



PLANNING COMMISSION

July 19, 2018

A regular Planning Commission meeting was held in the City Hall Council Chambers, Petoskey, Michigan, on Thursday, July 19, 2018. Roll was called at 7:00 P.M. and the following were:

Present: Gary Greenwell, Planning Commission Chairperson
Dana Andrews
Betony Braddock
Dean Burns
James Holmes
Emily Meyerson
Rick Neumann
Cynthia Robson
Eric Yetter

Staff: Rob Straebel, City Manager
Amy Tweeten, City Planner

Others Present: More than 60 persons present for presentation on 200 E Lake

Upon motion and support, the minutes of the May 17, 2018 regular meeting were approved 9-0.

Conceptual Plan Presentation- 200 E Lake

Staff explained that this was the initial review by the Commission to provide direction to the developer on the concept plan. She believed the concept would require a major amendment to the Planned Unit Development existing on the property based on the ordinance requirements. She then reviewed the standards of approval for a Planned Unit Development and the overall goals and objectives of the City Master Plan that would be taken into consideration by the Commission when reviewing a zoning amendment.

Mr. Tom McIntyre, Petoskey Gateway, LLC then provided background on their progress reviewing the site, introduced his team, and gave an overview of their current concept for the property, which is the sixth iteration. The concept includes a hotel with 82-84 rooms, conference space of 9,000 square feet, 91 residential condominiums, retail space of 12,000 space to include 1-2 restaurants and walk in medical office for McLaren Northern Michigan. There would be 500-600 covered parking spaces, with 100 of them gifted to the City. He then introduced Bob Gibbs, Planner for the project.

Mr. Gibbs gave an overview of the four-building site plan, three of which would be mixed use; noted the building heights and that there are limited views from the property below the fourth floor; the buildings would be 40-60 feet wide, with the lowest level of parking structure for the hotel. He believes that the density belongs in the core of the community and this development helps that occur, and that the sprawl occurring in the townships is not sustainable development.

Rob Baccigalupi then gave an overview of hotels in other historic downtowns, including Savannah, GA and Charleston, SC., as well as the Park Place in Traverse City and provided information on the benefits of a conference center on other businesses downtown.

Alexander Bogaerts, project architect, explained the site topography and that it created challenges but also opportunities to hide the parking inside the building; explained access to the various parking levels and the plaza; noted the different entrances disperse the traffic.

Mr. McIntyre provided a breakdown of the parking as 120 for the hotel, 200 for the residential units, 75 for retail/ medical space, 100 for public and 105 not yet allocated.

The Commissioners then asked: about the location of the conference center; whether any of the housing would be affordable; whether the plan included useable space at the corner of E. Mitchell and Petoskey; how the public parking would be accessed; whether the Park Place hotel could be built today; how the development pro-forma would change if the City bought the parking instead; whether Petoskey Pointe could be built; how the size of the current proposal compared to Petoskey Pointe; whether Tax Increment Financing has been discussed; about the vision/use for the plaza; about the frontage at E. Lake and US 31 and how the parking would be screened; how the access points on Mitchell Street would work given the current traffic congestion at E. Mitchell/Emmet and US 31; whether the development would be built in phases; whether there would be any residential on the first floor; who would own and control the plaza.

Mr. McIntyre and his team responded that the conference center would be on the first floor of building on E. Mitchell Street and at 9,000 square feet would meet the needs of many of the state organizations that hold conferences; that they are looking into the possibility of incorporating affordable housing into the site; that there would be useable space as the corner of E. Mitchell and Petoskey; that the public parking would be at the same grade as the drive off of Petoskey Street; that the Park Place Hotel in Traverse City could not be built under current zoning regulations; that they would envision working with the DDA and Chamber on use of the plaza for activities such as farmer's markets and outdoor dining and that the hotel and residences would have access as well; that the vehicular access is still being studied; that the project would likely be built in phases over several years although they would prefer it to be built at one time; that there could be residential on the ground floor along the plaza; and that the condo association would own and control the plaza, with the intent to have it open to the public.

In response to the question about whether Petoskey Pointe could be built, the City Planner believed the zoning for the site remained, and the City Manager added to the inquiry stating the validity of the PUD was in question and that it is currently under legal review as the developer had brought it up as a "Plan B" to the current concept. He did not believe the Commission was beholden to Petoskey Pointe. Mr. McIntyre responded that he was not interested in building Petoskey Pointe as the project was too big, but did believe the PUD was still valid.

The City Manager also responded to the question on use of tax increment financing that it is being discussed and it is included in the Economic Development Strategy as a possible incentive for projects with public benefit.

Commissioners also commented that it was an exciting start; that the black and white elevations were misleading; that there were a lot of curb cuts shown; that there is a need for affordable housing; that it was unclear what "giving the city parking" meant; the way height is shown on the drawings is misleading and that the height was much taller than the 40 feet allowed in the Central Business District.

At this time, public comment was taken.

Kate Marshall, 1015 E Mitchell Street, asked about the need for drawings that are to-scale as required in the zoning ordinance and felt an independent traffic engineer should be hired. It was explained that this is an informational meeting with schematic plans only and if the applicant so desires they will come back with detailed drawings and traffic studies.

Dan Cleary, 615 State Street, noted his construction experience and asked about the height restrictions in the communities shown in the presentation (Charleston and Savannah) and talked about the economic impact of the construction phases.

Curt Harwood, 1510 Kilborn Drive, asked about the height of the hotel and of Petoskey Pointe, noted that the St. Francis steeple is 106 feet; and asked how high a fire truck can reach.

Dave Gerathy, 610 Grove Street, recently moved to Petoskey because of its walkability and questioned what a 600 car parking structure would do to walkability.

To these inquiries, Mr. Gibbs responded that Charleston has a block by block form-based code and has a concerted strategy to stop sprawl by having people live in the City; that parking at the entrance of downtown is where it should be located to keep cars out and that traffic studies don't typically look at pedestrian impacts.

Ben Slocum, Howard Street and a Petoskey Fireperson responded that the City had a 100 foot platform fire truck, which is the largest available; that as a business owner he is aware that workforce housing is a huge problem and causing restaurants to reduce hours; and asked Mr. McIntyre about his involvement in Proposition 3 in Traverse City.

Mr. McIntyre gave a summary of Prop 3 that required any buildings over 60 feet to go to the vote of the people, which they believe violates zoning laws so the issue is now before the Court of Appeals.

Bob Kronberg, 422 Grove, noted it was smaller than the original Petoskey Pointe Development but that traffic will be an issue, and that given the slope of the city having the whole town above this site, making it the focal point continues to be an issue and that he believes the concept is out of character with the City.

Carlin Smith, Petoskey Chamber of Commerce Director, noted the Chamber Board had received a presentation on the proposal and talked about the economic impact. They didn't get into the details that the Commission and Council will need to address, but want something to happen at 200 E Lake Street and are hoping the approach is working to get something done, rather than stopping it.

Lori Pall, 603 E Lake Street, reminded the Commission that the master plan developed after Petoskey Pointe included charrettes where the public clearly wanted future development to be compatible with existing downtown scale; that Blueprint Petoskey doesn't go to 80 or 100 feet, and feels it is the job of Commissioners to uphold the City Master Plan.

Jessica Shaw, 517 E Lake, noted that Petoskey is not as big as the communities used for comparison and is concerned about the size. She asked about the cinema comment to which Mr. McIntyre said there wasn't support from the City for a cinema.

The City Planner clarified that the issue was not support for a cinema downtown, but that the site may not be able to hold all of the uses proposed, and given a proposal of a 10 story building to allow for a single-story cinema, the balance may have to be located a cinema elsewhere.

Nan Casey, 114 E Lake, commented that she is the closest house to the site and welcomes the change it would bring.

Discussion then returned to the Commission. Commissioner Robson noting that height is the concern, and that they were not being clear on what the height of the hotel would be. She commented that she had done research on building heights regionally, with Bay Harbor maximum height of 60 feet with the hotel at 75 feet; that the CBD zoning allowed three stories, 40 feet that the region has smaller buildings and 85 feet is too much of a variation and too big; that she wanted buildings closer to 60 feet; that the CBD requires ground floor retail so did not think ground floor residential should be included. Commissioner Greenwell added that the site has been derelict for 50 years and that the buildings proposed were within the allowed heights by the PUD and he therefore did not have an issue with it.

Chairman Greenwell thanked the developers for the presentation and felt they were provided sufficient input should they decide to return.

Review and Adoption of the 2018-2022 Downtown Strategic Plan

Staff provided an overview of the plan process, strategies and actions.

Commissioner Meyerson commented that there continued to be a disconnect between the need for parking and dense downtown development; that there was no youth involvement or focus in the plan; and that there was no discussion of public art in the plan and she felt that it continues to be needed and should be a priority.

Commissioner Andrews, a member of the plan process committee, responded that the plan addressed issues raised through the public input but that these issues had been discussed at the committee level as public art was included in the prior plan, but there had not been support for keeping it at the forefront.

Becky Goodman, Downtown Director, added that the issue of public art had been divisive between City Council and the Downtown Management Board, with Council ultimately choosing to not adopt the plan developed.

Commissioner Meyerson did not think that downtown was only for business, that youth are not welcome downtown, that they weren't included in the process, but that their voices are important. She felt youth need to be included.

Commissioner Neumann, a member of the plan process committee, concurred that due to the divisiveness of public art, the committee and DMB didn't incorporate and that because Pennsylvania Park is so important to the community, people are protective of what occurs.

Staff commented that one concern of Council was that the public art plan only addressed downtown, but the reason was that it was funded through the downtown assessment; that the message that public art is needed could be passed on to council; and that she questioned whether it was the downtown's responsibility to incorporate youth involvement, or whether it was a needed component of public participation in the master plan update.

Commissioners discussed how to forward their comments to City Council regarding public art and youth involvement. Commissioner Burns made a motion to approve the 2018-2022 Downtown Strategic Plan and forward to City Council with the recommendation that they revisit the issue of public art community wide. Support for the motion was by Robson and carried 9-0.

The Commission directed staff to include youth involvement during the master plan update.

Updates

Staff informed the Commission that the City had received certification through the Redevelopment Ready Communities program and that the award ceremony would be at City Council on August 20th; that they would be reviewing the 2019-2024 Capital Improvements Plan at their August 16th meeting and that the webinar on Local Historic Districts would be held on July 26th and to let her know if interested.

The meeting then adjourned at 10:01 P.M.

Minutes reviewed by Emily Meyerson, Commission Vice Chair/Secretary