

City Of Birmingham
Special Meeting Of The Planning Board
Monday, April 17, 2023
City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the special meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on April 17, 2023. Chair Clein convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Present: Chair Scott Clein, Vice-Chair Bryan Williams; Board Members Robin Boyle, Stuart Jeffares, Bert Koseck, Daniel Share, Janelle Whipple-Boyce; Alternate Board Member Jason Emerine (not voting); Student Representatives Asher Kaftan, Matthew Wiegand (arrived 7:45 p.m.)

Absent: Alternate Board Member Nasseem Ramin

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis; City Planner Leah Blizinski, Senior Planner Cowan, City Transcriptionist Eichenhorn

MKSK: Brad Strader

B. Approval Of The Minutes Of The Regular Planning Board Meeting of March 22, 2023

04-14-23

Motion by Mr. Williams

Seconded by Mr. Boyle to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Board meeting of March 22, 2023 as submitted.

Motion carried, 7-0

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Share, Clein, Koseck, Williams, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Jeffares

Nays: None

C. Chair's Comments

Chair Clein welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the meeting's procedures.

D. Review Of The Agenda

E. Unfinished Business/Courtesy Review

F. Rezoning Applications

G. Study Session

1. B1 Zoning District – Commercial Permitted Uses

SP Cowan presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members' discussion was as follows:

- Liberalizing the parking requirements to one parking space per 100 sq. ft. for a café use would likely be appropriate since it would be serving the neighborhood and nearby residents would be less likely to use their vehicles to visit;
- It might be appropriate to remove the parking for employees since a café use in this context would have minimal staffing requirements;
- Basing the parking calculation on just the dining area instead of the gross floor area was already allowing a café use a more liberal parking calculation, and moving to one parking space per 100 sq. ft. instead of one parking space per 75 sq. ft. may not be appropriate;
- In order to reduce potential concern from nearby, single-family residences, it might be more appropriate to keep the same one parking space per 75 sq. ft. parking ratio as other establishments while basing the calculation only on the dining area since these are small establishments;
- A café use would be more appropriate in the B1 zone than a health club/studio use would be, because the latter use could generate an unpredictable amount of traffic during class departure and arrival times;
- A café use would also likely be more appropriate than a bank use because most banking tends to be done online and brick-and-mortar bank locations tend to be consolidations of many different bank employees and ancillary services;
- It might be possible to limit the definition of a bank in the B1 zone to being teller-based and transaction-focused in order to limit the traffic the use would be likely to generate;
- It would be necessary to clarify whether the Zoning ordinance defines banks and offices differently;
- The parking calculations for offices would limit ~~eliminate~~¹ the size of offices that could exist in the B1 areas;
- The definitions provided by Staff were well done;
- Some of the presently-allowed uses in B1 and other zones need to be revised, and the Board should begin to address that in the next one to two years;
- Clarifying the parking calculations for each type of use needs to be stated in the proposed ordinance changes;
- The parking calculations for an indoor dining accessory use needs to be stated in the proposed ordinance changes;
- It would be helpful to provide the parking calculation of a specific site as an example, demonstrating the present parking calculation and the parking difference if an indoor dining accessory use were added; and,
- Staff should consider any creative ways other municipalities have allowed a health club/studio use in a similar zoning context.

Michael Vogt, attorney, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He noted that the point of the B1 changes would be to encourage less parking-intensive uses. He said that the limited amount of parking available in most of the B1 areas would likely drive the size of the indoor dining areas. His client, for instance, would likely be limited by a one parking space per 75 sq. ft. parking ratio, even only based off the indoor dining area, to a 375 sq. ft. indoor dining area in the context of a 1900 sq. ft. space. He said that one parking space per 100 sq. ft. or more might be more practical.

¹ As amended at the May 10, 2023 meeting.

For a health/club studio, he suggested the Board consider allowing personal training limited to five people at a time, with other health/club studio uses to be reviewed through the SLUP process.

The Chair thanked SP Cowan for his work.

H. Community Impact Studies

1. 34952 Woodward & 690 E. Maple – Request for Community Impact Study Review for new 6- 9 story mixed use development

CP Blizinski and Mr. Strader presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Toby Veit, VP of Development with Ryan Companies, Brett Bunke, VP of Architecture with Ryan Companies, and Paul O'Meara with Rowe Professional Services spoke on behalf of the project. In reply to Board inquiry, members of the applicant team stated:

- They would ask Barr Engineering to provide the Board with the Phase Two Environmental Assessment from 2011;
- They would provide the Board with a copy of the 'perpetual parking agreement' referenced in the CIS;
- 'Ground improvements' means caissons or deep foundations;
- It was unclear what F&V meant in its memorandum when it said the model needed to be updated. All the proper procedures were followed. The queue numbers were based on available information;
- Keeping the ingress on Maple is important in order to allow visitors to find the public parking that will be available as part of the development;
- It would likely be appropriate to ban left turns onto Maple during certain times of the day; and,
- It was unclear how future bicycle and pedestrian trips should be estimated, and the applicant team would speak with F&V about how to clarify that information.

Board members' discussion was as follows:

- The development would require clear signage indicating that public parking was available;
- The plans for ingress and egress onto Maple should be clarified before final site plan review;
- There was interest in reviewing the Phase Two Environmental Assessment with respect to the chromium levels and the adequacy of the soil borings
- The CIS should explicitly state that caissons or deep foundations would be required;
- A no left turn sign onto westbound Maple would be challenging to enforce. Left turns onto westbound Maple should be prohibited;
- There was no concern about the ingress off of Maple;
- How trip generation would affect the access of the site needed to be resolved; and,
- It was essential that the applicant team resolve points one and two as described in F&V's memorandum.

Public Comment

In reply to Cheri Taunt, owner of 700 E. Maple, Mr. Veit confirmed the applicant team would take all necessary measures to ensure that Ms. Taunt's building would not be affected by the construction of 690 E. Maple.

04-15-23

Motion by Mr. Boyle

Seconded by Mr. Williams to postpone consideration of the acceptance of the Community Impact Study for 34952 Woodward & 690 E. Maple to May 10, 2023.

Motion carried, 7-0

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Share, Clein, Koseck, Williams, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Jeffares

Nays: None

04-16-23

Motion by Mr. Williams

Seconded by Mr. Boyle to amend the rules of procedure to allow both site plan and study sessions items at the May 10, 2023 Planning Board meeting.

Motion carried, 7-0

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Share, Clein, Koseck, Williams, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Jeffares

Nays: None

I. Special Land Use Permits and Site Plan & Design Reviews

J. Site Plan & Design Review

1. 34952 Woodward & 690 E. Maple – Request for Preliminary Site Plan Review for new 6-9 story mixed use development

CP Blizinski presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members' discussion was as follows:

- The eastern egress stairwell could be moved inside in order to allow pedestrians to walk around the building. Otherwise, it might be appropriate to gate at the sidewalk along Maple so pedestrians do not follow the path and reach a dead end;
- It seemed difficult to get from an entry point in the parking structure to the back side of the retail;
- From the back side of the retail the pedestrian access path should exit to Maple;
- There should be a usable entrance to the retail on Woodward;
- The sidewalks along Woodward should potentially be wider than seven feet;
- The ventilation for the garage and the potential louver should be integrated so as not to look like mechanicals;

- If traffic is prevented from making a left on westbound Maple, there would be some concerns about the condition of the alley and whether the width of the public alley can accommodate two-way traffic. Additionally, how idling delivery vehicles might impact traffic in the public alley should be considered, as should the location of a loading dock;
- At some point in the future the applicant should explain how traffic delivery would occur at the site;
- The drop-off lane may pose a problem;
- It might be beneficial to create a lane underneath the building where package dropoff and other deliveries could occur. Otherwise, dangerous conditions could occur with delivery drivers trying to figure out where to pause;
- Birmingham Place has a similar retail condition worth reviewing;
- Building amenities fronting on Maple would likely be requested by the Board in the future;
- It would be beneficial for future discussions to know which other adjacent buildings use the public alley;
- It might be appropriate to charge for the public parking to deter building residents and nearby employees or visitors to restaurants from monopolizing the parking;
- Detailed floor plans would be required for final site plan;
- Significant attention needs to be paid to the pedestrian experience on and around the site;
- The corner of Maple and Woodward should be enticing from the pedestrian level, and making improvements to the pedestrian experience at that level should be prioritized;
- A pedestrian plaza at the Woodward level would be appropriate. Three or four parking spaces on Woodward would have to be removed, but those spaces are likely to be removed regardless because they do not align with access management. Greenleaf Trust at 34977 Woodward has a potential example of such a plaza for reference;
- If the other parking is done well, it would be possible and preferable to remove the parking along Woodward. Doing so would help alleviate the pedestrian pinch points at the north and the south corners;
- The project overall is very well done and the site plan is close to being ready for approval by the Board; and,
- Other buildings nearby, including the Greenleaf Trust building and the Balmoral at 34901 Woodward Ave, can provide aesthetic references. It would be interesting to see something at the building front that is as beautiful as the building and connects to the other sites.

Matt Stevens, Project Designer with Ryan Companies, spoke on behalf of the project. In reply to Board comment, Mr. Stevens stated:

- The egress stair on the eastern edge of the property would serve the amenity deck on level three. It would not connect to the parking garage or be for the public;
- The main frontage on Woodward would be the appropriate location for retail, which prevents vehicular access off of Woodward. Adding vehicular access off Woodward would also make less sense than the public alley or Maple;
- Residential and loading traffic would be primarily directed into the public alley;
- The vehicular access off of Maple would be largely for those unfamiliar with the site and visitors to the retail who were unaware of the parking off the public alley;
- They would aim to make the sidewalk along Woodward a pleasant space;
- Entries to retail on Woodward would be a priority;

- To the north the applicant team was considering a passageway to allow pedestrians to enter and exit the parking garage. Pedestrian entry and exist into the parking garage would be made clear;
- The architectural aim is to create interest at the corner of Woodward and Maple via different aspects of the building being different heights and visible from different angles;
- The mechanicals for ventilating the garage would be integrated into a cohesive design;
- Larger trucks would be directed towards the loading dock. Smaller deliveries are likely to stop at the most convenient location, which is on Maple, and that is why the drop-off lane would be located there; and,
- The applicant team will advocate for the ability to enhance the pedestrian experience along Woodward. The City's support for doing so would likely help in discussions with MDOT.

04-17-23

Motion by Mr. Williams

Seconded by Mr. Jeffares to postpone consideration of the preliminary site plan review for 34952 Woodward & 690 E. Maple to May 10, 2023.

Motion carried, 7-0

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Share, Clein, Koseck, Williams, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Jeffares
Nays: None

K. Miscellaneous Business and Communications

The Board answered brief questions about the 34952 Woodward & 690 E. Maple site from SR Wiegand.

- 1. Pre-Application Discussions**
- 2. Communications**
- 3. Administrative Approval Correspondence**
- 4. Draft Agenda**
- 5. Action List – 2023**
- 6. Other Business**

L. Planning Division Action Items

- a. Staff Report on Previous Requests**
- b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting**

M. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:18 p.m.

A blue ink signature of Nick Dupuis, consisting of a stylized 'N' and 'D'.

Nick Dupuis, Planning Director

A black ink signature of Laura Eichenhorn, appearing as a cursive 'L' followed by a wavy line.

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

APPROVED