

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
November 13, 2023

Vice Chairperson Perrot called the meeting to order in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 13, 2023.

ROLL CALL

Present: Gray, Mantey, Perrot, Westendorf
Absent: Crutcher, Kmetzo, Majoros
A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Kevin Christiansen; City Attorney Beth Saarela, Recording Secretary Bonnie Murphy, Brian Belesky, Director of Media Specialist, Jennifer Morris, OHM Advisors, Austin Downey, OHM Advisors.

APPROVAL MOTION by Westendorf seconded by Mantey, to approve the agenda. Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

A. October 9, 2023 Minutes

MOTION by Mantey, seconded by Westendorf, to approve the items on Consent Agenda Motion carried, all ayes.

FINAL SITE PLAN REVIEW – PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT: HILLSIDE TOWNES – ROBERTSON BROTHERS HOME, MAXFIELD TRAINING CENTER, 33000 THOMAS STREET

Vice Chairman Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Director Christiansen stated this item is a final site plan review of a Planned Unit Development Plan, final PUD plan review by the Planning Commission for Hillside Townes submitted by Robertson Brothers Homes for the Maxfield Training Center at 33000 Thomas Street. The background is that this project which has been before the City now for a period of time has reached the final step of the City of Farmington's Planned Unit Development process. Again, the property is the Maxfield Training Center and the proposal is Hillside Townes which is a residential condominium project, an owner occupied condominium project consisting of fifty-three townhome units on the Maxfield Training Center site. A little background and history at the May 9th, 2022 Planning Commission meeting the commission held a pre-application conference as you are aware with a discussion and review with the applicant on the proposed PUD concept plan for the redevelopment of the former Maxfield Training Center. The Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary conceptual PUD plan and scheduled the required Public Hearing

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for Hillside Townes at the October 10, 2022 meeting as requested. At the November 14, 2022 Planning Commission meeting, the commission held the required PUD Public Hearing and recommended approval of the preliminary conceptual PUD plan for Hillside Townes to City Council. At their July 24, 2023 meeting, City Council approved a preliminary conceptual PUD plan agreement for Hillside Townes. So this evening we are at the fifth step of the City of Farmington's PUD plan process. The Applicant, Robertson Brothers Homes, of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan has submitted a final PUD site plan for Hillside Townes, the final site plan includes a conceptual plan, and existing conditions survey, a final site plan, a landscape plan, proposed floor plans and proposed building elevations. Also attached are aerial photos of the site and the following additional information is attached, a final PUD site plan review letter from OHM Advisors dated November 1st, 2023, also colored renderings of the proposed building elevations, a building unit materials colors patch sheet and site photometric lighting plan information submitted by the Applicant. This evening the Applicant again, Robertson Brothers Homes of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan is here to present the final PUD site plan to the commission. So, I'll go ahead and just scroll down for a second. This is an aerial photo, this is the Maxfield Training Center site, the building, the site as well which includes the parking, adjacent properties are shown as well including community, Shiawassee Park and the adjacent residential to the north and west. We have also Farmington Place which is to the east and the commercial property, church and the residential buildings, homes and those homes buildings with nonresidential use located on Grand River Avenue. So this is the existing aerial photo and the existing conditions with respect to the subject property and surrounding properties. There's another aerial photograph which is a little more discernible, it's a black and white photo, it shows the property in question. You'll also note that with the church property there is the church parking lot that is directly adjacent to the west of the Maxfield site. So these are the aerial photos and if we page down, this is the review letter for the final PUD site plan for Hillside Townes as prepared and submitted by OHM Advisors, again, included with your packet is the letter that reviews the final site plan submitted and then focuses on the elements in that plan in relation to the City's final PUD plan process. With us this evening are Jennifer Morris and Austin Downey from OHM Advisors to answer any questions that you might have so we can go through that if you so choose. Also then this is the final PUD site plan that is submitted for this evening's meeting and for your consideration by Robertson Brothers Homes, Mr. Tim Loughrin is here this evening in order to present this final PUD site plan to you. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will turn this back over to you.

Vice Chair Perrot invited the Petitioner to the podium.

Tim Loughrin, Robertson Brothers Homes, came to the podium. He stated he is here to present the final PUD site plan for Hillside Townes on the former Maxfield Training Center site, owned by the City, and that they were awarded the RFP for the site approximately two years ago. He said they see this as a catalyst to jump start the downtown area which

already has a lot to offer so they're excited to work on this, they've been looking at this site for many years before it even became available. He presented the site plan and stated they made some improvements to it, a lot of it is screening for the neighbors, and they had to switch gears as the homes would not withstand on the hillside, and they ultimately have a site plan with fifty-three townhomes. He put up the revisions that were made since he had last been before the Planning Commission, by adding sidewalks essentially from Hillside Townes through the church parking lot which also is used for City parking on that site. As part of the PUD agreement, Robertson Brothers will resurface that parking lot and making a few improvements and some landscaping and a sidewalk connection to the neighboring properties. One of the things that is new is there was a lot of discussion about the rear of the elevations, building 20 through 28 the rear elevation was enhanced and a six-foot screen fence, horizontal wood slats painted, so that will help screen the garage portion of it from view. Another addition is how do we integrate the sidewalk to the west so they created a circular look with bench seating and some landscaping, so that was another thing the City Council wanted to see. Those are the improvements that we made, otherwise it's essentially the same plan. In summary it's just under three acres, it's zoned Central Business District, there are fifty-three total owner occupied, with first floor entry with garage being accessed from the rear and a zoom room on the bottom which is very popular. The second floor is the kitchen and open area and the third floor is the bedrooms. He put the elevations on the screen and described the materials as being Hardee board and an extended patio area to give a little more room on the outside. He then welcomed questions from the commission.

Perrot opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Mantey asked about the comment in the OHM letter regarding lighting and Loughrin replied there's no extra lighting on the project, there is coach lighting on front and back and those stay on all night and they are comfortable with that and rarely bring in additional lighting.

Perrot stated as a point of clarification, there was no mention in your summary about connectivity from Thomas Street to Grand River, does that exist and Loughrin replied this project is a catalyst for that, it wouldn't be done with this project necessarily but was designed for the promenade but not part of this development. Perrot asked if that's a commitment that the builder will do it and Loughrin replied no, the City will be doing it, there were a lot of things we offered back and forth on what's going to be part of this project and part of DDA funding needs to go through but this project is a catalyst for all of it.

Perrot stated this project is dramatically different than the original version and he greatly appreciates all of the work the builder put into it.

Perrot thanked the Petitioner and opened the floor for a motion from the commission.

Westendorf stated he has a question for staff. He asked if the connections to the park on the west side and south side were dropped from the project and they were major pieces of this project and are they happening or not. It sounds like DDA is paying for one or both of them.

Christiansen replied the obligation the developer has as shown on the site plan is to facilitate all of those elements for connectivity, so you can see the pathways throughout the project site that go through the site to the north and go out to the park, so those are being provided. And you'll note that promenade art park which is the connection to Riley Park is also provided, the details for that still rest with the DDA. It's shown in the conceptual PUD plan, it's in the PUD agreement, the obligation is the acquisition of those homes that are part of the area that will be promenade art park, the demolition of those homes and the repurpose of the site in accordance with this plan. The details for it still have the decision making of the DDA working with the developer but that will happen, that connection will happen and again, as I mentioned, the connection through the site, the one that Mr. Loughrin mentioned to the west out to Warner is the responsibility of the developer and on this plan and the one that goes across on the north side shown on this plan. What will happen at Shiawassee Park is still being worked through the City and that all hinges on available resources but whether it's going to be stairs or rebuilding or repurpose at the bridge that is still a work in progress but the connectivity to those points will be made as part of this project.

Perrot confirmed that the City owns the two homes and Christiansen replied the City has owned those homes for a period of time, that's correct.

MOTION by Mantey, seconded by Westendorf, to grant the approval of the request of Robertson Brothers for approval of final site plan subject to the following conditions: the plan, the PUD agreement becoming effective as completed in the agreement to purchase dated August 31, 2021 as amended, the purchase agreement between the City and Robertson Brothers, satisfaction by Robertson Brothers of all actions under the purchase agreement and under the PUD agreement, including all other final approvals set forth therein and the closing on the purchase agreement in accordance with the terms thereof resulting in the transfer of property to Robertson Brothers and also subject to the requirements of the OHM letter dated November 1, 2023.

A roll call vote was taken on the foregoing motion with the following result:

AYES: Gray, Mantey, Perrot, Westendorf

NAYS: None

Motion carried (4-0)

REQUEST TO SCHEDULE SPECIAL LAND USE PUBLIC HEARING AND SITE PLAN REVIEW – MAMA EATZ BAR, 35223 GRAND RIVER AVENUE

Vice Chairperson Perrot introduced this item and turn it over to staff.

Director Christiansen stated this item is a request to schedule a Special Land Use Public Hearing and site plan review for Mama Eatz Bar, located at 35223 Grand River Avenue. The owner of the existing Mama Eatz Restaurant located in the Drakeshire Plaza Shopping Center is closing to repurpose the existing restaurant and construct and install a bar in the existing restaurant building unit. The plans are to remove some of the existing structures and facilities in the existing restaurant building unit and construct and install a new bar. These facilities and site changes improvements as well require the review and approval of the Planning Commission. The existing commercial building is zoned C-2, Community Commercial District. The existing property and that existing use within the C-2 with a bar, so that would be a restaurant with a bar are a Special Land Use in the Community Commercial District. So restaurants are a permitted use by right, a restaurant with a bar is a Special Land Use to repurpose and expand the existing restaurant to add a bar, then kicks in the Special Land Use portion which requires the Special Land Use to be followed and would require a site plan to be submitted and requires the Planning Commission to consider the Special Land Use and the site plan and to hold the required Public Hearing for the Special Land Use. As indicated a Public Hearing and site plan review then and approval are required by the Planning Commission. No changes to the existing building or the existing shopping center, Drakeshire Plaza, are proposed. The Applicant has submitted a Special Land Use Application and site plan package for the proposed changes and improvements. Aerial photos of the site are also attached with the staff packet. The Applicant is here this evening, Mr. Neeleshwar Thakwur, he is representing the restaurant Mama Eatz and then his site plan and Special Land Use Application to make a request of you to hold the required Public Hearing.

If I might, Mr. Chairman, we'll go ahead and this is an aerial photo, this is Grand River Avenue. Just to the west is Drake Road, you see the shopping center, Drakeshire Plaza, which is bordered in red, you see three segments to the shopping center, construction, so three buildings with multiple units so it's a multi-tenant facility, you see the units are shown here. This is Drakeshire Plaza, the Mama Eatz Restaurant is 35221 in this drawing here and it's down in the southwest corner of the shopping center site. The Applicant has operated Mama Eatz in Drakeshire Plaza for three, four years. With that, Mr. Chairman, there is a site plan package that shows interior modifications, again, there's no exterior modifications posed at this point so what's before you is a request for Special Land Use and site plan for the bar and this evening the requested action is to schedule the required Public Hearing for the Special Land Use.

Perrot invited the Petitioner to the podium.

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Kondal Jinna came to the podium and stated he lives in Drake's Crossing and Perrot opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners.

Hearing none, on a MOTION by Westendorf, seconded by Mantey, to move to approve the scheduling of the Special Land Use Public Hearing and site plan review for Mama Eatz at the December 11, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

Motion carried, all ayes.

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW – CITY OF FARMINGTON MASTER PLAN

Vice Chairperson Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff. He stated this is a follow-up to the previous meeting which was very much appreciated by staff and thanked Christiansen for his knowledge.

Christiansen thanked Perrot for his words of support, that it's something the City has focused on, that the roadmaps, the guides in place, to provide direction to the community and that's what the Master Plan does. By statute it is required and the City must comply with the statute with respect to its long range plan. We went through quite a bit of information in the current Master Plan which was updated in 2019 and by Statute we have a responsibility to look at this plan every five years, updating the plan. And it could be and we talked about this, that everything in the plan is still valid and we still need to work on it and still needs to be part of the plan and maybe it's just a couple tweaks with respect to things that might be a little different or some changes that have happened over the last five years or maybe most of it is still applicable and valid and you want to go continue on with that plan and that might be the update or you could looking at something in more detail, that's up to you. The Planning Commission has the responsibility of developing and then moving through the process the Master Plan. There's also some oversight by Statute by City Council and also not only by the City but by adjacent communities. In any event we went through in detail the plan the City has used for the past four years since 2019 and continues to use and we got to a point where looking at all the various elements of the plan we've discussed making sure the implementation of this tool is also something that is moved forward in accordance with what was laid out in 2019.

Christiansen stated this plan has various components to it, the plan itself really is the existing conditions and demographics and relate to it, Future Land Use including in this plan the identification of five focus areas, those focus areas then individually discussed in this plan and reflected on and direction provided and then we get to the implementation strategy which is policy framework, zoning strategy and the Capital Improvement Program Plan for the City of Farmington. So we got through Section 5 at our last meeting and I'll go down to that portion and you might note and I'll make this comment that OHM Advisors, the City's planning and engineering consultants provided the oversight and the consulting

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services and support for this Master Plan, so they certainly have direct involvement, engagement and work with us as well as the City's planning consultant so they have considerable knowledge of this plan and are here this evening to provide any comments if you so choose for them to do that.

What we should do as we discussed is take a look at the implementation section and have some response to those questions and kind of then come back full circle knowing what our goal is is being prepared for when year five of this plan takes place in 2024, being prepared to move forward with an update knowing that we looked at the plan in some level of detail so then we can put together a general direction on how we want to update that plan. Again, as I said last meeting the 2019 plan was shepherded through the process by a Master Plan Steering Committee. That Steering Committee was made up of various board commissioners, appointees, as well as City Manager and administrative staff, so our Steering Committee did all of our groundwork, the nuts and bolts if you will of this plan moving it forward to the Planning Commission. That could be the direction you take again or it can be different but that is information for you and we'll get there in 2024 and hopefully have the opportunity moving forward with the City's commitment with the update and also depends upon the resources available to do that which requires money in our budget, funding as well.

Moving forward with implementation, policy framework, this is kind of the overall policy structure with respect to the Master Plan and its implementation. The overview provides the various bodies that are involved, City Council, Planning Commission, the Downtown Development Authority, the Grand River Improvement Authority, the Economic and Community Development Department, at the time this was created the Building Department, Public Services, Public Works and community organizations. And you can see that is identified in this plan, so there's a lot of different interests that are part of this plan that need to be engaged in order to successfully implement your Master Plan. You see here goals, strategies, identified and how is that spelled out and then the overall timeframe for this plan, short, medium, long term and ongoing.

Housing is a focus of this plan because as you're aware the City of Farmington is predominantly a residential community with a core downtown which support nonresidential uses of our housing, land use, again it's about 70 percent of our land use, the majority of that is single family detached housing in subdivisions which have been part of this community for a long time. So one of the very desirable and attractive elements here that really make the quality of life in Farmington are neighborhoods, our residential portions of the community. And we have not only single family but we have a significant amount of multiple family residential, too, that varies from apartments or condominiums, owner occupied condominiums, condominiums that are for lease or rental condominiums in different ways. We have senior housing community, Farmington Place as well. Housing is probably the key land use in this community and this was identified

in this Master Plan and we continue to work in that direction as we saw earlier this evening with the approval of the final site plan for Hillside Townes. Housing is in demand and housing in Farmington is very much in demand and not only is it new housing as was approved tonight by you, but it's maintaining and enhancing existing housing and make sure that thrives and that our neighborhoods stay strong. So that's a very important thing and a very important part of this Master Plan. So you have the overview here, existing conditions and trends and again we'll look at this in detail when we peel the onion of the update. But you'll note here nationwide trend, housing size, is it increasing, is it different than four years ago, the diversity of the housing stock as I mentioned, we do have an older housing stock because we have older platted subdivisions but that older housing stock has been maintained very well and invested in and it continues to be invested in. And that is certainly one of the attractive elements of our housing stock is that the owners take pride in those homes and they maintain those homes which help maintain our neighborhoods to whoever chooses to purchase, to live in, to own, to occupy and a lot of that housing stock is owned by families, families with children, families with school-aged children that go attend the schools within our community and that is just something that is invaluable to us here at the City of Farmington in terms of the quality of life and attractiveness and desirability of the community.

So, public engagement was a big part of this, again going into the diverse type of housing types, there were action items identified and current range of housing options which I just mentioned this and we continue to do this. The Maxfield Training Center is owner occupied condominiums. You might recall a couple meetings ago you recommended approval and actually City Council did approve the preliminary conceptual plan and draft PUD agreement for Legion Square. Legion Square is a residential community that are condominium style apartments so they are for lease housing units. And you may recall over the last number of years you've also been involved in housing that has enhanced the single family detached portion of the community, two projects. You know that down in the Meadows subdivision, Flanders Elementary School which had been closed was then put onto the market and the City worked with Farmington Public Schools and eventually we realized Riverwalk of Farmington, thirty-three new single family detached homes, brand new houses in the community. And the same thing with Liberty Hill. Liberty Hill is fourteen units on the former Courthouse property. So, home ownership, housing as a whole and a diverse mix of housing options throughout the community, we continue to promote that and that's reflected in this plan.

Paging down, the next part of this implementation section is the Land Use portion that talks about how vital the diversity of land use and how a focus on economics and demographics and the desirability for different types of uses in the community, key to the City's operations and its resources, its revenue generation, its tax base, all of which is used to provide funding resources for the City's operations. The City's operations including everything it takes to provide and operate the kind of community that Farmington is, public safety, police fire, public works, water, sewer, roads, money that goes to the

school by tax base and revenue and all other parts of the City's operations and budget, so a diverse land use base and that's focused here. The existing conditions, the public engagement, the five focus areas, it's our time now for repurpose, redevelopment which the City is going through now, do we breathe life into older facilities or to the point of razing structures that have lived their life cycle and served their purpose and building new construction. The Maxfield Training Center, that's a 60,000 square foot school building which was platted in 1850 and the old Union School that was there. And that school transitioned into two other schools that were built way back in the early part of the 1900s that existed until the Maxfield Training Center which became obsolete and it was not operating for a period of time. And that was moved forward now where it's owned by the City and it's going to be demolished and new housing going to go in. So the use is changing, redevelopment taking place. And the Legion, that was built in 1947 and has lived its life cycle there without a significant amount of investment to repurpose that building if that was a desire and the decision was made to sell the property and the interest now is to demolish and repurpose the site preparing it for residential.

These are things in your Master Plan, that the plan provides and without this implementation strategy, giving rational and basis and justification to make the decisions that you do, you wouldn't be doing those things without the Master Plan. So as we move forward, infill, we talked about. Walkability and connectivity, absolutely a vibrant community with all of the elements that make it what it is depend upon the interrelationship of properties to each other, the residential portions of the community to the nonresidential portions of the community, the downtown, the connectivity to the neighborhoods with sidewalks leading to the downtown and throughout the downtown. This current Master Plan focuses on walkability and connectivity and you realize that when you looked over the site plans. Commissioner Westendorf asked the appropriate questions with regard to walkability and connectivity to the parks and what the plan for Hillside Townes was providing for in its final PUD site plan and it follows this Master Plan in connectivity to the site from other places to the site and through the site and your Master Plan gives you the rationale the basis for doing that and you've done that very well.

You'll note, too, the City Council created the Pathways Committee which is a committee of the City Council with the direction of looking at the walkability and connectivity throughout the City and they've done an excellent job in identifying opportunities and where there isn't that connectivity seeing that it can be realized and moving forward or get.

Zoning strategy, you might recall when this plan, the 2019 Master Plan was adopted, the next step after the plan was adopted was to go through the Zoning Ordinance and look at it and that is the tool that implements the Master Plan itself, it is the rule book, it is the documents, the instrument that contains all of the standards and all of the requirements for property in the community, it specifies zoning districts and minimum lot sizes and setbacks and all those kind of things and it does the same thing on a nonresidential with

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property sizes, etc. So your zoning strategy is very important. The Zoning Ordinance is very important. What you did is after the Master Plan was adopted in 2019 you conducted a zoning audit to make sure that that tool was in a current configuration and had all the elements necessary to continue to implement the City's Master Plan and including the updated Master Plan in 2019.

So, zoning strategies is part of this, again land use category, zoning districts, all part of it, residential, nonresidential, whether it's commercial, office, industrial whether it's public property, parks and open space.

The next part of this section is the desire of the community leadership, officials, boards, commissions, yourselves included with respect to the City's commitment to utilize the resources we have generated predominantly through tax base, for expenditures to achieve the implementation of the Master Plan through various projects, utilizing the rules, the zoning ordinance, but then using this tool, the Capital Improvement Plan, which by State statute that lays out the requirements of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission every five years, create, develop, adopt a Master Plan, the zoning ordinance to implement the plan and the Capital Improvement Plan looks at all of those tools and lays out a six-year wish list of desired expenditures over a certain amount for acquisition of property, for expenditures on infrastructure, water, sewer, roads, sidewalks, the like and for facilities and equipment and so it is the direction that the City wants to move forward with using the resources they have to achieve the enhancements, the upgrades, to redevelop and the implementation of its plan. Again, it's part of the State statute that relates to the Master Plan, the Planning Zoning Enabling Act provides the requirements and direction to the Planning Commission in the Master Plan and also provides the direction for the Planning Commission to create a six-year Capital Improvement Program that is to be updated on an annual basis and you've done this now year after year. So the Capital Improvement Plan is a list of expenditures, whether it's projects, facilities, equipment, over a six-year period. It uses, the Master Plan, the Recreation Master Plan, the Farmington Vision Plan, the Downtown Area Plan, the Grand River Corridor Vision Plan, the Orchard Lake and Ten Mile Roads Intersection Place Plan, Rouge River Nature Trail Project and the Downtown Master Plan. All of those tools, resources that are used to generate the Capital Improvement Plan.

For the items under expenditures that areas of items that require most are operations, public safety, police, fire and the infrastructure. Being an older community we have a daily need and a focus on making sure that we're maintaining our infrastructure, etc.

Next step is the Capital Improvement Plan and its Steering Committee will deliver a draft to you after their work is done.

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Perrot confirmed the threshold for items is \$10,000 plus and Christiansen replied in the affirmative. Perrot also stated that the department heads are a valuable resources in identifying items under their direction and control.

Commissioner Gray asked if they will have access to the data and Christiansen replied it is available to everybody and shared in many ways for public to access it as well

Perrot thanked Christiansen for the overview.

UPDATE – CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Director Christiansen stated that this agenda item affords the commission an opportunity to ask any questions they might have about development or for an update of existing projects that are moving forward. He then went over the current projects and their progress thus far.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT

None heard.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Westendorf, supported by Mantey, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary