

PLANNING COMMISSION

February 18, 2021 Virtual Meeting

The City of Portage Planning Commission virtual meeting of February 18, 2021 was called to order by Chairman Corradini at 7:03 p.m.

IN REMOTE ATTENDANCE

Kelly Peterson, Director of Community Development; Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning & Neighborhood Services; Catherine Kaufman, City Attorney and Kyle Mucha, Zoning & Codes Administrator.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Forth called the roll: Joshi (yes, Portage); Fries (yes, Portage); Corradini (yes, Portage); Pezzoli (yes, Portage); Baldwin (yes, Portage); Myer (yes, Portage); Freiman (yes, Portage); Youngs (absent); and Fawley (excused).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Commissioner Joshi, seconded by Commissioner Baldwin to approve the February 4, 2021 meeting minutes. Upon roll call vote, Joshi (yes); Fries (yes); Corradini (yes); Pezzoli (yes); Baldwin (yes); Myer (yes); Freiman (yes). The motion was approved 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

Tentative Plan Amendment for Woodbridge Hills Planned Development, 4100 West Centre Avenue. Director Peterson summarized the staff report related to an application submitted by Mr. Andrew DeNooyer, representing 633 Group dated February 12, 2021, to amend the previously approved Tentative Plan for the Woodbridge Hills Planned Development (PD). The applicant is proposing to change the land use designation of the property located at 4100 West Centre Avenue from commercial to multifamily residential. The applicant proposes to construct an apartment building, consisting of 48-60 residential units on the 1.45-acre parcel of land. Ms. Peterson informed the Commission that the proposed apartment building height, design, total number of units and setback distance from property lines will be finalized following the approval of the tentative plan amendment.

Mr. Andrew DeNooyer was present virtually to provide additional details regarding the proposed project. Mr. DeNooyer indicated that a recent market analysis was conducted that indicated Portage, and subsequently Woodbridge Hills, could support a higher density multi-family residential development project which is in high demand for the region. Mr. DeNooyer indicated that the proposed parcel development would allow tenant access to the Woodbridge Hills shopping complex, recreational amenities (trails, bikeways). Mr. DeNooyer also indicated that the proximity to US-131 makes the development of this parcel of land attractive and desirable. Mr. DeNooyer indicated that tenants will vary in age with units catering to young professionals and others to a more empty-nester lifestyle. Mr. DeNooyer also indicated that the proposed project will allow for further "place-making" and be attractive to area residents. Mr. DeNooyer further discussed the underground parking garage and its intent to minimize parking visualizations. Regarding resident concerns pertaining to storm water management, Mr. DeNooyer responded that storm water will be maintained on site and should alleviate runoff onto adjacent properties. In finalizing the summary, Mr. DeNooyer indicated that local businesses in the Woodbridge Hills shopping center are excited for a mixed-use development of this magnitude and welcome this proposal.

Commissioner Freiman inquired with the applicant regarding the following: if the proposed building would be a noise barrier between West Centre Avenue and Marsh Pointe Condominiums; storm water runoff; water level of the Hampton Bog and the proposed traffic signal at Marsh Pointe Drive & West Centre Avenue. Mr. DeNooyer responded that the proposed building could assist with reducing noise levels from West Centre Avenue. Mr. DeNooyer also stated that the storm water management of the site is under review, but does not see

any potential adverse impacts the proposed development proposal. Installation of the traffic signal would need to be coordinated with the city.

Commissioner Joshi inquired with the applicant regarding the need to change the current property designation from commercial to residential. Commissioner Joshi also expressed concerns with traffic congestion and indicated that the proposed designation may not be the right use for this particular parcel. Mr. DeNooyer responded to Commissioner Joshi and indicated that market change has made the proposed project necessary. Mr. DeNooyer reiterated the high demand for a mixed-use development, such as the current proposal. Mr. DeNooyer explained a proposal involving the redesign of the Woodbridge Shopping Village parking lot to increase safety of pedestrians and reduce traffic congestion. Mr. DeNooyer also summarized construction of an outdoor plaza area.

Commissioner Fries indicated that a hotel on this parcel would generate more vehicle traffic than the proposed project.

Commissioner Baldwin concurred with Commissioner Joshi's concerns regarding traffic congestion and traffic flow. Mr. DeNooyer responded to Commissioner Baldwin that any traffic increase will be minimal and in conjunction with parking lot updates, should be mitigated.

Commissioner Pezzoli expressed concerns with traffic congestion and signaling the intersection of Marsh Pointe Drive and West Centre Avenue. Commissioner Pezzoli noted that traffic already backs up on West Centre during peak hours and an additional signal may only exacerbate the problem. Commissioner Pezzoli also expressed concerns with the elevation change between the proposed project and Marsh Pointe Condominiums to the north and the proposed residential density being out of character for this area. Mr. DeNooyer responded to Commissioner Pezzoli by reviewing the proposed surface parking lot to the north of the proposed project, which would reduce the grade change between the two developments. Mr. DeNooyer also reiterated the desire for a type of residential development in this area of Woodbridge Hills.

Chairman Corradini opened the public hearing. Julie Place, on behalf of Marisa Royster, 4076 West Centre Avenue #211, phoned in and expressed concerns with the proposed project disturbing this peaceful and enjoyable area of Portage. Ms. Place indicated that the proposed project would be too densely populated and would prefer to see a two-story residential building instead of the proposed three-story. There being no further public comment, a motion was made by Commissioner Joshi, seconded by Commissioner Myer to close the public hearing. Upon roll call vote, Joshi (yes); Fries (yes); Corradini (yes); Pezzoli (yes); Baldwin (yes); Myer (yes); Freiman (yes). The motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Joshi commented that the density of the proposed project seems extreme for the size of the parcel and would prefer to see a project with less density.

Chairperson Corradini thanked Mr. DeNooyer for the presentation and all the residents who voiced their concerns about the proposed project. Chairperson Corradini indicated support for the project and commented that the impact of such a project will benefit the city.

Commissioner Myer commented that housing trends are shifting to high density, low land impact and voiced support of the proposed project.

Commissioner Baldwin commend that a two-story development would fit the parcel better and would allow for lower density.

Commissioner Fries commented that the projects completed in the past by Mr. DeNooyer have had a great impact on the area and viewed this project as another positive addition to the Woodbridge Hills area.

Commissioner Fries motioned, seconded by Commissioner Myer, to recommend to City Council that the Woodbridge Hills Tentative Plan Amendment be approved subject to the following conditions: 1) development standards be established consistent with attached tentative plan and the written narrative; 2) the requested density modification be approved to allow 41.3 units/acre (up to 60 total units on 1.45 acres) for this phase of the development; 3) the requested building setback modifications be approved to allow a setback distance of 10 feet from the west property line and 20 feet from the south and east property lines so as to avoid encroachment into the existing sanitary sewer easement; 4) applicant confirms they have the authority to use the easement area prior (Marsh Point Drive) prior to site plan approval; and 5) specific site design details, such as storm water, utilities, traffic and so forth, be finalized with submittal of the final (site) plan for this phase of the project. Upon roll call

vote, Joshi (no); Fries (yes); Corradini (yes); Pezzoli (no); Baldwin (yes); Myer (yes); Freiman (yes). Motion approved 5-2.

NEW BUSINESS

FY2021-2031 Capital Improvement Program - Deputy Director Forth provided an overview of the FY2021-31 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Deputy Director Forth informed the Commissioners of formatting changes to the FY2021-31 CIP compared to those prepared in prior years. These changes include combining the Streets and Sidewalk categories, creating a Bikeway and Trailway category, including project costs on the project profiles, and fiscal years 6-10 were combined since projects in these years are more for planning purposes and subject to change from year-to-year. Deputy Director Forth summarized the FY2021-22 projects in each category. Deputy Director Forth indicated these are the first year projects and if the CIP is approved by City Council, these projects will be funded and completed. Mr. Forth also highlighted various projects set to take place in the coming years. Director Peterson provided further details to the Commission regarding current and proposed projects for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year and how City Administration is focusing on closing out ongoing projects prior to beginning any new undertakings.

Chairperson Corradini thanked staff for assembling FY2021-31 Capital Improvement Program. Chairperson Corradini noted a significant amount of City Administration time and effort is devoted to this annual project. There being no further discussion involving the proposed FY2021-31 CIP, Chairperson Corradini motioned, and seconded by Commissioner Fries, to recommend to City Council the FY2021-2031 Capital Improvement Program be approved. Upon roll call vote, Joshi (yes); Fries (yes); Corradini (yes); Pezzoli (yes); Baldwin (yes); Myer (yes); Freiman (yes). Motion approved 7-0.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS/COMMISSIONERS

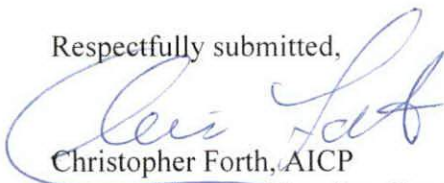
Commissioner Fries asked about the status of the Master Plan Update. Deputy Director Forth indicated that Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) were sent out to consulting firms and several have been received. The qualifications of these firms are being reviewed. The update process will begin before the end of this fiscal year.

Chairperson Corradini thanked the Department of Public Works staff members for their prompt attention and dedication to ensuring Portage roads were cleared of the recent snow/ice accumulation.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Baldwin, seconded by Commissioner Freiman to adjourn the meeting. Upon roll call vote, Joshi (yes); Fries (yes); Corradini (yes); Pezzoli (yes); Baldwin (yes); Myer (yes); Freiman (yes). The motion passed 7-0. The regularly scheduled meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher Forth, AICP

Deputy Director, Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services