 2-1/2 story limitation currently being discussed for the overlay district would prohibit the units being proposed. They requested a three story, 35-foot limit.

In terms of architecture, they were leaning toward a Craftsman look, with high quality exteriors and varying roofs.

Mr. Clarke said the units would be priced at \$185-\$205/square feet, with final price in the \$300,000's, with further options available.

During round-table discussion, the following points were made:

- The units would be approximately 1650 square feet each, which was about 100 square feet larger than what had been previously shown.
- Rooftop decks would be provided.
- Robertson Brothers were not commercial developers. The commercial portion might be developed by someone else, perhaps controlled by Mr. Snyder, or perhaps sold to a separate buyer. Robertson Brothers was asking for approval of the entire site, however.
- The commercial building would have commercial on the first floor, with the possibility of apartments on the 2nd floor.
- The exterior style was an aesthetic choice. However, several Commissioners preferred a more contemporary architectural style. Robertson Brothers was constructing a very modern “Tiger Town” development in Detroit.

- If over time the commercial component was not developed because no one was interested in developing it, Robertson Brothers might come back with a request for a full residential development.
- The commercial component was shown as perpendicular to Seven Mile Road.
- This development did not have any residual parking behind the garages. The applicants thought there was adequate parking on the site for visitors – perhaps the site was even overparked, especially with the reciprocal parking agreement with Cross Fit. When residual parking behind garages was provided, Robertson Brothers' experience was that residents would use that space for permanent parking, or for parking of vehicles such as trucks with snowplows. In this development, that was not desirable. The condominium documents did not allow outdoor overnight parking, except for occasional overnight guest parking.
- Vice Chair Russell remained concerned regarding whether there was adequate guest parking, and whether it was feasible that guests would park a distance away from the unit they were visiting, and would instead park behind a garage whether or not there was adequate room there, thereby creating a safety hazard.
- The front doors all faced green space.
- All the decks were moved to the front.
- The garages were side-by-side.
- Commissioner Smith asked if the units were family friendly. Was there a park for young children to use? Where would children ride their bikes? Mr. Clarke explained children could use the sidewalks for bicycles, and a connection could still be made to the park, so that bicyclists could use the bike path there.
- Demographics in other similar communities developed by Robertson Bros included a wide diversity of successful young people, and also newly single people.

Commissioner Miller said the developer had done a good job of responding to the comments that were made previously. He could support this concept. The addition of the commercial building was a benefit, which combined with other commercial buildings in the area provided a decent grouping of commercial uses. The scale of this type of development provided good density. He had seen and visited people in similarly scaled developments, and they had a nice feel to them. He supported extending the allowed building height to accommodate these buildings.

Commissioner Mielock said he liked the density much more than that presented previously. If the applicants were to move forward, what path would they pursue?

Planning Consultant Elmiger reviewed process for approval of the overlay district, which was on tonight's agenda, but which process would possibly not be complete for several meetings.

Mr. Clarke said they would like to submit immediately, and would probably submit a PUD plan.

From the audience, Michelle Aniol thought commercial development in the subject area would compete with the downtown area. She opposed commercial development on the site, and supported an all-residential development, with a connection to the neighboring Wayne County park. Regarding architecture, she supported a more modern product, instead of a peaked roof system.

In response to a question from Mayor Roth, Mr. Clarke said there was an anticipation of Brownfield development funds for the site, as there was uncompacted fill for 10 feet or more. The soil would need to be removed.

Vice Chair Russell strongly supported commercial as part of this development. He also thought the commercial building should be turned so that the building was parallel to Seven Mile. This would create more energy on the street, and would complement the commercial aspect to the north and also provide a commercial aspect that would benefit the residents, such as dry-cleaning, etc. He felt there were commercial opportunities that would not compete with downtown but would serve the neighbors.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said a footnote on Table 11-1 read: *A non-occupied ground level of a residential or mixed-use (commercial and residential) building used only for parking or tenant storage shall not count as a story with regards to the building height described in Table 11-1, and will permit up to an additional five-feet in height.*

Planning Consultant Elmiger thought that footnote would accommodate the product described this evening. Additionally, a PUD proposal could request deviations from the ordinance.

Vice Chair Russell thought the connectivity to the Wayne County Park was essential.

Commissioner Tinberg agreed that the commercial building should be parallel to Seven Mile Road.

Seeing that discussion had ended, Vice Chair Russell closed this discussion item.

SEVEN MILE-SOUTH MAIN STREET OVERLAY – DRAFT ORDINANCE REVISIONS

Commissioner Snyder remained recused during this discussion item.

Planning Consultant Elmiger explained that the draft presented this evening was revised according to comments made at the last Planning Commission meeting:

- The minimum number of residential units in the permitted density had been eliminated, so that a density up to 15 dwelling units per acre was allowed, thus permitting a lower density if that was desired.
- Planning Consultant Elmiger had looked into how other communities calculated density in a mixed-use project. Most communities used a “net” lot area, which was the total area of the lot minus any public or private right of ways. Northville’s ordinance also used this method to calculate minimum lot area; therefore this method was included in the draft ordinance.
- Maximum height dimensions were added to the table on page 3, so the height limits were provided in both stories and feet, which was consistent with other sections of the Zoning Ordinance.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said if the Commission was satisfied with the draft language, the next step would be to set a public hearing. Additionally, rezoning the PR-1 parcels in this area to General Commercial District should be set for public hearing at the same time.

Regarding the height requirement, Commissioner Miller pointed out that the proposed footnote on page 3 would allow a height as needed by the development just discussed.

After discussion, the consensus of the Commission was to add clarifying language to the subheads under Maximum Building Height: *If building contains commercial use only: 2 stories*, and repeated for residential and mixed use.

Commissioner Tinberg summarized that under the proposed language, residential only buildings had a maximum height of 30 feet, unless the first story was a garage, when the building could then be 35 feet.

In response to a question from Downtown Development Authority Director Ward, Planning Consultant Elmiger said there was no definition for a mixed-use development.

Vice Chair Russell indicated he would entertain a motion.

MOTION by Mielock, support by Maise, to set the Seven Mile-South Main Street Overlay revisions for public hearing at the next available meeting.

Maise	yes
Mielock	yes
Miller	yes
Russell	yes
Smith	yes
Tinberg	yes

Motion carried 6-0-1 (Snyder recused)

MOTION by Maise, support by Mielock to set for public hearing at the next available meeting the rezoning of PR-1 parcels within the Seven Mile-South Main Street Overlay District boundaries to General Commercial.

Maise	yes
Mielock	yes
Miller	yes
Russell	yes
Smith	yes
Tinberg	yes

Motion carried 6-0-1 (Snyder recused)

In response to a question from Commissioner Maise, Planning Consultant Elmiger said the property owners within the area to be rezoned would be noticed.

Mayor Roth said that he had been approached numerous times by people who were concerned about the pace of homes being purchased for tear down so that larger homes could be constructed on small lots, and whether current ordinance restrictions regarding setbacks and area coverage were enforced. The question had come up whether Northville should look at doing something similar to what Plymouth had enacted, which was a .4 floor area ratio, which meant that all the floors of the building could equal .4 of the area of the lot. This helped to minimize bulk and massing. The .4 was based on an analysis of homes across the City. The regulation was popular with the residents in Plymouth.

After discussion, the consensus of the Commission was to ask Planning Consultant Elmiger to review the Plymouth ordinance and to contrast that with Northville's ordinance, in terms of desired outcomes.

Joint training with the Plymouth Planning Commission would be held Wednesday June 27 at 6:30 p.m. at Plymouth City Hall.

9. ADJOURN

Seeing that there was no further discussion, Vice Chair Russell asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Maise, support by Smith, to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as published 07/17/2018