

**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS**  
**CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM**  
**JUNE 15, 2023**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Trafelet called the Special Meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present:                      Brickner, Countegan (arrived 6:05pm), Grant, Mantey, Stimson,  
Trafelet, Varga, Ware

Commissioners absent:                      Aspinall

Others Present:                              City Planner Perdonik, Staff Planner Canty, City Attorney  
Schultz, Planning Consultants Bahm and Tangari

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Stimson, support by Brickner, to approve the agenda as published.**

**Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Chair Countegan arrived at 6:05pm.

**NEW MASTER PLAN STUDY**

- A. Review 2009 Master Plan Area Plans
- i. Orchard Lake Road Corridor, Fourteen Mile Road, and Northwestern Highway
  - ii. Grand River Corridor
  - iii. Haggerty Corridor
  - iv. Freeway Overlay Districts

Referencing their May 11, 2023 memorandum *Master Plan Special Study Areas – Non-Residential Planning Areas: First Set* Planning Consultants Bahm and Tangari led tonight’s directed discussion, which continued from the discussion held at the May 18 special meeting.

General comments across special planning areas included:

- The Master Plan should clearly articulate what has been discussed during the master plan update work sessions over the past months.
- The Master Plan should address the difficulties of redevelopment in certain areas. The Master Plan could lay out the City’s vision for those areas, and how that vision might best be achieved by use of zoning options, such as a Planned Unit Development.
- The Master Plan should be clear as to what qualities the City wants to see in its redevelopment projects. If desired qualities vary by location, that should also be articulated.
- One common discussion theme was the potential of using a mixed-use zoning designation to foster mixed-use development in the special planning areas.

- PUDs should be required to provide more open space and pedestrian amenities as part of their public benefit. It was important for the Commission to see the PUD tool as one that allowed the City to receive significant benefit from new development/redevelopment.
- The PUD ordinance had not been changed in a long time; it might be timely to look at the PUD ordinance in terms of how the present language met the needs of the City, and how new language might be clearer in its expectations.
- Should the City develop additional policies relative to empty storefronts? Could an environment with incentives be cultivated so that when the right use (as articulated in the Master Plan) came along, properties were development-ready?
- The City should be proactive in articulating its vision for the different special study areas, communicating with the real estate community regarding that vision, and providing encouragement for developers to study the Master Plan before coming to the City with development plans.
- The Commission was not as interested in drawing lines around special study areas as it was in providing a narrative of the vision for those areas.
- The Master Plan should address the issue of parking generally, with an eye toward reducing parking requirements.

### **1. Orchard Lake Road from 12 Mile Road to 13.5 Mile**

Properties on the east side of Orchard Lake Road

- Commercial properties with shallow depths (130') present challenges to redevelopment. The City continues to grapple with encouraging/requiring positive amenities on these lots.
- The service drive, where it exists, is a positive feature that allows people to go in and out of neighboring facilities without using Orchard Lake Road.
- The Commission should continue to think of ways to make this area more walkable, such as reducing front setback requirements in order to bring buildings closer to Orchard Lake Road. However, a prior effort to bring buildings closer to Orchard Lake Road had met with some resistance in the business community.

Properties on the west side of Orchard Lake Road

- These properties are almost all office buildings, with relatively good occupancy rates.
- Should the future vision of this area allow for greater flexibility of use and mixed use, perhaps through a mixed-use zoning designation?

### **2. Orchard Lake/14 Mile/Northwestern Highway**

- City envisions growth and redevelopment in tandem with what is occurring in West Bloomfield, including restaurants and multi-family housing behind commercial uses.
- This “triangle” could provide a mix of entertainment, retail, and dining opportunities.
- Hunters Square used to be the location of Tally Hall, which until the 1980s had provided indoor space for about 20 unique restaurants. The Master Plan could acknowledge this history, and encourage development that included public spaces – both exterior and interior – that supported people enjoying food from (future) Hunters Square restaurants, and that would encourage walking the Hunters Square shopping area, instead of driving from location to location within Hunters Square. An interim plan might be to allow food trucks at Hunters Square.
- All redevelopment in this area is likely to occur via a Planned Unit Development.
- The Master Plan should acknowledge approved PUDs, whether or not they have been/are being developed.

- The Home Depot/dark Sam's Club development site was overparked. Regarding that site, was it possible to discover Home Depot's long-term plans for its Farmington Hills store? This knowledge would aid in future planning for the site.
- Expand retail uses, especially encouraging diverse smaller shops.
- Regarding non-motorized traffic, the bike lanes on Northwestern Highway are underutilized and perceived as dangerous.

### **3. West Grand River Corridor**

- Discussion focused on the northeast corner of Grand River and Drake, where having to share in the costs of maintaining and upgrading the large detention pond discouraged new development. The pond needed to be re-engineered and the cost to do that was very high.

### **4. East Grand River Corridor**

- Corridor Improvement Authority in place. Unfortunately the TIF (tax increment financing) associated with the Corridor had never yielded sufficient funding to pay for improvements in this area.
- The Grand River Overlay Ordinance was written in 2009. The Overlay provided additional flexibility for development including form-based standards, and also defined properties that were pre-qualified for PUD development.
- Some of the commercial lots – especially on the south side of Grand River – were only 80' deep. Mixed zoning could be applied to a wider area from Grand River including some of the residential lots, so that if a developer wanted to develop a larger business and could purchase the residential property adjacent to a small business for development purposes, zoning would be in place to allow that.
- The homes in this area were among the City's most affordable housing. If those residential properties were converted to business/commercial use, the affordable housing would likely not be replaced. Where would these people live?
- Perhaps the Master Plan should reflect the reality that on short commercial lots small scale development was likely the only option.
- A narrative in the Master Plan should provide guidance on how, in the future, the small commercial lots could be expanded.
- Work with MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation) to reconfigure M-5 in this area, in order to open up new development parcels.

### **5. Haggerty Corridor**

### **6. Freeway Overlay Districts**

Work with MDOT to improve major intersection rights-of-way to better serve pedestrians and offer enhanced aesthetic value.

Chair Countegan closed tonight's discussion.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Stimson, support by Trafelet, to adjourn the meeting at 7:25pm.**

**Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marisa Varga  
Planning Commission Secretary  
/cem