

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS  
23600 Liberty Street  
Farmington, Michigan  
August 14, 2023

Vice Chairperson Perrot called the meeting to order in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 14, 2023.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Director Kevin Christiansen; Recording Secretary Bonnie Murphy, Brian Belesky, Director of Media Specialist,

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Director Christiansen stated there is a request to switch items four and five, concurrent with the Applicant's amendment, as they appear on the Agenda.

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Westendorf, to approve the amended agenda.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. July 10, 2023 Minutes**

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

**SITE PLAN REVIEW – PROPOSED OUTDOOR SEATING, LOFT CIGAR LOUNGE, 33419 GRAND RIVER AVENUE**

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

Director Christiansen stated the City has received a site plan application for a proposed outdoor seating area for the existing Loft Cigar Lounge, located at 33419 Grand River Avenue in downtown Farmington. The subject property is currently zoned CBD, Central Business District. The Downtown Development Authority Design Committee reviewed and recommended approval for the submitted site plan for the proposed outdoor seating for Loft Cigar Lounge at their August 3, 2023 meeting. Attached for your review and consideration is a copy of the site plan application and a proposed site plan submitted by the Applicant. Proposed modifications, improvements to the existing site include an enclosed outdoor seating area as defined and shown on the plan and upgrades, enhancements, that support the proposed outdoor seating area. He put the aerial

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photograph on the screen and went over the details of the proposed site plan. He stated the outdoor seating area is defined in the parking lot about 16 x 42 feet, there is a series of tables shown, four-tops with solar LED light umbrellas, and there are chairs and metal planters on the perimeter of area as proposed. He stated there are details for the outdoor planters which define the outdoor seating area and protects, secures and enclosed that area, which meets Code requirements. The A-frame recycled plastic picnic tables are shown here in detail, you'll see Adirondack chairs shown in the seating area, the umbrellas that are shown and the lights as well.

Vice Chair Perrot thanked Christiansen for his background and invited the Applicant to the podium.

Don Singleton, 33419 Grand River Avenue, came to the podium. He stated the actual proposed patio will go from the edge of the building down, that there are currently five parking spaces residing right there and what they've done thus far is pour concrete around where one of the planters used to be, and they moved the parking spaces back about nine feet, still meeting Code requirements for parking spaces but gives a lot of additional useful space on the back of the building. They have owned the property for about a year and have slowly, methodically gone about trying to improve the property, trying to increase foot traffic to this side of Farmington Road which had been an issue but also just to improve the look of this building. We are looking to have picnic style tables, cigar smokers love congregating around other cigar smokers, so it's not unheard of people to come in and sit with another group of random people they've never met before and have a conversation. The metal planters are intended to rust over time, 42 inches long, about 32 inches high. Greenery will be present to provide some protection from headlights from cars pulling and parking there, all parking requirements being met. We selected solar lights for the project and have already poured the cap of one of the porches, getting ready to redo the other porch and the railings on the porches.

Perrot asked if the planters will contain live plants or artificial and the Applicant replied live.

Crutcher confirmed that no parking spaces will be lost and the Applicant applied affirmatively, they are just being moved back.

Kmetzo asked how it will be utilized in the winter months and the Applicant replied it will not be enclosed. Christiansen then stated that the City's outdoor seating requirements allow it only from April through the end of October, with allowance during Covid for temporary sites, and that the Ordinance will dictate the guidelines.

Mantey asked if there was any concern with vehicles making the turn and Christian replied that ingress and egress to the building will not change, but just move down. As far as the

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alley is concerned, that area will be checked on west side of outdoor seating area to make sure the turning radius is adequate and that there are no safety issues.

Crutcher asked what the dimensions of the alley are and the Petitioner replied he is not certain and Crutcher cited the requirements for cars being able to back up in the alley and the Petitioner replied he will look into that.

Westendorf asked if this area will be included in the Syndicate and the Petitioner replied yes.

Crutcher asked with the limited season for tables and chairs do planters have to be taken up as well and Christiansen replied that typically they'll bring it in but they will work with the Petitioner to make sure they are moved and brought up close and further discussion was held.

Vice Chair Perrot called for a motion from the Commissioners.

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Mantey, to approve the site plan for proposed outdoor seating, Loft Cigar Lounge, 33419 Grand River Avenue, as presented, and recommended for approval by the DDA Design Committee.

Motion carried, all ayes

**LEGION SQUARE - PRELIMINARY PUD SITE PLAN REVIEW: CERVI CONSTRUCTION, AMERICAN LEGIONAL HALL, 31775 GRAND RIVER AVENUE**

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

Director Christiansen stated this item is a continuation of a preliminary PUD, planned unit development site plan review with the Planning Commission on a proposed PUD planned unit development plan for the development and for the redevelopment of the former American Legion Hall. At the February 13, 2023 PC meeting the Commission held a pre-application conference, a discussion and review with the Applicant on a proposed PUD concept plan for the redevelopment of the former American Legion Hall. No action was taken at that meeting. At the May 8, 2023 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission reviewed the preliminary PUD plan for Legion Square and scheduled the required Public Hearing. At the July 10, 2023 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission held the required Public Hearing. No action was taken at that meeting. The Applicant, Cervi Construction of Livonia, Michigan, has submitted a preliminary PUD plan for the redevelopment of the former American Legion Hall. The preliminary plan includes a conceptual preliminary site plan, a preliminary proposed building elevation, a project support information materials, letter, and some additional information. Also attached are

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at the Public Hearing was a Planning review letter from OHM Advisors, dated May 4, 2023 and a PUD site plan Engineering conceptual design review letter dated May 5, 2023. Additional information provided by the Petitioners since the July 10, 2023 Planning Commission meeting includes the following: a letter to the Farmington Planning Commission from Cervi Construction, additional response to comments to the Farmington Planning Commission and a revised updated right sided Grand River side building elevation, and all of that's attached with your staff report for this evening. The Applicant, Mr. Fabio Cervi, is here this evening in order to present the additional information and the preliminary PUD plan to the Commission.

Perrot thanked Christiansen for the background and invited the Applicant to the podium.

Fabio Cervi, Cervi Construction, 12419 Stark Road, Livonia, Michigan, came to the podium and read a letter into the record addressing the concerns heard at the July 10, 2023 Public Hearing.

Perrot thanked Cervi and opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners.

Crutcher questioned the Grand River elevation that the Applicant presented and Cervi responded that OHM had requested a sidewalk to connect from the side of that to the Grand River sidewalk as well which will be depicted in the next site plan.

Christiansen stated there had been additional discussion with the Applicant regarding an item that had brought to Mr. Cervi's attention and briefly discussed at the Public Hearing meeting, and also the Pathways Committee at their meeting last week in their interest in making sure that Farmington in connection with their long range plans has connectivity throughout the community as best as possible and certainly providing connectivity where there isn't connection, where there's missing sidewalk, where there's missing connections.

He put the aerial photo on screen to depict the overview of the area. He showed the sidewalks in the area and pointed out the areas where there is no sidewalk. He said discussion that was being held that the Applicant would pull lot line back and construct a sidewalk on the southern part of his frontage. That way the right of way contained in this area is City right-of-way and will be maintained by the City and the Applicant has agreed to do that and further discussion was held.

Crutcher asked for a clarification that the Applicant wants to add a sidewalk on the south side of his property that connects the property just to the east on his property on the corner that does not have a sidewalk and Christiansen replied there's one piece of sidewalk on the north side of Sherwood right at the elbow at the northwest corner

property, they do not have sidewalk in front of their frontage, but that's not part of the petition. He stated that part of the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority's long range plans for connectivity and the Rouge River Nature Trail and Pathways Committee, that there would eventually be a connection but I can't say that now.

Mantey asked if that were to happen, who would be responsible for shoveling it and Christiansen replied that the dedication of property, once it becomes public, the City of Farmington would be responsible for both road and any walkway to be constructed within the public right-of-way.

Perrot thanked the Petitioner.

Perrot then stated he had a couple of comments and that this is one that he has really been struggling with the whole time it has been on the forefront and that is putting a 30-ish foot structure overlooking a neighborhood. He stated that all of the Commissioners are residents of the City, appointed by Council, not a paid position but they serve as they generally care about their city. He said he can't help but think, we talked about connectivity and all these other things and long range planning with the Pathways Committee and all this stuff but there's people that live there and I can't help but to think what that's going to look like standing on where Sherwood meets Shaw and standing on Sherwood there's four houses on Sherwood that would be looking at this every day when they go to work and everything. I just really struggle with the height and I understand that it's legal and I understand that he's asking for a little bit of deviation on a couple of other things but is there something I am missing here because 30 feet is a lot. And we've had comments from the residents that own the homes on Sherwood and Shaw and we had comments from people that are in the apartments immediately to the west and they both voiced concerns specifically about the height, and I'm really struggling with the height. It's not like I can force somebody to say anything but is there someone who can help me better understand as an advocate for residents how is advocating for something of this size in this specific spot right. And to further expand on it, it would be great, because it's a lot of density in a small area in a city that is very built out and we're really stuck in some spots and we're going to lose, the way things are going on certain projects around the community, we're not going to maximize, and not that's a money grab or anything like that, but we're not going to maximize what we need to get out of certain spaces and I am really struggling with this. I love the way it looks, it's very pretty, I'll admit, however on the Legion site it's a lot and if somebody can help me understand what I'm missing here, I would really appreciate it.

Crutcher stated in terms of the height it's a three-story building with a pitched roof which makes it almost four-stories tall and it would be a big change from being next to a parking lot which is zero stories tall but I don't think any development in here of any kind of multi

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family residential is going to fit, as one-story. There's nothing that would make it feasible and it probably wouldn't work. So, to develop this property with anything it's probably going to be something of this scale, whether it's a residential building or a commercial building, it's probably going to be something of this scale.

Mantey stated that something that would be done with this space would be different bringing than what is there right now, it's a quiet building, bringing in residential, you have to think about commercial could bring a lot of traffic there, there's a whole lot of scenarios here.

Kmetzo stated she has a comment and perhaps for Mr. Christiansen. In the entire City of Farmington how many 30-foot buildings do we have and Christiansen replied many, throughout the community and cited the OHM review letter that discusses height and area and bulk requirements in accordance with Ordinance Section 35-134, so these are the height and bulk requirements as relates to the C-2 and then also to the R-1-P and you see here the R-2 building height is a maximum of 35 feet, three-stories and we have that in the community at many locations. And in fact, the Applicant built this same product in the Central Business District, with the same architecture, same configuration, same dimensions. Kmetzo asked if they were next to other residential homes and Christiansen replied there is difference throughout the community and how that is. He stated the project the Petitioner has constructed is the Orchards on Slocum Street, there is not residential directly adjacent to the east or west which is front to back but there is along the street on the south side of Slocum ranch homes so that is the existing condition, so they are in proximity but not sharing property lines here to the east. But if you look at the ordinance provisions, 35 feet, three-stories, this is for your information in the C-2, what's proposed is 32.5 feet, three-stories and then the R-1-P is a 30-foot, two stories, again 32.5, three-stories, but again, we're in a PUD scenario. So that's information for you and it's in this review letter. He stated this is the elevation submitted by applicant, a three-story structure with front loaded garages with an access to the individual units in the buildings, four buildings, so, again, this is what's also built in the community. There are three-story 35-foot height buildings throughout the community at different locations, every location is a little different. The point that was made earlier was the existing residential, it's not of this scale, one-story as they exist to the most part and that's one-story to the south, across on the south side of Sherwood and completely adjacent to the east as I know you're aware.

Crutcher stated if it did not have a pitched roof, it would make it only 20-foot or so and if you eliminate the garages, you would make it a two-story building. The question is do you meet parking requirements with it that way. Christiansen replied parking right now is two-per, one in garage and one on surface with driveway, which meets Code and there's a couple guest parking spaces but currently it meets parking requirements and further discussion was held.

Westendorf said it looks like the site slopes back, has there been any thought to lower height in back and stepping down and Cervi replied the property does slope towards the back, that's the purpose of the retaining wall, we could possibly talk to the engineer and maybe split the retaining wall, maybe partial in between the first building and second to get it down a couple feet towards the back and that also they could reduce the roof pitches to get the height to 30-feet and further discussion was held.

Cervi stated if I may add, the Orchards site are three-stories and we have single-family homes, we overlook a child care one-story home, behind T.J. Maxx there's a three-story building that backs up to single family, so we're not proposing something unique to the neighborhood.

Perrot asked if there were any further questions of the Applicant, hearing none, he called for a motion from the Commission.

Commissioner Kmetzo asked for clarification on the Planning Commission's duties as to this item, if it was to approve or deny and move it forward to City Council and Christiansen replied in the affirmative.

MOTION by Kmetzo, supported by Crutcher, to approve the submission of the preliminary PUD site plan as presented by Cervi Construction, of the American Legion Hall, located at 31775 Grand River, to move forward to the City Council for their review and recommendation.

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

AYES: Crutcher, Kmetzo, Mantey and Westendorf

NAYS: Perrot

Motion carried (4-1)

### **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 stated there has been quite a bit of activity since the last meeting. Since the completion of the Farmington Road Streetscape, Heights Brewery has announced that they have a goal to open in September. The old access to west parking lot has been closed and Dinan Park and the new public space is coming along, it is a nice outdoor area on Farmington Road with the ability to enjoy the Social District as well.

Cannelle's is set to open September 1<sup>st</sup>, with outdoor seating.

The Italian Bakery will be having a grand opening as they're retenanting. Bob's Big Boy is open and it is exciting to see a lot of interest in the Grand River Corridor, with a façade modification of Paramount Health Care, the Winery is under contract and looking to move forward with PUD process along with the Oakland Land Bank to assist with the acquisition of that property along with MEDC.

He stated there is interest in other locations of the community with retenanting of existing buildings in the Industrial Nine Mile Corridor location.

Commissioner Kmetzo inquired about the recon of the Shell Gas Station and Christiansen replied that this project is quite involved with removing retaining walls, tearing down of C-store and construction of brand new building, adding new pump islands and redo site with the goal of keeping operations going during construction.

Kmetzo then asked about the Drakeshire Plaza and Christiansen replied they are slowly working on it and there is a rollaway on site but that interior plans are not yet approved for new construction.

Mantey asked about Tuesday Morning and Christiansen replied there is nothing new to report.

He then stated the Maxfield Training Center has moved forward to City Council for preliminary PUD approval and draft PUD Agreement and that the next step would be to expect engineering plan details in the next 30-60 days.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following residents spoke during Public Comment:

James Masoris, 31712 Sherwood Avenue  
Joy Masoris, 31712 Sherwood Avenue  
Johnny Watson, 31751 Sherwood Avenue  
Brendan Reddy, 31721 Sherwood Avenue  
Kim Campbell, 31622 Shaw Avenue  
Allan Appiah, 31731 Sherwood Avenue.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT**

None heard.



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**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Kmetzo , to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary