MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY OF ROMULUS PLANNING COMMISSION HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 21, 2018

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Freitag at 6:47 p.m.

2. Roll Call Showing: Jerry Frederick, Mike Glotfelty, Daniel McAnally, Edna Talon-Jemison, Celeste Roscoe, Dave Paul and Cathy Freitag

   Excused: Jessica Workman and Melvin Zilka

   Also in attendance: Carol Maise, City Planner; Brad Strader, MKSK Studios; Jessica Katers, OHM Advisors; and Christina Wilson, Planning Secretary

3. Motion by McAnally supported by Roscoe to approve the agenda as presented.

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

   Agenda

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

4. New Business

5. Adjournment

4. New Business

A. City of Romulus Master Plan Amendment – Vining Road Development District

   Brad Strader, MKSK, 4219 Woodward, Suite 305, Detroit, MI 48201 showed the commissioners a PowerPoint presentation of options regarding possible future land use designations of the Vining Road Development District.

   • Mr. Strader passed out maps to the commissioners with different land use options.

   • Mr. Strader commented that based on the Vining Road Market Study, our knowledge of the Vining Road area, and market trends, it appears that everyone is in agreement that the Regional Center commercial zoning designation covers too big of an area for the market and the commission needs to figure out appropriate use areas and they need to determine the best spots to retain the Regional Commercial.

   • Mr. Strader noted that during the City Council/Planning Commission joint meeting he asked to see a show of hands on what they would like to see in this district like shopping, the need tax base, fiscal impact, etc. The commissioners raised their hand on one important thing which is jobs.

   • Mr. Strader commented that the truck traffic and routing was a key consideration discussed by the Planning Commission at the joint meeting with the City Council however they didn’t really raise their hands as much on that as they did the jobs.
Mr. Strader stated that truck doors facing major streets and some of the feeling that he received from the commissioners was that they would like to have places to go and shop, tax base is important, we don’t want uses that generate lots of trucks in the district. The screening needs to be there if there are dock doors facing streets and that some of those uses should be in a part of this district. The building aesthetics, architecture and landscaping is important.

Mr. Strader asked the commissioners if there was anything else that they thought was important to them in regards to the Vining Road District. He noted that there was mention of some area being designated residential. If the Regional Commercial “red” is going away on the map, it doesn’t mean that it all has to be warehousing.

Mr. Strader mentioned that he worked on a chart with Ms. Maise that shows land use and zoning intensity of uses. This chart doesn’t show every use in the ordinance and there are a lot of other uses that are not listed. These uses on the chart are maybe some of the ones that the commissioners may want to adjust. These include: Restaurant/Retail, Office/Conference Space/Research + Technology Labs (research and technology labs only allowed in the M-1 and M-2), Gas Stations (for personal vehicles, no commercial trucks), Advanced Manufacturing (e.g., specific manufacturing of parts using advanced technology and light manufacturing such as breweries and bicycles), Warehouse – large scale storage for items other than trucks, Crossdocks (truck doors on both sides to streamline loading process – doors must not be facing the road in M-1 and they must be set back 200 feet in M-2), General Manufacturing, Truck Terminals (high truck activity and parking, small buildings), Truck Stops (truck refueling and rest station; including diesel fuel).

Mr. Strader went through each slide with explanation and discussion.

Office/Research: They heard from the market study was that there has not been a big demand for this use and he thinks that the feeling and some feedback that he received from the commissioners is that office/research could be used at the interchange where it has visibility or around the lake. Some type of residential could also take advantage of the lake but not a warehouse with a lot of truck doors. A higher level of building and site design along the lake and more restricted uses should be required.

Mr. McAnally stated that they would like to take advantage of the water at the lake and the amenities that are there because it is for people to enjoy, not a truck terminal.

Mr. Strader took note that should be more people focused and not trucks.

Mr. Glotfelty commented that the lake area could also be used for restaurants.

Mr. McAnally stated that he likes how Commerce Township is mixing a lot of different uses, or trying to, in one area.

Mr. Strader commented that maybe we end up with an overlay district that has design standards including pedestrian-orientated with open space and walkways; Tim Keyes uses the term “campus”.

Gas Stations/Truck Stops: Everyone seems to be in agreement that they didn’t want to see truck stops in the district but Mr. Strader asked what they thought about gas stations?

Mr. McAnally commented that he would think that it would be a complementary usage.

Mr. Paul commented that it would be for residential use.

Mr. Strader stated that it would have to be away from residential but in the right spot.
Mr. Strader mentioned that he had a feeling that truck stops are not wanted and that there are other places in the city for them.

Ms. Maise asked if truck fueling centers would be a consideration. She commented that the commissioners amended the ordinance last year to add this use; not a truck stop but fueling stations for trucks.

Chairperson Freitag commented no.

Ms. Maise asked the commissioners for clarification on diesel fueling because they amended the ordinance last year to allow gas stations for trucks having diesel fuel which would be bigger service stations. Provisions were added into the M-1 District that would allow them with conditions. Access management and circulation is critical.

Mr. McAnally commented that if you look at a Speedway gas station, it isn’t catering to diesel but it does have diesel fuel.

Ms. Maise replied that it isn’t big enough for semi-trucks.

Mr. Strader and the commissioners agreed that diesel fuel as an accessory use is acceptable but gas stations in the district should be primarily an auto use.

Ms. Maise noted that it would then tie into the design standards. She reminded the commissioners that they did add in some good design standards for that section of the ordinance.

Mr. Strader stated that he got the sense that this would be a higher design standard than the rest and if we’re going to make the concession of widening the uses allowed, then the design standards need to go up.

Mr. Glotfelty commented that getting back to the campus type development, he would like to see some sidewalks in there and possibly a park.

Mr. Frederick noted that it should have a concentration of hard woods as well, not just ornamental trees. He referred to the six acres of hardwoods currently at Smith and Vining and he understands that they would be leveled for anything that goes there but that six acres of trees should be reestablished.

Mr. Strader noted that they could require distinct landscape standards.

**Light Manufacturing/Industrial:** Mr. Strader noted that this is not crossdocks.

Chairperson Freitag asked if light industrial would be all the way down to Wick.

Mr. McAnally replied that it would be right up to it.

Mr. Paul mentioned that it was a little concerning.

Chairperson Freitag agreed and suggested that the Wick Road frontage not be light industrial, to keep it open for commercial.

Mr. Strader agreed and suggested that hotels could tie back into the hotels along Merriman and possibly some other entertainment options.

Mr. McAnally also agreed and stated that he would like it if it could be parcelled out right so that it’s viable. He noted that this location doesn’t have the regional center like on the other side of the water.
• Mr. Strader reviewed the maps with the suggestions from the commissioners depicting the desired uses and districts for the region.

• Ms. Maise asked the commissioners to confirm the mixed use option.

• Mr. Strader stated that none of the maps that he has on the screen is exactly what the commissioners are looking for; it would be a combination of the 4 maps.

• Mr. McAnally asked the commissioners how they felt if they were to extend the boundaries of the light industrial to the east and keeping the frontage along Wick open.

• Mr. Paul commented as long as it doesn’t interfere with the hotels there.

• Mr. McAnally asked if they would go that far.

• Mr. Strader commented that he will come back with a map and draw boundaries on an aerial with an outline of what the design standards would be to clarify what mixed use means.

• The commissioners agreed and Mr. McAnally stated that they believe that they all know what they don’t want.

➢ Crossdocks: These are the buildings that have doors on both sides of the building. These have more of an impact visually and would be a use more acceptable in the medium industrial district not on Wick, Vining and Smith and behind other uses.

• Mr. McAnally stated that the crossdocks would have to be buffered.

• Ms. Maise asked Mr. Strader to clarify if the crossdocks could face the road with a deep setback or are docks allowed on both sides of the building, no matter the orientation.

• Mr. Strader replied that he believes that the feeling from the commissioners is that the dock doors would not face Wick, Vining or Smith.

• Ms. Maise reminded the commissioners to keep in mind that Amazon was designed to accommodate docks on both sides of the building.

• Mr. McAnally commented that he would imagine that if the commissioners set the design standards so that the buildings are looking decent up front that there is a certain amount of the dock doors that we may have to consider.

• Ms. Maise suggested that this is something that the commissioners would want to look at to make sure that the setbacks are far enough from the road. She referenced the Ashley Capital development on Van Born Road where the berm is so tall and the landscaping is grown so that you cannot tell that those are docks facing the road. She noted that there are two cases on the next BZA agenda with requests for overhead doors on the front elevation. These include D&G Phase 2 and they are actually going to utilize glass since they are smaller overhead doors needed for a certain tenant. As part of the variance, conditions can be included like screening and with glass it’s going to look a lot better than just a whole bank of overhead doors. She thinks that the design standards are going to help noting that crossdocks are a very desirable use. Screening is certainly going to be necessary if the whole intent is to not see them. She asked if there were other reasons the city would not want to allow them. If there is anything else about them, maybe they are not generating enough employment for example, or any other reasons why they city would want to limit crossdocks.

• Mr. Glotfelty stated that the city is getting too truck heavy.
• Ms. Maise asked if the concerns is more about the particular users and truck traffic that they generate as well as the appearance.

• Mr. Glotfelty commented that it was both and he wants them a couple hundred feet away from the road also.

• Ms. Maise commented that it is the standard now.

• Mr. McAnally stated that the city may have to give up some of the wants to get something in return, which he understands as long as the applicant is screening it and setting them back off of the roadways, the commissioners can work with it.

• Mr. Paul commented that it also depends on the size of the building as well.

• Mr. Strader commented that there could be enough oriented where the dock doors are on the east and west of the building and the north and south sides of the building have offices or don’t have doors. It’s a matter of if it’s the use that you don’t want to see or the aesthetics of the use. It’s kind of a combination. It’s hard to say if the applicant is going to only generate 250 trucks a day, which isn’t a high number but, still higher than what commercial would have. Once the use is in and inside it starts changing, we can’t control that number of trucks; it could be 275, 350, or 400 trips. He mentioned that he asked Steve Dearing from OHM to show a table of different types of industrial uses and what ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) shows is what truck trips they would generate and he thinks it would be a good thing to show impact of trucks and truck routings.

• Mr. Strader continued the overall discussion and reminded the commission that right now the Master Plan doesn’t show Vining Road as a truck route. It shows Ecorse as a truck route but not Vining. If some of these industrial uses are going to be considered, Vining would need to be classified as a truck route.

• Mr. Paul asked Mr. Strader if Vining Road is being built to standards for a truck route.

• Mr. Strader replied yes.

• Mr. Frederick stated that it is a Class A road.

• Ms. Maise noted that if they determine that Vining is not a truck route it would be significant and would impact land uses that can go in there. If it’s not a truck route, industrial uses cannot be considered.

• Mr. Strader commented that the city could only consider industrial uses if the city is going to change the map to include it as a truck route. He doesn’t believe that City Council ever adopted the truck route as an ordinance. It was part of the Master Plan but never got adopted by City Council.

• Mr. Strader informed the commissioners that he will have the map drawn up on an aerial and they can outline some design standards at their next meeting. He thanked the commissioners for their time and asked if they had any more questions.

• The commissioners agreed.

• M. Glotfelty complained that he felt that all of them dropped the ball with the design standards when it came to Mopar’s building.

• The commissioners all agreed and commented that they weren’t happy with the color of the building. Mr. Frederick stated that it’s a very shocking color.
• Ms. Maise stated that the building is 500,000-sq. ft. and significantly setback from I-275 with the wetland area in front including a lot of trees. She recalled that the commission was pretty comfortable that things were going to be screened however there was concern about the visibility of the docks. Mopar's trademark color was on the plans however it may have looked different on the renderings.

• Chairperson Freitag commented that it seems more intense because the building is so close to Pennsylvania.

• Ms. Talon-Jemison asked Mr. Strader that when doing the future land use map to keep in mind that light industrial at the northwest side is abutting The Preserves of Romulus and the residents are likely not looking to have industrial uses in their back yard.

• Mr. Strader agreed and commented that they are going to show that area as mixed use.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Roscoe supported by McAnally to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 p.m. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Roscoe, McAnally, Talon-Jemison, Frederick, Glotfelty, Paul & Freitag. Nays – None. Motion Carried.

[Signature]

David Paul, Secretary
City of Romulus Planning Commission