

HARTLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

May 9, 2024– 7:00 PM

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Fox called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:**
3. **Roll Call and Recognition of Visitors:**
Present – Commissioners Eckman, Fox, Grissim, Mayer, McMullen, Murphy
Absent – Commissioner Mitchell
4. **Approval of the Meeting Agenda:**
A Motion to approve the May 9, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting Agenda was made by Commissioner Grissim and seconded by Commissioner Eckman. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**
None
6. **Call to the Public:**
None
7. **Public Hearing**
 - a. Site Plan PD Application #24-001 Highland Road Self-Storage Facility PD – Preliminary Planned Development Site Plan

Chair Fox opened the Public Hearing at 7:02 p.m. stating all public noticing requirements have been met.

Director Langer gave an overview of the location and scope of this application stating the following:

- West of US 23, north of M-59, behind the Arby's Restaurant
- 1.21-acre property zoned GC General Commercial
- Multi-story, climate-controlled storage would typically not be permitted in GC General Commercial zoning.
- Rezoning this parcel to LI Light Industrial or I Industrial did not seem likely.
- Not directly on M-59 so the visibility for a commercial use is diminished.
- Site Plan Review Committee decided to explore using the Planned Development process.
- Planned Development process is being used which is a three-step process occurring before both the Planning Commission and the Township Board: Conceptual, Preliminary and Final. The Township Board is the final decision maker. This project is at the Preliminary step.
- Director Langer presented the proposed site plan and explained the access.
- Proposing a three (3) story climate-controlled, mini storage building.

Erin McMachen, Civil/Environmental Engineer, with Stonefield Engineering and Design; representing the Applicant, Joe Qonja of On Q Commercial Real Estate, stated the following:

- Seeking Preliminary Planned Development approval for a three (3) story, self-storage facility.
- Use is something new to the Township and surrounding area.
- Providing a higher-end facility with high quality materials that will be aesthetically pleasing.
- Having the climate-controlled option for storage will be a valuable option for residents as well as having it close to home for easy access and convenience.
- They have worked with the Township and the Fire Authority to give everything they can for this site; PDs are a give and take process for both parties involved.
- Unique location, most commercial uses want the road visibility which makes this a more applicable use for this location.
- Changes since the Concept review:
 - Widened the drive aisle per the Fire Marshall’s comments, now 26 feet wide with pervious pavers.
 - Removed the mountable curb to provide the flush pavement desired by the Fire Marshall.
 - Provided full specifications for the pervious pavers to ensure they would support the load of a fire truck.
 - Wider drive aisles will also provide convenience for customers loading and unloading, allowing another vehicle to pass by.
 - Added a trash enclosure to the northeast corner of the site.
 - Updated plans show the location of the monument sign in the front greenbelt.
 - Requesting waivers.
 - Exceeding the maximum 35-foot building height due to the required height for the interior drive aisle, height of units, and required parapet rooftop screening wall. No real visual impacts due to the location of the site.
 - Minimum acreage for a PD is 20 acres, this is 1.21 acres. Township has granted special waivers for small PDs in the past.
 - Building and parking setbacks due to the size of the lot. Large front setback and the Highway has a large setback which is limiting.
 - Signage waiver, signs permitting on east and west facades, but they would like to trade the east (highway side) façade for a wall sign on the south side and still have a sign on the west side which is conforming.
- All of staff’s recommended revisions will appear on the construction plan set as requested.

Call to the Public:

None

Chair Fox closed the Public Hearing at 7:16 p.m.

Chair Fox referred to the staff memorandum dated May 2, 2024.

Eligibility Criteria (Section 3.1.18.B.)

Commissioner Grissim stated the Recognizable Benefits for this project are vague. She feels the listed benefits are more for the business than the community. The Planning Commission likes the project and the architecture, but they feel pushed when it comes to definitive Recognizable Benefits for the community. She does not see them.

Commissioner Eckman agreed stating it is a problem as it is somewhat subjective. He asked how it has been managed with businesses in the past.

Chair Fox stated the following:

- Sometimes it is more difficult, especially when the site is smaller.
- Walgreens and Chase Bank are a PD.
- He might ask is this a project that Hartland might miss out on if it were not a PD making it a benefit to the community to have the project at this location; are they doing something that will benefit the community.
- This is a fabulous looking building.
- From the beginning they were told to bring their A game, that this structure cannot look like a storage unit facility, it needs to look like it will fit in a commercial district.
- On the two existing small PDs, the benefit is Hartland had some great looking buildings and the convenience of these services at this location.

The Applicant agreed stating oftentimes a community benefit is recreational, but this site backs up to the freeway. They are trying to provide something that Hartland will be proud of and be a benefit to the community.

Commissioner Murphy agreed with Chair Fox stating it is a benefit that the site will be utilized. If not this project, then what? It is a beautiful building, a centerpiece, it could change the look of the area. In residential developments, we can be creative; commercial is different, maybe add a sidewalk if possible.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed sidewalk options, this site, and possible future road construction.

Director Langer stated the following:

- Believes he has a good understanding of what the Planning Commission expects regarding sidewalks for a residential project.
- Often there does not seem to be a consistent thought process for commercial projects.
- Suggested a work session to discuss the topic and gain an understanding of what the Planning Commission and the Township Board are looking for regarding sidewalks in commercial areas.
- Clearly understanding the Planning Commission's thought process in this area is important as it is part of his job to guide applicants from the initial stages of a project and communicate the Township's desire for this component, rather than discussing it with the applicants for the first time during the Public Hearing.
- Sidewalk installation has come up with other projects where some sidewalks have been required, others not.
- It is a difficult topic.

The Planning Commission continued to discuss sidewalks and this particular site.

The consensus of the Planning Commission is a sidewalk will not be required with this application.

Planned Development Design Standards (Section 3.1.18.C.)

Minimum Yard Requirements

Director Langer listed the building setback deficiencies.

Commission Grissim commented it is jammed onto the site, the site is not big enough for this project.

Chair Fox stated that is part of the reason it is a PD.

Commissioner Murphy agreed.

Commissioner Eckman stated it is jammed onto the site, but it is a unique piece of property surrounded by other unique sites. There is no front yard, which is not as much of a problem here as it might be somewhere else.

Commissioner Mayer stated for anyone watching or reading in the future, this project is encroaching on the north side potentially negatively affecting the Best Western property. The property owners own both parcels, so they are only affecting themselves.

Building Height

Director Langer stated per the architectural plans, the building height is stated as forty (40) feet height, to the highest point. Chair Fox added there are no rooftop units, everything is internal so screening will not be required.

Parking and Loading

Director Langer stated there is one barrier-free space and three regular spaces for a total of four parking spaces. The Ordinance does not have this specific use or parking standards, so staff used parking calculations for mini storage that required slightly more. The Applicant provided information from other of their sites on how many parking spaces are actually needed indicating four spaces will be adequate.

Open Space

Director Langer stated most of this site is built out with this project. Chair Fox stated he does not think this site plan would work on M-59, but it works for this site at this time.

Site Requirements

Dumpster Enclosure (Sec. 5.7)

Director Langer stated the dumpster does not comply with the ten-foot setback. The gates are shown on the plan as a metal gate that would provide a screen; we typically see wood gates. He would like the Planning Commission to decide if a) they approved the use of metal gates rather than wood, and b) if metal, then what color as one was not specified. The Applicant stated they intend the metal gate match the building if it is permitted. Also, they screened the enclosure with landscaping to lessen the impact on the Best Western side. The Planning Commission had no comments.

Off-Street Parking (Sec. 5.8.4.H – Parking requirements for this use not listed)

The Planning Commission had no comments.

**Landscaping (Section 5.11 – Updated Landscape Ordinance version)
Greenbelt Landscaping (Sec. 5.11.2. C.)**

East side

Commissioner Grissim mentioned there are a couple of trees shown in the US 23 right-of way. The Applicant stated they will apply for a ROW permit; they have an option for plantings; they will work with MDOT.

West side

Commissioner Grissim stated there are three drives, the trees are very close to the existing lights, suggested a narrower variety. The Applicant agreed. Commissioner Grissim stated the rest is heavily landscaped and looked good.

Foundation Landscaping

Commissioner Grissim asked about the south side label on the plans. The Applicant clarified there is lawn on the south side and there is an incorrect marking on the north side they will fix. Commissioner Grissim continued if they could get some additional landscaping on the south edge, working with narrow strips, desire is to soften that area as seen from the street view. The Applicant agreed to find a species of shrub that can thrive in a narrow area.

Screening of Ground Mounted Equipment (Sec. 5.11.2.G.iii.)

Commissioner Grissim stated anything taller than 30 inches, such as the transformer or condensing units, should have screening on three sides but the heights were not all shown, seeing it on two of the sides but not always three. If we know the height, then we can determine if it must be screened. The Applicant stated they will comply.

Other Landscaping and Site Comments

Commissioner Grissim stated the following:

- Fill in landscape where possible as discussed earlier, narrow varieties for small spaces
- Required minimum tree size is 3” caliper.
- Have Landscape Architect sign and seal plans
- Willow Oak is not hardy in Michigan, should be changed.
- Construction Plan set should be updated with changes.

Director Langer stated a drive aisle is located on the north side of the building, but parking spaces are not present, thus a waiver is not required for off-street parking as requested.

Lighting (Sec. 5.13)

Director Langer stated the Photometric Plan did not account for any of the wall mounted lights and the height of the pole fixtures was not shown. All of these can be addressed on the Construction Plans. The Applicant stated they chose to use wall scones that have very low output, but they will show them on the Construction Plans.

Architecture Comments

Director Langer stated the split face block is slightly over and glass on the northern elevation is at 20%. Chair Fox stated it is a PD and everyone seems to agree it is a very nice-looking building.

There is a sample board. Director Langer mentioned that the colors shown on the materials board better reflect the true colors of the structure rather than the elevations in the packet, in his opinion.

Wall Sign (Section 5.26.8.H.)

Director Langer stated they have two fronts, the US 23 side and the service drive. The Applicant has requested to have signage on the west and south facades instead. The requested sign on the south façade is the sign that normally would not comply. The sizes of the signs comply with the requirements.

Commissioner Mayer commented on the underground stormwater collection system, possible detention area near Arby's, and the condition of the private access road, stating if the Applicant is looking for additional benefits to the community, maybe something could be worked out for that area. Director Langer stated the Applicant is still working with the Drain Commissioner's Office on those details which usually does not happen this early in the process. Chair Fox stated asking the Applicant to pave the private road would be a huge hit for a 1.2-acre site. He would prefer the businesses along that road take care of it in their time as it affects their business. The Applicant stated they have already repaired a catch basin and will continue to make all necessary repairs as needed. They will do what they can to keep it in good shape.

Commissioner Murphy asked about the location of the flagpole shown on the site plan if it is placed properly so that the flag does not contact the building. The Applicant stated they would have to confirm the size of the flag get back to the Planning Commission but with all of the trees and light poles they may need to add it to the site plan to ensure clearance around everything else proposed.

Commissioner Eckman offered the following Motion:

Move to recommend approval of Site Plan/PD #24-001, the Preliminary Planned Development Site Plan for Highland Road Self-Storage Facility Planned Development as outlined in the staff memorandum dated May 2, 2024.

Approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The Preliminary Planned Development Site Plan for Highland Road Self-Storage Facility Planned Development, SP/PD #24-001, is subject to the approval of the Township Board.**
- 2. Waiver request for the planned development project area to be less than 20 acres is approved.**
- 3. Waiver request for the building height to exceed 35 feet is approved.**
- 4. Waiver request for one (1) wall sign on a side of the building that is not the building wall's primary entrance (south elevation) is approved.**
- 5. The applicant shall adequately address the outstanding items noted in the Planning Department's memorandum, dated May 2, 2024, on the Construction Plan Set, subject to an administrative review by Planning staff prior to the issuance of a land use permit.**

6. **As part of the Final Plan Review, the applicant shall provide a Planned Development (PD) Agreement that includes any access and maintenance agreements. The documents shall be in a recordable format and shall comply with the requirements of the Township Attorney.**
7. **Applicant complies with any requirements of the Township Engineering Consultant, Department of Public Works Director, Hartland Deerfield Fire Authority, and all other government agencies, as applicable.**

Seconded by Commissioner Murphy. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Call to the Public:

None

9. Planner Report:

None

10. Committee Reports:

Chair Fox suggested scheduling a work session on the Community Benefit topic. We are highly organized but, on that topic, we all stumble. The Planning Commission briefly discussed the topic. Commissioner Murphy requested sidewalks be added to the conversation. The Planning Commission agreed.

11. Adjournment

A Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Grissim and seconded by Commissioner McMullen. Motion carried unanimously. The Regular Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by.



Tom Murphy
Planning Commission Secretary