

**CITY OF LIVONIA – CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF STUDY MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 20, 2021**

Meeting was called to order in the Auditorium of City Hall, 33000 Civic Center Drive, at 8:45 p.m. by President Kathleen McIntyre. Present: Rob Donovic; Jim Jolly, Laura Toy, Scott Bahr, Cathy White, Brandon McCullough and President Kathleen McIntyre. Absent: None

Elected and appointed officials present: Mark Taormina, Director of Planning and Economic Development; Todd Zilincik, City Engineer; Paul Bernier, City Attorney; Lori L. Miller, Deputy Clerk; LaShawn Thomas, Director of Governmental Affairs; and Sara Kasproicz, Manager of Council Office.

Councilmember Rob Donovic led the meeting in the Invocation.

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION During Audience Communication Joe Schepis, 14557 Fairlane, commented on the professionalism and demeanor of Council at this evening's meetings. He then addressed the topic of trees and the preservation of same within the City.

Council granted Schepis additional time for his comments.

President McIntyre thanked Schepis for his attendance at the meeting and his engagement with the City.

NEW BUSINESS

1. BLOCK PARTY: Lauren Grewe, re: to be held Saturday, October 9, 2021, from 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sherwood, between Woodside and Parklane, with rain date of Sunday, October 10, 2021.

Lauren Grewe, 15612 Woodside, presented this request to Council. She stated she is representing Fairway Farms Homeowners Association and is requesting a street closure for a block party.

Councilmember White stated everything looks in order and offered an approving resolution for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

2. WAIVER PETITION: Planning Commission, re: Petition 2021-07-02-13 submitted by Leo Soave, to develop a Planned Residential Development consisting of a condominium subdivision with nineteen (19) detached single-family homes on the properties at 37711, 37631 and 37601 Plymouth Road, located on the south side of Plymouth Road between Newburgh Road and Jarvis Avenue in the Southeast ¼ of Section 30.

Mark Taormina, Director of Planning and Economic Development, presented this

request to Council. He stated this property is at the Southwest corner of Plymouth and Jughandle Road. This is a 3.36 acre site, it's currently undeveloped, and as you can see from the map it's bounded on three sides by roads, Plymouth Road to the north, Jughandle to the east and then Edward Hines along the south side. The property is currently in the process of being rezoned from originally it was from C-1 to RC, Residential Condominium, with the adoption of the Livonia Vision 21 Zoning Ordinance, the zoning classification is now NM-1, which stands for neighborhood multi-family. Council gave first reading to the rezoning on July 12th, and second reading and roll call are the final steps and are on hold pending the review of this Special Waiver Use and site plan. So, the NM-1 zoning does allow condominium multiple dwellings as a permitted use subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission and the City Council. The request this evening is for a planned residential development and the standards under this portion of the ordinance allows for reduced yard requirements to help overcome natural and other unique obstacles or constraints that pose a challenge to development under conventional design standards. And why this site qualifies clearly is because of its unique configuration, the fact that it's bounded on three sides by roads, and has a relatively narrow frontage along Plymouth Road. So, the design before you as indicated is for nineteen lots. These are all detached, single-family homes. The design shows lots that measure 40 feet by 100 feet for a total of about 4,000 square feet per lot. Again, this is a multi-family project, this is not single-family zoning, it's multi-family zoning. So this is a unique development concept under the multi-family zoning classification. All the homes would have frontage on a 24-foot wide private street that would have access from Jughandle. As you can see the street would extend about 150 feet in an east/west direction and then turn north where it would end in a T-turn around just south of Plymouth Road. There is a sidewalk provided both along the internal residential street as well as along Plymouth Road and Jughandle Road. This is a nice addition; it would help link the sidewalks along Plymouth and Jughandle to Hines Parkway. There is a need for storm water management, in this case it would occur in the southwest corner of the site, that would be in the form of an underground pipe detention system. Included in their plans with your submittal is a fully detailed landscape plan. You can see it includes quite a bit of plantings along the north and west side to the property where the site abuts residential, single-family residential to the west. There's also a berm along that side of the property. The Master Deed and Bylaws that were submitted do comply with our minimum standards for brick, that's 65% for multi-story residences; and 80% for ranches. The Planning Commission is recommending approval of the plans as submitted. And then lastly, and I'll let the Petitioner describe the house plan, this is a typical rendering of one of the homes. These are relatively narrow homes, they're a story and a half homes for the most part, either two-bedroom or three-bedroom depending on the option selected with attached two-car garages. So, with that, Madam President, I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Councilmember Toy asked Taormina to point out Edward Hines Drive on the site plan and asked if there were four or five that backed up to Hines?

Taormina replied I'll go back to the aerial photograph and what we'll see here is

there's a strip of the park property, so between the actual Edward Hines Drive and the south boundary of this site there is a setback with some trees along this area. I think these houses would be visible probably in the wintertime, but might be concealed by those trees during the summertime.

Councilmember White asked what the square footage of the homes are and Taormina replied they would range anywhere from about 1,300 square feet for the ranches and roughly 1,500 square feet for the multi-story.

Councilmember Jolly asked the Petitioner if there would be basements and John Pastor, representative from Soave Homes, replied yes, depending on what kind of car you have it might be a one-car garage or two-car garage.

President McIntyre asked Pastor to introduce himself for the record.

John Pastor, 33461 Capri Court, Livonia, Michigan, representing Leo Soave Homes stated the homes are anywhere from 1,300 to, I think it goes up to 1,500, 1,600 square foot, two-car garage with a basement, depending on which style of the home that you're going to go with. And it's also, through the Planning Commission they also asked us to work with the Engineering Department on the T-turn, kind of angle that off a little bit so it's easier for the trash pick-up company as well as any fire trucks that can actually get in there and back up and get out. Those are some of the comments that we had talked about at the Planning Commission and moving forward. Again, these price ranges are going to be anywhere from \$250,000 to \$350,000, depending on your extras and all that stuff that you want to do. It is a newer type style of housing project that's coming up. People my age I guess want, I should say now, it's kind of scary, is it's a smaller house, smaller lot, but yet still detached. You still have your own individual place that you can mess around with your landscaping if you so desire and stuff but you can still get out of town and go to Florida or Arizona, Texas, the Caribbean, wherever you like, you know, it's just a little bit nicer to be able to come/go as you choose as opposed to being attached to one another, listening to your neighbors and all that.

Councilmember Donovic stated this sort of project really excites me. I'm looking forward to that new ordinance that we passed on zoning, how we re-envision zoning in the community, what homes look like in the community. Not everybody wants a big lot with a lot of grass. Looking at this project, you're offering a diverse option to residents to whether it be senior population or a lot of people that I know that are younger professionals that don't have the time, they may travel a lot or they may not want a large home, they want to live in a nice area, they want the nice amenities, but they don't necessarily need all the square footage. So I think this is perfect as we move forward in our community and how we look at offering our residents different diverse options and diverse residence, regardless of what age spectrum they may be on. I do have a question and just help me understand. When the road comes out to Plymouth Road right there, what was the determining factor on not opening that up, what was the thought process behind the Petitioner?

Pastor replied that has a lot to do with the County, determining with them, and also with the Planning Department on all that stuff and how we're going to get, since you also have another road right next to it and you have a road on both sides of it, to get a third collector road out there would have been really tough.

Donovic stated I'm happy that it's not open because my fear is that eventually is becomes used as a thorough way where people want to cut through to avoid a light, so I'm happy that it's not open and I'm also happy it's going to offer more green space now because some of the concerns I hear about this area, it is very wooded and making sure you try to preserve as much of that green space. And I think that may be a selling point for the future residents; they want to live near that sort of area with that sort of environment. So, I think this is great and I'm looking forward to offering our residents something like this.

Councilmember Toy asked if there was a first floor laundry in the homes and Pastor replied if you want it, you can have the first floor. Toy stated I hear a lot of residents, they want to move into a condo but they want a first floor laundry because of the stairs, that's why. Parking, you get a few people coming over, where do they park, in the street obviously?

Pastor replied as with any other neighborhood association, unfortunately these aren't designed for a lot of people to begin with, but similar to my association where I'm at, I'm on a one-street, actually we're on a twenty to twenty-four foot wide road, so again, it's not the best but you just park wherever you can. Then we'll just park on Hines and walk up through the trees and not damage.

Toy asked how many ranches will be on the site and Pastor replied it's literally going to be up to the customers, whatever they want. They're going to start off, here's the options that we have and it all depends on who wants what. Again, I'm sure that the older crowd is going to gravitate towards the ranches and the younger crowd is going to gravitate more to the square footage.

Toy asked when you talk about three bedrooms, does that mean two up and a master down and Pastor replied yes.

Councilmember McCullough asked Taormina with the new zoning ordinance, does the lot go to ZBA on this or no, is it streamlined?

Taormina replied it's streamlined under the Planned Residential Development standards, so it affords the City Council the discretion of waiving some of the dimensional requirements.

McCullough said I think this is a great plan, using that postage stamp at Jughandle and Plymouth, a new type of housing development that is much needed in this community, assuming you get these things up, I'm sure they're going to be accounted for pretty quick, it's a great plan.

Pastor said more importantly, think about if we don't have this type of zoning in the City, that piece of property probably would be still sitting, if you think about it. So, it's a new way of innovating smaller pieces of parcel into something that can be used and is viable for the community.

McCullough said and you've got Hines right there, it's a great selling point, well done.

Vice President Bahr stated when he first saw this one of his concerns with the new zoning ordinance is how we're --- and I support the new zoning ordinance, don't get me wrong --- but I recognize it's going to make it easier to pack in these small lots more than we've done in the past and maybe I just need to get with the times. I hear what people are saying about the market for these, I have concerns about it and certainly don't like the idea of seeing these type of packed developments proliferating a lot, however, it kind of reminds me of the Haggerty Square project. I remember the comment was made when we approved that that this is a great place to try this and see how it works and that's kind of what I think when I see this. So, no further questions from what's been asked and I have concerns about this but I think this particular spot, it will be interesting to see how this neighborhood goes, and maybe this is a wave of the future, it's been a long time since we've built 1,400, 1,500 square foot homes in this city.

Pastor stated and if you also think about it, think about the size of the property and the oddity shape of that property. And if you look at Livonia, Livonia is a pretty well developed community so there's not much "open space" other than our parks.

Bahr said you guys keep finding it, though. Pastor stated we're just trying to build a better Livonia.

Councilmember Donovic said I understand my colleagues' concerns about re-envisioning how zoning looks in the future. I just know from my perspective talking to some folks that looking at developments differently and offering residents --- residents will have to move into here. I think there's going to be a very particular customer that wants that smaller lot but also wants a home with a lot of amenities. But I totally understand my colleagues' position, I do get it and it is worrisome sometimes because you look at some of our properties and it's never been like that and this is new, but I do think it's nice to offer residents that option if they want it. On that topic, since this is going to be an association, correct?

Pastor replied yes, sir.

Donovic then asked are these homes, will the lawn be maintained by an association and the snow?

Pastor replied each homeowner will handle their own, but the association takes care of all of the common areas.

Donovic asked when it comes to snowplowing in the wintertime and Pastor stated actually, that's their road, so they will be plowing their own.

Donovic confirmed that the association will be handling the snow removal of their own road and Pastor replied yes. Pastor went on to say if this were a big 23-acre parcel, different story. I'm all in agreement with you, there's no way I would be doing these postage sized lots and all the stuff on there. But these oddity lots, that's where I think this is a very good product and fills in some of these areas that people wouldn't even look at. And that's what we're doing, we're finding people and finding lots to think out of the box.

President McIntyre asked if these homes come with lake privileges and is there an automatic membership in the Lake Pointe Yacht Club and Pastor replied they're still conferring on that.

Councilmember Toy offered an approving resolution for the Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION:

APPROVING

REGULAR

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION None heard.

as there were no further questions or comments, President McIntyre adjourned the Study Session at 9:14 p.m. on Monday, September 20, 2021.

For the 1930th Regular Meeting of October 4, 2021

DATED: September 23, 2021

SUSAN M. NASH, CITY CLERK