

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
March 14, 2016

Chairperson Crutcher called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, on Monday, March 14, 2016.

ROLL CALL

Present: Buyers, Crutcher, Gronbach, Kmetzo, Majoros, Waun

Absent: Chiara

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen, Inspector Koncsol

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Majoros, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes of Regular Meeting – January 11, 2016

Motion by Buyers, seconded by Gronbach, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried, all ayes.

SITE PLAN REVIEW (LED WINDOW LIGHTING) – UPTOWN PLAZA, 31530-31630 Grand River Avenue

Chairperson Crutcher introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated this item is a site plan review for the continued use of interior window lighting in Uptown Plaza located at 31530-31630 Grand River Avenue. He stated the Applicant has submitted a site plan application and support material in order to maintain existing interior window lighting at the shopping center in the existing building. He indicated the commercial site is zoned C-2, Community Commercial; interior window lighting for non-residential uses is subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission in accordance with the requirements of Section 35-48 of the Zoning Ordinance.

He stated the Applicant, Jamal Garmo, on behalf of Farmington Plaza, LLC, is present at tonight's meeting to present his requests to the Planning Commission. He indicated there were attachments included in the packets for the Planning Commission, including an aerial photo of the property, a copy of the site plan application for the interior window

lighting submitted by the Applicant, and also a copy of the overall site and photographs that show the interior window lighting as it exists today that the Applicant would like to maintain in the windows of the existing shopping center building. A copy of Section 35-48 which specifies the regulations for that zoning district, with respect to exterior and interior lighting was also included in the packets. He then indicated Subsection F of Section 35-48 is specific to tubing, lighting tubing, exposed bulb lighting and the lighting for non single family residential uses, and stated it is prohibited as an architectural detail in all buildings, along the rooflines, eaves, around the windows, etc., but the Planning Commission may approve interior illuminated architectural bands when such bands will enhance the appearance of the building.

Crutcher invited the Applicant to come to the podium.

Jamal Garmo, owner of Farmington Plaza, came to the podium. He indicated that prior to doing the lighting in the Plaza that is the subject of tonight's Planning Commission meeting, he had conversations with Mr. Koncsol who he thought indicated that as long as the lighting doesn't flash it was allowable. He had them installed and was subsequently told they were not allowed. He indicated his reasoning for installing the lights was to increase the business because the Plaza sits away from the road and needs some exposure.

The floor was opened for questions from the Commissioners.

Majoros asked Garmo for specifics of the discussion he had with Inspector Koncsol and Garmo indicated that he was under the impression that the lights would be approved as long as they were not flashing lights.

Buyers stated that the lights that he saw as he drove by the complex were currently illuminated at the southern end of his complex and the Applicant responded yes and Buyers asked if his intent were to light the entirety of the building and the Applicant responded that he would like to add more to the back stores as well.

Buyers then asked if the ones that were illuminated as he drove by the complex were the only ones currently installed and the Applicant responded in the affirmative stating that they are LED.

Crutcher asked Inspector Koncsol if there was anything he would like to add and he responded that they did have a discussion relative to lighting and his understanding was that Garmo was interested in some type of banding lighting around the perimeter of the building and no mention was made of the windows specifically and that he had informed the Applicant of a prior case with Smoker's Wonderland that went before the Planning Commission.

Kmetzo asked for clarification on the zoning and Christiansen responded it is C-3, General Commercial.

Garmo stated that his request is not a smoke and tobacco shop or liquor, but rather a clothing store, the Overstock Outlet Store, and the upcoming opening of the International Mediterranean Market.

MOTION by Majoros, supported by Buyers, that the Planning Commission with respect to the interior window lighting at Uptown Plaza, located at 31530-31630 Grand River, be denied under the criteria that it does not meet the character or vision of the Farmington Community and it is specifically noted as an issue not allowed in the City based on the Zoning criteria of 35-48, Letter F of the Zoning Ordinance, and that approving the Petitioner's request would be inconsistent with previous actions the Planning Commission had taken historically.

Motion carried, all ayes.

OUTDOOR SALES AND DISPLAY REQUEST – UPTOWN PLAZA, OVERSTOCK OUTLET, 31550 and 31614 Grand River Avenue and International Mediterranean Market, 31580 Grand River Avenue

Crutcher introduced this Agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated that the Petitioner has submitted plans for outdoor sales to be located along the front of the entrance of the existing commercial building for the units at 31550 and 31614 Grand River Avenue, Overstock Outlet at the Uptown Plaza, as well as 31580 Grand River Avenue, the International Mediterranean Market. He indicated the existing property is zoned C-3, General Commercial, where seasonal commercial and outdoor displays are permitted in the C-3 district subject to site plan review in accordance with the requirements of Article 7, CBD, Central Business District, C-2, Community Commercial; C-3, General Commercial; and RO, Redevelopment Overlay Districts.

Crutcher invited the Applicant to come to the podium.

Jamal Garmo stated that he had come before the Commission for outdoor sales and displays for Overstock Outlet last year and would like to continue this year and for the upcoming International Market.

Majoros queried the Applicant on the outdoor displays for the specific stores.

Buyers asked if displays would be taken inside each evening and the Applicant responded that Overstock Outlet had water that stayed outside but everything else was brought in at the end of the day.

Christiansen indicated that is pretty consistent with the Big Lots that was previously at that shopping center and the hardware store and stated that everything that the Applicant is proposing is consistent with ordinance requirements.

Kmetzo asked for clarification on the special provisions in Number 2, Section B, and Christiansen responded that what he is proposing is typical and would fall under those provisions. She then asked what the International Market was proposing to sell in its outdoor displays and the Applicant responded.

Crutcher asked if the clothing store would be utilizing the outdoor displays and the Applicant responded not on a daily basis, only occasionally on nice days.

Buyers asked if there was any difference in the approval granted last year for the outdoor display and tonight's request for same and Christiansen responded they are consistent with what was approved last year and for the prior uses at the shopping center and further discussion was held on what, if any, conditions were placed on last year's approval.

MOTION by Gronbach, supported by Majoros, to approve the request for outdoor sales and displays at the Uptown Plaza for Overstock Outlet, located at 31550 Grand River and 31614 Grand River for the International Mediterranean Market, and 31580 Grand River for the Overstock Outlet, and that the display be in accordance with the blueprint plan that was submitted and that all merchandise be displayed in accordance with the ordinance and be maintained properly.

Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Christiansen stated they had hoped to have a couple more items on tonight's agenda but they did not get completed and submitted on time to place them on the agenda, some outdoor displays and seating that are looking to come in as well as a couple redevelopment projects that haven't reached a point to come before the Planning Commission.

He also indicated they are in the process of putting together a draft budget and then the budget that will go before City Council for the 2016-2016 year and in that budget is a plan to fund and to update the City Master Plan which was last updated in 2009. He also stated the DDA has embarked upon updating the Downtown Development Master Plan for the downtown.

Gronbach asked staff to possibly consider amending the Farmington Code Section 35-48 regarding exterior lighting and signage to Section F, specifically F-1, to reclarify the types of lighting allowed and not allowed in windows and specifically amend it to include LED lighting so it's clarified and this question doesn't have to keep on coming back before the Planning Commission.

Christiansen responded that he will take that under advisement and talk with his administrative staff and legal counsel about it.

STAFF COMMENTS

None heard.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Majors, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary