MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY OF ROMULUS PLANNING
COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Freitag at 5:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call Showing: Jerry Frederick, Mike Glotfelty, Daniel McAnally, David Paul, Michael Prybyla, Celeste Roscoe, Edna Talon-Jemison, Melvin Zilka, and Cathy Freitag

   Also in attendance: Carol Maise, City Planner; Marcus McNamara, OHM, Engineering Consultant; and Merrie Druyor, Community Development Administrative Coordinator

3. Motion by Zilka supported by Roscoe to approve the agenda as presented. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Zilka, Roscoe, Prybyla, McAnally, Talon-Jemison, Frederick, Glotfelty, Paul, and Freitag. Nays – none. Motion Carried.

   Agenda

   • Pledge of Allegiance
   • Roll Call
   • Approval of Agenda
   • New Business


      (Action required: Approval, approval with conditions or denial of the site plan.)

   • Adjournment


   Dan Uebelhor, Project Manager, Insite Real Estate, 1400 16th Street, Suite 300, Oak Brook, IL 60523, stepped forward on behalf of the applicant to provide a PowerPoint presentation and an overview of the project [PowerPoint has been attached].

   Chairperson Freitag opened up the meeting to questions and comments from the board.

   • Carol Maise, City Planner stated one of the questions may be the amount of trailer storage proposed, which may tie into some of the other questions the board may have, and that Insite would be able to answer those.
   • Mr. Glotfelty commented that he is excited about the project and that a lot of money must have been spent on the traffic study. He noted his concern with the traffic and that he would really like to see a deceleration lane put in. He believes it is needed now as he travels Wahrman Road several times a day at all times of the day and sees the level of traffic existing now.
• Mr. Uebelhor questioned a deceleration lane coming Eureka and going south.
• Mr. Uebelhor wanted to clarify and asked rather a lane for traffic coming from the south going north?
• Mr. Glotfelter stated north bound heading south.
• Mr. Uebelhor understood and noted this would be for traffic from the north heading south; Mr. Glotfelter thought a deceleration lane is needed.
• Mr. Glotfelter answered a passing lane on the right
• Mr. Uebelhor asked about the opposite side of the road.
• Mr. Glotfelter said he’d like to see them on both sides, but he feels traffic is only going to continue to get worse with the other building that is going on the west side.
• Mr. Uebelhor responded that there is a middle “suicide” lane; a left turn lane for south bound traffic to turn in.
• Mr. Glotfelter said yes there is a center lane, but with a 53 foot trailer you have what you call a “tail swing”, the trailer could swing out and hit a car.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated he feels this shouldn’t be a problem for Insite to put in.
• Mr. Uebelhor questioned improvement on the opposite side of the road.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated yes, it is needed on both sides. He also mentioned that when a truck turns in, the trailer doesn’t always follow in, the trailer can kick out. He feels a right lane is needed there for southbound traffic.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated he doesn’t believe the traffic study will work in the real world and a passing lane or a deceleration lane should be provided.
• Mr. Uebelhor replied that this passing lane would have to cut into the properties across the street and it would impact their driveways that currently exist and he doesn’t know that there would be room within that right away. He has spoken with Marcus the city engineer about the acceleration lane coming out from the driveway and heading northbound, but southbound with a middle turn lane would make it a double wide passing lane which could be confusing and problematic.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated it would improve the flow there since the traffic is busy there at all times of the day and that he travels it at all times of the day.
• Mr. Uebelhor responded that he has the traffic study that was done that shows they have 2.6 trucks per hour coming in, so there is not that many trucks and the level of service continues to operate at acceptable levels.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated its heavy now it’s going to get worse before it will get better.
• Mr. Glotfelter also noted that it’s a little bit of storm pipe, no major expense as long as utilities are not in the way it shouldn’t be a problem.

Michael Larsen, Managing Director of Development at Insite Real Estate, 1400 16th Street, Suite 300, Oak Brook, IL 60523 stepped forward on behalf of Wahrman Road Industrial Buildings.

• Mr. Larsen stated he wanted to clarify what is being asked, the widening of the road on both sides?
• Mr. Uebelhor if the Commission wanted to widen the west side of the road.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated yes, he’d like to have it on the east side of the road also, as long as the utilities aren’t in the way, it shouldn’t be a problem.
• Mr. Uebelhor questioned if on the east side, would be an acceleration lane coming out of the site be most appropriate.
• Mr. Glotfelter stated yes and it would give traffic time to merge in.
• Mr. Larsen relied the issue on the east side is there is a utility line that is across the road, as well as a 30-inch gas main that runs along there which makes some potential physical constraints. However
it wouldn’t keep them from putting in the lane but would keep them from relocating any overhead utility poles that would be required to do to put in the lane.

- Mr. Uebelhor added that without any physical constraints they could definitely consider it, but on the west side of the road this could have a major impact on the existing driveways, and he doesn’t think the traffic study warrants it. It is not required by the city’s engineering standards given the trip generation.

- Mr. Glotfety stated that a lot of money has been spent on traffic studies but the real world tells him if it doesn’t work right now, when a truck turns and the tail swings out you don’t want to be anywhere near that.

- Mr. Glotfety questioned if the traffic study was performed by satellite, since he hadn’t seen any counter strips.

Julie Kroll of Fleis & Vanderbrink 27725 Stansbury Blvd., Suite 150 Farmington Hills, MI 48334, came forward to go over the traffic study and to answer any questions the board may have.

- Ms. Kroll answered they used cameras to collect the data, they no longer use counter strip and they did collect turning movement counts along Wahrman. The road is a Class A Road, and is designed to accommodate trucks. It is 12 feet wide on the east side with a center left turn lane and a 12 foot wide lane on the west side.

- Ms. Kroll stated if they were to put in a lane as discussed, but it would be very confusing for drivers and you could end up with potential side swiped crashes, because people wouldn’t understand what this additional lane is for and then it goes away in this three lane section. They don’t add passing lanes on three lane roadways; widening it to a five lane section or a four lane road is done but you wouldn’t make it a three lane road with a passing lane.

- Mr. Kroll stated that Marcus may have comments on road design.

- Mr. McNamara replied that Ms. Kroll is correct, Wahrman Road when it was rebuilt by the City was designed to accommodate truck traffic. It would be no different than if a truck was sitting at a left turn light with a through lane next to it.

- Mr. Glotfety responded that there are plenty of places in the city that should have had the turn lanes but we don’t have them and he’s trying to solve a problem before one is created. There are many places in this community where they should have been installed.

- Mr. McNamara commented that he is not aware of any that have road design standards that would have an eyebrow to accommodate. If the truck is maintaining their lane and turning in the way they should be, they shouldn’t be crossing back over to the right as they turn left. They may but at that point it becomes an enforcement issue that the truck is not maintaining lane integrity.

- Ms. Kroll stated as far as volumes, there are very small volumes of trucks in and out of this driveway; approximately 7 in an hour.

- Mr. McNamara noted that the warrants for a signal or stop sign is based on volumes and the design standards and traffic control manual are very clear that if you don’t meet those warrants, those types of things should not be installed because they result in safety issues. For example, if you install a stop sign where is not warranted, people learn that and start to run it and then there are crashes. This is a little bit different when you start talking about deceleration and acceleration lanes since there are thresholds where they are absolutely necessary. The criteria is both the traffic generated by the purpose used and the background traffic that is already in place. Essentially if you don’t meet that warrant or that threshold, it’s not an absolute necessity but it doesn’t hurt.

- Mr. McNamara stated they did talk to the applicant after Carol made them aware of Mr. Glotfety’s concerns, and as Dan has mentioned they agree that it makes sense if at all possible to include an acceleration lane for trucks headed out to the north from the site. There will need to be a small
modification to the south side of the entrance to alien with that lane, but they don’t believe it’s possible to get a full deceleration lane because of the proximity of the neighboring parcel. He noted that actually the right-of-way does not exist.

- Mr. McNamara noted there is a limitation on the right-of-way and in addition to that, all the site truck traffic generated is from the north and they would be very few if any truck trips coming from the south.

- Mr. Uebelhor stated if necessary they could accommodate the acceleration lane as long as the utility constraints don’t keep them from doing it. To Marcus’s point, he doesn’t think it’s even possible given the right-of-way constraints, and there may not be much benefit given the fact that most of the traffic is going to be coming from the north heading south. To Julie’s point, from a safety standpoint he doesn’t think it makes sense to add just a passing lane; if you’re going to worry about safety, you need to widen the whole road. This is Class A Road and is designed to accommodate trucks turning left and any issues would be because the driver took the swing to wide.

- Mr. Larsen stated that aside from the technical merits, he understands and agrees to add an acceleration lane on the east side going northbound provided there are no physical constraints with right-of-way and utilities.

- Mr. Glotfeltly stated at minimum he would appreciate that, and second of all it will save the curb from being torn up. It would help with the flow.

- Mr. McNamara pointed out the situation where the truck may be inclined to cheat if they are turning in but this is mitigated by the fact that it is a relatively wide throat and there are two lanes on the inbound and as trucks get further in, they have a storage and staging area. Between that and adding the acceleration lane that should provide more than enough width to where he believes it would be very unlikely that they would need to cheat to get into the site.

- Mr. Glotfeltly asked if they had any problem putting an acceleration lane on the eastbound side.

- Mr. Larsen answered no they do not, provided the physical constraints of the right-of-way, and the utilities that they will look into with engineering.

- Mr. Paul questioned the 10.6 delay on Wahrman regarding the employees in the traffic study report.

- Ms. Kroll answered it is 10.6 seconds.

- Mr. Paul stated it isn’t much of a difference between trucks and employees.

- Ms. Kroll stated yes it is very minimal, 10.6 seconds per vehicle.

- Ms. Freitag questioned the report from Marcus regarding the additional clarification on the daily operations from the applicant to justify the proposed number of truck staging spaces in relation to the daily truck volumes.

- Mr. Uebelhor said the simple answer is they want as much parking as they can get and they are preparing for a worst case scenario and a backup that is not anticipated such as a backup that was caused by something in the facility created a delay in the trucks not getting in on time as planned. In that event, if there were only a few, five, ten stalls provided could cause a backup of trucks onto Wahrman Road and they do not want that for safety reasons. Having that many spaces can at minimum have the trucks come in they have somewhere to go in there is an unforeseen backup. At any given time they do not see all the stalls being used. He stated there are two inbound truck lanes and there will be two types of trucks that will be coming into this facility. One type is for this tenant and specific user - they come through the left most lane and they check into the guard house and then proceed to where they gate is. There will also be third party trucks that come into the facility and they may not necessarily know what dock they are going to be at so they would need to back into a spot, radio in to the guard shack or they walk into the guard shack to check in and would then find out what dock they are to go to. These third party trucks could be there for seconds, minutes, possibly hours, it will just depend and this gets back to the worst case scenario for an unforeseen back up. It comes down to the space is there and they just want to be safe.
• Ms. Freitag stated we wanted clarification and you gave it to us.
• Mr. Frederick questioned if the phase two building would be similar to the phase one.
• Mr. Uebelhor answered similar in nature, height, and colors noting the colors may change based on the tenants’ branding. It is an industrial zoned property with no rezoning required and in general it would be a similar facility.
• Mr. Larsen stated this is being looked at being developed as a logistics center so it would be harmonious between the two facilities.
• Mr. Frederick stated the only reason he asked is because we just approved something for this site and it was with six buildings all very similar.
• Ms. Maise clarified the board is only approving phase one at this time; phase two will come back to the Planning Commission. Phase two will be undeveloped and left undisturbed until such time they come back for approval on phase two.
• Mr. Frederick questioned the dual entrance, is it just their employee entrance off of Wayne Road for cars only? Trucks would never exit out that way?
• Mr. Uebelhor stated correct, trucks would never come in that way.
• Mr. Frederick questioned if phase two trucks would use the same driveway off of Wahrman or a new driveway.
• Mr. Uebelhor answered a new driveway. He apologized that the driveway doesn’t show up very well on the screen. A new driveway and curb cut is proposed on the north end of the site below the Carter Drain and it would allow traffic to circulate around the building. They have a couple users looking this building so it could potentially be a one or two tenant building so they have accommodated a conceptual parking layout if it were to go to two users as another maxed out scenario could park it to code and not need any relief and provide adequate circulation all the way around the building that would meet city standards and fire codes as well.
• Mr. Glotfelty questioned if there were any plans for onsite fuel.
• Mr. Uebelhor stated no not at this time.
• Mr. Paul questioned if the water would be tied in as a loop.
• Mr. Uebelhor answered yes.
• Mr. Paul stated that once they are all done they may need to put in more landscaping for blocking the trees.
• Mr. Uebelhor stated yes that has been addressed as one of the conditions, and certainly would if it were determined by staff after an inspection that more screening was necessary. The one view that may be an issue would be coming northbound on Wahrman from the south where there is a little section where they’ve added some evergreen trees as an additional buffer that would screen the view from the trucks. Every view from the site is pretty heavily vegetated but in the event there is an issue with view corridors they would certainly address it.
• Mr. Zilka asked if they have any plans of cleaning the Carter Drain across from their property.
• Mr. Uebelhor stated he was unaware it needed to be cleaned and questioned if there are issues.
• Mr. Zilka stated the Crain drain that runs into the Carter Drain, he stated it hasn’t been cleaned in several years. He stated if you put your retention basin in the Carter Drain and the other business it eventually drains into the Blakely Drain.
• Mr. Mott answered that right now there is no plan or discussions with the Drain Commission to clean the drain. The site has been designed to detain there 100 year storm event which we have also included for the phase two. This is done to restrict the discharge from the site into an agricultural rate, so you’ll actually have similar flows from what is currently there with a 100 year storm event. We have had discussions with the Drain Commission which has been reviewed and approved for the previous development, and we are basically doing what we had before and it will be reviewed by them.
- Mr. McNamara stated this is a pumped outlet so you are not relying on gravity the elevation of the outlet can be higher than if it were gravity system so if the drain does have a backup you have extra protection.
- Mr. Mott stated that is correct because the storage elevation is down so there would be additional storage on top we do not even account for this in this development.
- Mr. Zilka asked who controls the flow of the water out of that retention basin.
- Mr. Mott stated it is based on Wayne County requirements, because we are draining into a Wayne County drain, they have set it up that we are only allowed to discharge 1.5 CFS breaker which is their agricultural rate.
- Mr. Zilka expressed his concern for those residents who live at the end of Blakely Drain in the event of a flood would be the ones to suffer for it.
- Mr. Mott stated the purpose of the retention pond is to hold that water to a point so that it allows for a majority of that flow to get downstream released at that slower rate and discharges the pond over a 24-40 hour period. It’s held in there longer to allow water to get through the system so it has a restricted outlet to it.
- Mr. Zilka stated he’ll have to live with it, but he will be talking to the Drain Commission.
- Mr. Mott stated that is why the County is making the new developments put in these 100 year storm retention ponds to help relieve some of these issues that could happen.
- Mr. McAnally asked this is a refrigerated building is there a backup generator onsite.
- Mr. Larsen answered yes there is one backup generator along with an automatic transfer switch as an added protection if anything were to happen to the generator they could also bring in a mobile generators and plug into the building as another added protection.
- Mr. Prybyla commented that whoever is to make the motion that #7 is the acceleration lane.
- Mr. Prybyla also stated he would like the trees to be planted back far enough to allow for growth.
- Mr. Uebelhor stated yes, they want to plant trees to screen the storage spaces from view but not to block views that cause a safety issue. He stated they will be very selective and cognoscente of where they put the trees but they want to accomplish the mission to screen the unsightly things and keep views open for safety.

Motion by Glotfelty supported by Prybyla to approve the Site Plan for SPR-2017-016; Wahrman Road Industrial Buildings subject to:

1. Waivers to the following:
   a. The driveway spacing requirements of Section 14.06 between the proposed driveway on Wahrman Road and the driveways on the west side of the street.
   b. The waste receptacle enclosure requirement of Section 13.06 since a compactor will be utilized and located in the truck dock area.

2. A variance to the natural features (wetland) setback requirement in the locations as identified on the site plan.

3. Verification from the applicant that the number of anticipated daily truck trips in relation to the amount of trailer storage proposed is appropriate.

4. Sidewalks adjacent to parking and trailer storage areas must be 7 feet in width or designed to accommodate vehicle overhang.

5. If truck and trailer parking is visible from the roadway as determined during a site inspection upon completion of construction, adding new plantings for screening will be required.
6. Any other items identified by the ARC committee being addressed during engineering/building review.

7. Attempts shall be made to accommodate an acceleration lane on the east side of Wahrman Road for northbound truck traffic.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Glotfelty, Prybyla, Paul, Frederick, Talon-Jemison, McAnally, Roscoe, Zilka, and Freitag. Nays – None. Motion Carried.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Zilka supported by Paul to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Zilka, Paul, Glotfelty, Frederick, Talon-Jemison, McAnally, Roscoe, Prybyla, and Freitag. Nays – None. Motion Carried.

David Paul, Secretary
City of Romulus Planning Commission