

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
23500 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
March 11, 2024

Chairperson Perrot called the meeting to order in Meeting Room A, 23500 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024.

ROLL CALL

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

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Kevin Christiansen; Recording Secretary Bonnie Murphy; Brian Golden, Media Specialist. Beth Saarela, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

A. February 12, 2024 Minutes

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

SITE PLAN REVIEW – PROPOSED OUTDOOR SEATING, FARMINGTON BREWING COMPANY, 33336 GRAND RIVER AVENUE

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

Director Christiansen stated this item is a site plan review for proposed outdoor seating for the Farmington Brewing Company at 33336 Grand River Avenue. The owners of the Farmington Brewing Company has submitted a site plan for additional outdoor seating area at their existing microbrewery located in the CBD, Central Business District. The owners would like to locate a second outdoor seating area adjacent to the rear of the existing business. Their building is shown on the attached site plan layout, again, that's attached with your staff packet. Outdoor seating in the CBD requires review and recommendation by the Downtown Development Authority, DDA Design Committee and approval at the Planning Commission. No changes regarding building dimensions or other site improvements are proposed. The Downtown Development Authority Design Committee reviewed and recommended approval of the submitted site plan for the proposed outdoor seating area for Farmington Brewing Company at their February 29th meeting. A copy of those minutes are attached with your staff packet. Farmington

Brewing Company's original outdoor seating site plan was approved at the September 8, 2014 Planning Commission meeting and there's copies of the meeting minutes and the approved site plan and support materials for when that original site plan was approved and that's the outdoor seating area that I think we all know out in front of the building along Grand River and that's been there now since 2014, I guess we'll say nine years, it's amazing how time flies. What is being looked at this evening is a second outdoor seating area as I indicated in the rear of the existing building. The Applicant, Petitioner and property owner and owner of the Farmington Brewing Company, Jason Schlaff, is here this evening. He submitted a layout of the proposed additional outdoor seating area, he intends to review this with the Planning Commission this evening. With the materials that were provided for you for this meeting, there's a copy of the site plan application and the proposed site plan that have been submitted by Mr. Schlaff for the second outdoor seating area along the rear of the building. If we look through these materials, again, the first thing you see here after the staff report of the minutes, and that's the review and recommendation of approval from the DDA Design Committee, those minute from their February 29th meeting, some comments are made there. And also, in their review and recommendation, the application then is next you can see. You'll then see an aerial photo if everybody can take a look at that, you'll see what's showing here is the rear of the building and the area that right now is two parking spaces on the property, so this is Brewing Company private property. That little red area actually should have one more line in between going north/south, so there is a split of that area between the adjacent property to the west, Cowley's, and the Brewing Company, so that's not all Brewing Company but that's what is in the computer system so as best I could present it to you this evening but there is a line that runs north and south. The tail area to the west is the rear parking area for Cowley's, the area to the east, the east half, is the two spaces that exist on site for the Brewing Company. If you then look at the next page, you can see that this is the site plan that is proposed for the outdoor seating area, the dimensions, planter boxes are proposed along the perimeter, and there's examples of that that are in a photograph that's attached with your staff packet, you'll see the tables and chairs, a small garden area that exists for the brewing company. You can see then the Farmington Brewing Company's high interest, so you will come from Thomas Street if you're coming in the rear of the building through this outdoor seating area and then into the rear of the brewing company and you can see where that door is on this plan. There's another version of this, more of a sketch type drawing, the hard drawing of site plan, that's for your information, next then is a photograph and that is an example of the planters with the trellis so there's screening, so this is an area that's intended to be somewhat intimate. The planters with live plant materials, the lattice work and the screening that will provide kind of an enclosure then for that outdoor seating area as proposed. And you can see in that photograph, too, where the awning is and the rear entry door. The next photograph is an example of the wrought iron table, the chairs are associated with it and this is what if I understand correctly and Mr. Schlaff can correct me if I'm wrong, is used out in front,

so it's similar types of materials. And these materials are just for your information. What really is being asked here is for an area that was used temporarily during Covid as an extension of the inside restaurant outside permitted through all of the accommodations that were made to assist restaurants during the Covid time period, they used this area for outdoor seating and there was a temporary special event permit that was approved for that, similar to other restaurant/bar type uses in Farmington that had the same thing. Mr. Schlaff is looking to make this area that was used under this permit now a permanent area. So, this is provided for your information, it's got details, it's the same area, it's the same circumstance and in fact if you look at the temporary outdoor seating site plan, it's really the same thing. What is enhanced from that time is the planter boxes with the screening and the lattice work which is now part of this permanent outdoor seating area application. There's some minutes that were attached then from the original out front approval and also to materials that accommodated that and in fact, as I mentioned to you, photos of the iron tables and chairs for the rear, there's one for the front area that were part of the 2014, so it's the same types of materials, you can see both of those photographs. Also attached is a copy of the outdoor seating regulations for the City of Farmington that relates to accessory outdoor seating areas and again, the request this evening is to review the site plan application that's submitted, the minutes from the DDA Design Committee and their recommendation of approval of the outdoor seating area and then the materials submitted by Mr. Schlaff, again, his request his for your consideration and your approval of the second outdoor seating area along the rear as proposed.

Perrot thanked Christiansen for the background. He then invited the Petitioner to the podium.

Jason Schlaff, owner of Farmington Brewing Company, 26262 LaMuer Street, Farmington Hills, 48334, came to the podium. He stated one thing he would like to add is that the company has always had an existing bond for the City in the amount of \$1,000,000 in the event of anything unlikely but could go wrong and that the garden is actually a community garden, there are lots of spices of vegetables which is kind of cool. Except for those two minor points, I think everything was covered that I can think of.. Also, we don't need to apply to MDOT for the trunk line.

Perrot opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners. Westendorf stated he noticed in the back in one space that is striped space that looks like it's an egress path and it looks like exactly where all the planters and tables are going to be. Schlaff replied we're not blocking that, it lines up exactly with that, it's a second floor theater emergency egress and Westendorf stated the one he is looking on is on Cowley's side and Schlaff stated the Civic Theater cuts through the Brewery actually.

Crutcher said in the DDA recommendations suggesting that you not go back any further than the parking space, and Schlaff replied that they connect the dots with the short planters and will not cross over that.

Perrot asked if there has been any issues with traffic and Schlaff replied the only issues he has encountered is from a single local business and how they conduct themselves.

Kmetzo asked if patrons will be allowed to stand and Schlaff replied that is not a requirement to be in that area.

Gray asked what the capacity was for the area and Christiansen replied there is a limitation and that's something that will be complied with based upon the area and the number of tables and chairs and the amount of space and that's posted but I can't tell you what the number is. Schlaff stated he believes it's nineteen chairs. Gray then clarified by asking if the planter boxes will have the screens that protect the patron from the alleyway or shield them and Schlaff replied in the affirmative.

Perrot opened the floor for a motion from the Commissioners.

MOTION by Kmetzo, supported by Westendorf, to approve the site plan for the proposed outdoor seating at the Farmington Brewing Company located at 33336 Grand River Avenue.

Motion carried, all ayes.

Perrot then asked Schlaff for his input on how the City can assist local businesses and Schlaff replied that small grants for small businesses can make a tremendous difference and cited what a game changer it can be for the small businesses such as his that benefitted from grant money in the past and given time, he could most likely come up with some other things that could be beneficial for business owners in the downtown.

Perrot thanked the Petitioner.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – PROPOSED MASONIC PLAZA

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

Director Christiansen stated this item is a review of recommendation to the City of Farmington Downtown Development Authority Design Committee, proposed plans for that portion of the existing Masonic Lodge property located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Road in downtown Farmington. The Downtown Development Authority DDA Design Committee reviewed and forwarded the

proposed plans for Masonic Plaza from their February 29th meeting to the Planning Commission for the Commission's review and consideration and a copy of the minutes from that meeting are attached with your staff packet. Also attached for your review and consideration is a copy of the proposed plans for Masonic Plaza submitted by the DDA. So, if we look through the materials, the first thing after the staff report is an aerial photo, that aerial photo shows in the red boundary the Masonic Lodge, and shows the Masonic Lodge building and the Masonic Lodge grounds and the parking area. You'll note the Masonic Lodge property is bordered by three streets. It is bordered by Grand River Avenue, by Farmington Road and by Oakland Street. The portion of the property that is being proposed to be enhanced, upgraded, is that portion of the property at the corner down at the southeast corner of this site, so it's the northeast corner of the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Road but it's the southeast corner of the site. You might know it as an area that has been an area with landscaping, railroad ties, a little elevated and plant materials for quite a period of time. All of those materials were removed in anticipation for moving forward with a repurpose of this area and here we are now with what is being proposed, Masonic Plaza. You'll note right now it's kind of a holding pattern, that area again has been cleaned up and there's been some aggregate that's been put down, tables and chairs are there, you might recall that Edgar was there during the Ravenfest so he was very prominent there last October. So, what is being proposed is to repurpose that area as a permanent public gathering space, a plaza, and the Downtown Development Authority has been working on this for quite a period of time, they've been working with the Masons. This property is on the Masonic Lodge site but as I understand it there has been quite a bit of dialogue and that there is an agreement that is in place with the Masons for the use and the repurpose of this area as Masonic Plaza. So then as you flip through, the minutes from the DDA Design Committee meeting, then there is a plan, a Grissim Metz plan that shows this area, it shows the hardscape materials, it shows the enhancements that are being proposed for this area and this is for your review and consideration. You'll then, if we turn to the next page, see the rendering, kind of a concept aerial and imposed plan that shows that hardscape and the other elements, the tables, the chairs, the umbrellas, the landscaping and the other items that are part of what is being proposed as Masonic Plaza. That's an aerial overview, there's been kind of an oblique a little bit, it's a horizontal that is shown as well, we have two of these, you'll note the second one actually has some recreational elements, there's some swings that are being proposed as part of this overall enhancement, so that is shown here as well and other elements of that area. These are the materials that were provided by the DDA to you and what is being requested is your review and consideration and then an action would be a recommendation back to the DDA Design Committee as you so choose. I believe this evening we have Ms. Claire Perko, and Claire is here representing the DDA and this project and certainly I believe it's my understanding she's here to present and answer any questions you may have.

Perrot thanked Christiansen and called the Petitioner to the podium.

Claire Perko, Board Member for DDA and Chair of the Design Committee came to the podium. She stated she is excited to work on this project, that they have been working on this for a while now and would love to see this as a Bicentennial project, we want to get it moving as quickly as possible, it's pretty impressive, it's very exciting. We've been working with the Masons, they're excited about it, we do have a Land Use Agreement for a portion of it and they are looking to extend that area of our Land Use Agreement and they're very open to it. We used their compass symbol in the paving pattern of the corner there to give a nod to the Masons and they loved that and it also aligns with the two streets and how they line up so it really worked out in our favor with this design element. We are also going to be applying for grants like we did for Dinan Park and we want to make this accessible as well to serve all of our community. She then asked the Commission if they have any questions.

Perrot asked about the hardscape and Perko replied it will all be hardscape and pavers that matches the Streetscape and there will be planter beds, that would be the softscape. But the compressed gravel is going away, that will be the sub base for the pavers we're putting down. Perrot then asked if there are any requirements for physical barrier considering it's a playground area and Christiansen replied that the City doesn't as far as their own standards but what you'll note here in the aerial in the corner area are bollards, those are what exist today, and there are two connection points, a crosswalk that runs east/west and that's Farmington Road and then a crosswalk that runs let's say north/south across Grand River, those are not intended to change, those locations, it will be cleaned up and enhanced. Other than that, the same kind of circumstances with the crossings, the traffic signaling is all intended to be the same, not intended to change. But again, safety is a concern and we're certainly mindful of that and whatever takes place here, we'll certainly be looking to make sure that safety is a priority and place there what needs to be in place.

Perko stated they are planning to use the same black fencing that is a long Grand River that will be placed on two sides adjacent to the curb. And the swings are not meant to be playground swings, it's hard to tell on his, but they're being termed adult swings because they're not going to be the type of swings that kids can swing super high on and that kind of an idea, it's more like a bench swing, like a front porch swing.

Crutcher stated more rocking chair than swing.

Perko said the intention is not to be a playground but to be a space shared by lots of people and to address people with disabilities, there have been some studies to show

that swinging can really help with some different mental health issues, so we wanted to include that as one of the aspects.

Crutcher stated that in looking at the aerial photo it looks like the crosswalk comes to the apex of the corner and the rendering doesn't reflect that and Perko replied that will be addressed and engineered correctly and the Design Committee will be heavily involved and harsh critics in making sure everything is exactly where it needs to be for the optimal design.

Gray asked if there had been any thought given to the preservation of the outdoor furniture downtown and Perko replied that all furniture throughout the downtown are all heavy duty commercial grade furniture, so the same type you would see in City plazas everywhere and they are built to last.

Crutcher asked if the furniture will be year round or seasonal and Perko replied probably both, with umbrellas being put away for the winter but the durable furniture to be year round.

Gray asked if the project would impact the timing of the crosswalk and Christiansen replied there is no intent to change that signaling at this point, all of that which is run by MDOT, but no plan is in place to change it.

Kmetzo stated it is a very nice addition to that corner.

Perrot called for a motion from the Commissioners.

MOTION by Kmetzo, supported by Crutcher, to move to approve the recommendation of the City of Farmington, DDA Design Committee for the proposed plan for the repurpose of the portion of the Masonic Lodge property located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Road in Downtown Farmington.

Motion carried, all ayes.

Perrot thanked Perko.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2025-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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

Director Christiansen stated this item it to hold the Public Hearing for the 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program. The CIP Steering Committee and City staff have been

working diligently on updating the program to incorporate into the City's Master Plan and are requesting the Planning Commission to hold the Public Hearing this evening at our March 11, 2024 meeting. At the February 12, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission scheduled the Public Hearing for the Capital Improvement Program for March 11th, 2024. Public Notice was published and the draft 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program is attached with your staff packet for your review and consideration. If you turn past the staff report, you'll see a copy of the Notice that was published in the Oakland Press as required for the 2025-2030 City of Farmington Capital Improvement Program. That Notice then indicating the Public Hearing this evening. After that is a copy of the draft for 2025-2030 with a rendering of the Masonic Plaza on the cover. The request this evening for the Planning Commission is to hold the Public Hearing and then to consider the 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program, taking action and moving it forward to City Council for their review and consideration.

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Westendorf to open the Public Hearing.
Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC HEARING

(Public Hearing opened at 7:39 p.m.)

There being no public present on a MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Westendorf, to close the public hearing.

(Public Hearing closed at 7:39 p.m.)

MOTION by Kmetzo, supported by Westendorf, to approve the 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program as presented and move forward to City Council for their review and consideration.
Motion carried, all ayes.

UPDATE – CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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

Director Christiansen gave a summary of ongoing projects as well as new ones on the horizon, citing an upcoming meeting with the Brownfield Development Authority to consider the agreements necessary for moving forward with Hillside Towns redevelopment project, Maxfield Training Center, so the developer/investor can move forward with acquiring the property from the City and in preparation for the development

of the site. Legion Square will also be addressed at that meeting with the Brownfield Development Authority and move forward through the steps.

New businesses include Blueberry Brunch, Apricot Lane, and Taques Mexican Restaurant, and other repurposing being anticipated for other properties along Grand River.

The old SWOCC building that was repurposed and converted to Dogwood Veterinary, repurposing a portion of the inside of the building, has changed to Blue Pearl which will be a veterinary surgical center and they are repurposing the interior for a complete build out.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT

Director Christiansen also commented on the repurposing of Mama Eatz at Drakeshire Plaza with the addition of a bar.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary