

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES 03-22-2018



**CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE
PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 22, 2018 (THURSDAY) 5:30 P.M.
City Commission Chambers, Third Floor
City Hall, 225 E. Portage Avenue**

Pending approval by the Planning Commission

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Clayton Shunk, Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Clayton Shunk, Chair
Charles McCready, Vice Chair
Ken Kavanaugh, Secretary
Joseph Gallagher
Derric Knight
Rebecca Bolen
Robert Shimmens

Absent: Seth Harris
Wendy Hoffman
Greg Collins, City Commission Liaison

Roll call was taken as noted above.

Staff Present: Kelly Freeman, Community Development Director
Melanie McBride, Community Development/Engineering Office
Coordinator

Public Present: Craig Patterson, The Woda Group

It was moved by Charles McCready and supported by Rebecca Bolen to excuse the absent board members. The motion passed unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting of February 22, 2018.

It was moved by Ken Kavanaugh and supported by Derric Knight that the minutes from February 22, 2018 Planning Commission meeting be approved as circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

4. AGENDA: CHANGES, ADDITIONS, OR DELETIONS: There were none.

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5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS: There were none.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. PC Case No. 820 – Osborn Commons Site Plan Review:

Mr. Freeman began his presentation. The Woda Group is proposes to construct at four story, 65 unit apartment building located at 146 Ridge Street. There was a variance granted on March 16, 2017 that has now been extended to March 16, 2019 to permit commercial and residential uses to occupy the first floor of the building. Presently this layout is forbidden by the zoning ordinance. It can be all commercial, or all residential, but cannot be both. Mr. Freeman displayed the current proposed site plan. Mr. Freeman explained that everything on the site plan is residential except for the small purple commercial area that is just under 2,000 square feet. The commercial space is located at the corner of Moloney Alley and Osborn Boulevard. The next display was the proposed elevation of the building. Mr. Freeman explained the Mr. Patterson has brought some displays for the board to look at as well.

As far as the strict standards are concerned, Mr. Freeman explained that it complies with all the zoning ordinance requirements such as dumpsters, landscaping, etc. Most of the other non-zoning comments have been addressed. Due to the project being preliminary a lot of the engineering work has not been done yet. Site survey, storm drainage calculations, underground utility specifics, and site slopes for barrier free access still have to be completed. Mr. Freeman explained that this project is still seeking funding. This April will be their third attempt to seek funding from MSHDA (Michigan State Housing Development Authority). If the applicant is successful in obtaining funding, additional work will be performed to generate the engineering information, which will be subject to review by the City Engineer and Building Official.

Mr. Freeman's recommendation is conditional approval of the proposed site plan subject to the following: Prior to the submission of a building permit, the applicant shall provide engineering plans to the satisfaction of the City Engineer and Building Official.

Mr. Freeman explained that Craig Patterson from The Woda Group is in attendance if the board has any questions.

Craig Patterson addressed the board and asked to give an update on the project. He explained that in the development world you compete with other developers for MSHDA funding. In that process, sometimes you fall short on points. It is by those scores that you get funding. This will be a 13.1 million dollar investment at 146 Ridge Street. The Woda Group went into the second application round in October and won with two other developers with the same scoring. Due to cost per unit, they ended up not receiving funding since only one could be awarded in the tie-breaker. They have worked with Justin Knepper

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from the DDA to improve their scoring for round three and as of today they are four points higher than in October. On April 2nd they will submit for scoring at 134 points, but they will not know what the competition is like. They feel confident that a 134 score will win because 134 was the highest score last round.

Craig Patterson explained that he has been back to the City Commission to give an update to them as well. There have not been many changes to the original plan, there is still 1920 square feet of commercial space and bedroom sizing is the same. There are going to be two market rate apartments in the building, which was recommended by the mayor and some others who felt it was essential to have some units with no income cap. This may seem nominal, but it has raised the cost per unit. They do not receive housing tax credits for the commercial space or the two market rate units, so it drives up the cost because there is no savings to offset that cost.

Craig Patterson displayed two different elevation renderings to the board. He explained that can be customized with materials to have it fit with our community. He brought the rendering forward for the board to inspect and pointed out the commercial space for review.

Mr. Freeman explained that the power point presentation had not been updated since the last plan review application, so the other elevation rendering was not added.

Craig Patterson concluded, and offered to answer any questions the board has for him.

Clayton Shunk asked if site plans are typically approved for only six months.

Craig Patterson responded that it might be because usually they are final site plans with full engineering. Mr. Freeman added that he would like to discuss changing that to twelve months, especially due to our climate, to include a full building season. Craig Patterson explained that if they are awarded funding in July, it is likely that construction will not begin until spring of 2019 due to the permitting process.

Robert Shimmens asked when The Woda Group would find out if they have enough points to win.

Craig Patterson responded that they will apply again in April. They will put on their website at MSHDA everyone that applied under the new construction pool. There is a self-scoring process, which is how they are preliminarily ranked. Some companies will self-score really high, while The Woda Group self-scores conservatively. If we think we have a 134 on April 1st that will be how we score ourselves. They will not know until July if they have been awarded funding. In other states, such as Virginia, the process is done differently and they find out final rankings earlier.

Robert Shimmens clarified that they should know if they have funding in July.

Craig Patterson clarified that due to the fourth of July holiday, they would probably be

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notified by July 20th with verbal notification. A letter will be received after that. Craig explained that this will be a win-win project because for the last 25 years that property has been vacant. Every few months they check with the agent to see if there is any other interest in the property and there has been none. The people who will be going into the property will most likely be seniors, singles, and families with children. All of the tenants in the building have to have income certified to be there.

Ken Kavanaugh asked if The Woda Group uses labor from this area.

Craig Patterson responded that they have a commitment to hire locally. On a recent job in Traverse City, 32 of 37 subcontractors/suppliers were local or regional. The other thing The Woda Group likes to do is have their subcontractors hire a local general laborer to introduce them into the construction trades.

Robert Shimmens asked about the type of material used for the façade of the building.

Craig Patterson responded that there is brick, hardy plank, and mixed materials. Hooker DeJong is the Architect and the materials can be customized with the community.

Joseph Gallagher asked if there will be bicycle parking or bicycle repair stations.

Craig Patterson responded that there will be bicycle racks. He is unsure if there will be any covered parking. He will make note of the bicycle repair station for their final plan. They have been working to make the project transportation friendly, especially during the weekends when there is not public transportation.

Rebecca Bolen wanted to thank Craig Patterson and The Woda Group for coming up to give this presentation. As a regional planner, it meets so many goals for the city and this region.

Craig Patterson asked Rebecca Bolen if LSSU would be holding another economic summit this year.

Rebecca Bolen responded that she is unsure, but there may be a manufacturer and builder conference in October. It may be a good place to go to if The Woda Group gets good news in July.

It was moved by Rebecca Bolen and supported by Charles McCreedy to conditionally approve the site plan subject to the language in Mr. Freeman's recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

8. OTHER BUSINESS: There was none

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9. STAFF REPORTS:

A. Introduce language to extend site plan approvals from 6 months to 12 months:

Mr. Freeman asked the board if they have any objections to introducing language to be considered to extend the current site plan approval time period from 6 months to 12 months. The board agreed that the process takes so long that giving a longer time frame would be beneficial to everyone. Mr. Freeman will bring back the language to the next meeting.

B. Appointments expiring: Ken Kavanaugh, Clayton Shunk, and Seth Harris:

Mr. Freeman explained that the Ken Kavanaugh and Clayton Shunk are eligible for reappointment and asked if they would like to continue serving on the board. Both Ken Kavanaugh and Clayton Shunk responded that they would like to be reappointed. Seth Harris was absent from the meeting, but responded by email that he would like to be reappointed as well.

C. Rezoning Standards:

Mr. Freeman would like to establish standards for rezoning. He would like to bring the board some things to consider at a future meeting. Additionally, he would like to introduce language authorizing the Zoning Board of Appeals to act on split-zoning situations.

D. Interim Meeting:

There will be an interim meeting held on April 12, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. There was a site plan application that did not get in by the deadline for this meeting, but they are eligible for the interim meeting date and do wish to go at that time.

10. MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC OR COMMISSION:

Joseph Gallagher shared that there will be dark sky this Saturday, March 24th starting at 8:30 p.m. Please turn off or turn down your lights for one hour. Crackerjacks were shared to celebrate opening day of the Detroit Tigers baseball season beginning in one week.

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11. ADJOURNMENT:

There was a motion by Ken Kavanaugh and supported by Derric Knight to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m. The motion carried.

Clayton Shunk, Chair
Sault Ste. Marie Planning Commission