



PLANNING COMMISSION

February 20, 2014

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey Planning Commission was held in the City Hall Community Room, Petoskey, Michigan, on Thursday, February 20, 2014. Roll was called at 7:00 P.M. and the following were:

Present: Gary Greenwell, Chairperson
Dana Andrews
Dean D. Burns
James Holmes
Elizabeth Looze
Rick Neumann
Cynthia Linn Robson
Eric Yetter

Absent: Emily Meyerson

Staff: Amy Tweeten, City Planner
Lisa Denoyer, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Ryan Bentley, Petoskey News Review
Ron Cieslak, Merritt Cieslak Design
Bryan Nolan, Benchmark Engineering
Todd Swanson, 5135 Coastal Woods

Upon motion and support, the minutes of the January 16, 2014 meeting were approved.

**Public Hearing on a Special Condition Use for
a church at 1225 Northmen Drive**

Staff gave an overview of the Special Condition Use Standards of Approval (1717) and additional special condition use standards for churches and other facilities normally incidental thereto in the R1 and R2 Zoning Districts and a summary of recommendations for conditions of approval:

Based on staff's review of the site plan package dated 1/29/14, Landscape Plan dated 1/29/14, Photometric Plan dated 11/27/2013, any approval for the overall site plan and Special Condition Use for a church at 1225 Northmen Drive should include the following conditions for the site to meet the performance standards of Section 1716 and the standards of review for Section 1717:

1. Additional architectural detail or landscaping – including evergreen trees in place of shrubs- to break up the mass of the west building façade;
2. A 5 foot hedge along the south property line to screen parking (as shown) in place of a masonry wall;

3. Canopy trees along the east property line – a minimum of 6 trees planted 30 feet on center, minimum 2 1/2" caliper;
4. Elimination of the 14 parking spaces along the east property line;
5. Extension of the 6' sidewalk along Northmen Drive to Klondike Avenue;
6. Relocation of the trash enclosure to the northeast corner of the building (previous location);
7. A grease interceptor is installed in the kitchen area;
8. A pavement patch is completed for the fire hydrant lead; and
9. Yearly maintenance and cleaning of the storm water system structures and detention basin.

Staff would further recommend that the applicant request use of the Ottawa School parking lot and playground during non-school hours and construct a sidewalk from the north entrance to Klondike Avenue to allow this pedestrian passage.

Ron Cieslak, Merritt Cieslak Design, commented that they would be willing to; add more landscaping along the west building façade, plant a 5-foot hedge along the south property line in place of a masonry wall, add more trees to the landscaping along Northmen Court, eliminate the 14 parking spaces along the east property line, install a grease interceptor in the kitchen, and add a pavement patch for the hydrant lead. Mr. Cieslak also stated that they would be willing to extend the 8' sidewalk along Northmen Drive to Klondike Avenue but requested that they be able to make the extension 6' wide to be consistent with City sidewalk standards, and requested that they be able to screen the dumpster at its new proposed location as this would be its preferred location. Mr. Cieslak also asked the Commission for a percentage of landscape coverage that they would like to see along the wall.

At this time the hearing was opened for public comment.

There being no public comment, the hearing was closed.

Commissioner Holmes commented that he would prefer that the dumpster be located next to the building as there is a playground nearby and he is concerned that children might see it as a place to play.

Commissioner Looze asked to hear more about the conversation with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council regarding alternatives to black top parking and asked about the possibility of shared parking with the school to reduce onsite parking.

Todd Swanson, 5135 Coastal Woods, commented that he had spoken with Jennifer Gelb, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, regarding sidewalks but nothing else as she did not have plans to look at. Mr. Swanson also stated that he had spoken with Bryan Nolan, Benchmark Engineering, to address the 3% grade and whether it was feasible to use pervious materials such as grow block and that there were concerns about the cost of materials as the grow blocks would be three times more costly than pavement, as well as plowing issues and salt killing the vegetation. Mr. Swanson also stated that they had not spoken with the School District regarding shared parking and that would be up to them if they would allow such a liability on their property. He also voiced concerns about the fact that the school's parking lot and sidewalks are not plowed or cleared on weekends and was unsure who would be responsible for making sure that they were cleared and also had issues with the distance that people would be required to walk to get to the church from the school parking lot.

Commissioner Andrews asked if; the parcel had been split, the farm house was occupied, the existing sidewalk was 6' wide or 8' wide, there was anything separating the north property line and the school, and if the church had approached the school about use of the playground and baseball field. Mr. Andrews also asked staff if there were any questions or concerns presented by the school district.

Ron Cieslak responded that; he believed the parcel had been split, the sidewalk is 8' wide, and that he believed there was a fence between the school and the church property.

Todd Swanson stated that the farm house was occupied as recently as a year ago.

Staff responded that the school district had not contacted the City with any questions or concerns.

Commissioner Greenwell stated that he believes this is a situation to explore the possibility of reducing parking by utilizing the schools parking lot and asked how many parking spaces are needed currently and suggested that the church come back in a few years and request additional parking, should the need arise.

Todd Swanson commented that on average they currently have between 120 and 130 cars at the locations they are using and he doesn't believe that reducing their parking to below their current numbers would be right.

Commissioner Yetter commented on the size of the lot and asked if; the parking was based on the number of chairs, and if the seating numbers were current member numbers or a vision. Mr. Yetter also voiced concern about such a large parking lot being empty most of the time and the impact that 150 cars will have on the community.

Ron Cieslak responded that the seating plan currently has 570 seats and that this facility will allow them to use the facility daily and they do not want cars parked on the street. Mr. Yetter asked if they currently had that number of members to which he responded they did not.

Todd Swanson commented that they believe they need that much parking for their facility as they are continually growing and that they have church services every day, not just on Sundays. He also stated that when he spoke with Jennifer Gelb at Tip of the Mitt he asked if she knew of any facilities to compare this site with and she did not note any.

Commissioner Burns stated that he was sympathetic to their plight and suggested that they take a look at the driveway at the building located on the corner of Bay and Division and consider them as a resource for information on a grow block driveway. He also stated that the driveway doesn't look bad, is plowed, and the office is occupied year-round. Mr. Burns asked the church to provide their plans to Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for review to see if they would have any suggestions on alternate options for parking and stated that he is concerned about the amount of pavement. He also asked if the church would consider ivy as a cover for the west wall and stated that he favors an 8' wide sidewalk over the requested 6' sidewalk.

Ron Cieslak stated that he believes that the City's ordinance is a little light on parking for a church at a ratio of one parking space per four seats and that most cities have a ratio of 1:2 or 1:3. He also commented that he believes they would rather plant evergreens away from the building than plant ivy as it eats into the mortar and requires maintenance.

Commissioner Robson commented that she; has concerns with the size of the parking area in a residential area, would like the church to have a meeting with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to review their plans, realizes that grow blocks are more costly than pavement but would like to see less parking at the facility and shared parking with the school, if possible, she would also like to see at least 80% of the west wall covered and would like the site to look and feel more like a wooded area to the neighbors. Ms. Robson also stated that she believes that an 8' sidewalk is reasonable and would like to see it continued at that width to Klondike Avenue so that it is safer for kids as well as the walkers, bikers, dog walkers, and many others that use the sidewalk along Northmen Drive. She also asked if the dumpster could be moved closer to the building and stated that she would rather it stay in the new proposed location and be heavily screened.

Ron Cieslak commented that the overhang of the building limits how close the dumpster can be placed next to the building, that the Fire Marshall also requires it be set back a certain distance from the building and the garbage truck has to be able to access it as well. He suggested that they may be able to move it so that it was flush with the rear service drive.

Commissioner Neumann asked why there weren't any peninsulas shown along the north bay of parking near the retention area and if it was because of plowing. Mr. Neumann commented that if the 14 parking spaces were eliminated that the next two or three spaces to the north would be difficult to access. He also asked about the possibility of planting 3' to 4' bushes and lilies as a landscape to the north rather than a canopy of trees and arborvitae as they can grow quite tall and also asked if the plans could be flipped south to north so that the retention pond and playground would be on the south side and in the sun and the guardrail could be eliminated as he believes it appears out of place and emphasizes the retention basin. Mr. Neumann also asked if there was some architectural way that the mansard on the west wall of the building could be carried all the way down or shortened from the peak down to prevent kids from playing on it.

Staff responded that they are required to have a wall and that the plans could not be flipped due to slope issues that would arise.

Ron Cieslak commented that they would prune the hedge to 48" tall rather than allowing it to grow to mature height, they would use 42" black decorative fence as the pedestrian guard rail and that the west wall is 190' long and 15' tall so landscaping is the best solution to conceal. Mr. Cieslak also commented that there is a grade issue so the mansards could not be continued to the corners and that the two ends are retaining walls and they felt that was a good stopping point.

Todd Swanson commented that you will only be able to see about one-third of the west wall because of the trees, farm house, etc. He also commented that the farm house is taller than the church will be and that you will only see 60' of the right side of the building and 70' of the left side.

Bryan Nolan commented that; there are no peninsulas because they needed the extra parking and that they lowered the curb to make it easier to plow, there are many types of decorative materials that are used to make pedestrian guard rails and that the building plans could not be flipped because too much soil would have to be moved from the north side of the site to the south side to achieve the necessary grade.

Commissioner Greenwell commented that neither suggested mansard option would work as they would come to grade and people could walk on the roof and that he does not see how they could be extended and that shorter mansards would not look good.

Commissioner Looze stated that she would like the church to meet with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to review plans and receive recommendations on parking options other than pavement and asked about the possibility of turf parking.

Todd Swanson expressed concerns of plowing and salting a grass parking lot.

Staff commented that Gordon Food Services would be an example of turf parking along the exterior perimeter that is utilized during the summer months and is used for stacking snow in the winter months.

At this time, commissioner Burns made a motion with support from Commissioner Robson to postpone action until a full consultation and report regarding parking and alternate options can be provided by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for review and discussions are held with the school district regarding the possibility of shared parking at Ottawa School. The motion carried 8-0.

Master Plan Five-Year Review

Staff gave a brief overview of Chapter 1 and commented that the census data would be updated.

Commissioners discussed national recognition and the need for more up to date recognitions as well as the need to update rental/homeowner data, traffic on trails data and age profile data.

Staff then gave a brief overview of Chapter 2.

Commissioner Burns stated that he believed there was a need to inquire about the number of members in the local tribe as it may have increased.

Commissioner Neumann suggested that a ninth strategy be added to update the multiple resource survey and explore the feasibility of additional national register district listings as individual sites or districts. He believes the Emmet to Elizabeth Street area would qualify, as well as the west side as it is the oldest neighborhood in the City.

Continued Discussion on Public Art Approval Process

Due to lack of time this discussion was postponed until the regular March meeting.

Updates

Staff informed the Commission that Advanced Auto Parts is moving forward with their project. Commissioners asked about the status of Hobby Lobby to which staff replied that there was no update at this time.

Staff notified the Commission that the City applied for a DEQ SAW grant for a storm water asset management plan and master plan and hopes to hear whether the grant will be approved later this month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Minutes reviewed and approved by Gary Greenwell, Chairperson.