MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY OF ROMULUS PLANNING
COMMISSION HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2017

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Freitag at 4:00 p.m.

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

   Excused: Michael Prybyla

   Also in attendance: Carol Maise, City Planner, Brad Strader, MKSK, Steven Hitchcock, GMA Law, and Christina Wilson, Planning Secretary

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

   Agenda

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

4. Public Hearings

   A. RZ-2017-003; Project Mercury, requesting a proposed amendment to the City of Romulus Zoning Map to conditionally rezone 84.7 acres of property from the current designation of RC, Regional Center District to M-1, Light Industrial District to allow for the development of an 857,000-sq. ft. warehouse/distribution/delivery building on portions of Parcel #80-038-99-0001-000, #80-038-99-0002-701, and #80-038-99-0004-703.

      (Action required: hold a public hearing on the conditional rezoning request.)

5. New Business

   A. RZ-2017-003; Project Mercury requesting a proposed amendment to the City of Romulus Zoning Map to conditionally rezone 84.7 acres of property from the current designation of RC, Regional Center District to M-1, Light Industrial District to allow for the development of an 857,000-sq. ft. warehouse/distribution/delivery building on portions of Parcel #80-038-99-0001-000, #80-038-99-0002-701, and #80-038-99-0004-703.

      (Action required: Recommendation of approval, approval with conditions or denial of the conditional rezoning request to the City Council.)

   B. SPR-2017-013; Project Mercury requesting site plan approval for the development of an 857,000-sq. ft. warehouse/distribution/delivery building on portions of Parcel #80-038-99-0001-000, #80-038-99-0002-701, and #80-038-99-0004-703. Zoning – RC, Regional Center District (proposed changed to conditional M-1, Light Industrial District.)
(Action required: Approval, approval with conditions or denial of the site plan.)

6. Adjournment

4. Public Hearings

A. RZ-2017-003; **Project Mercury**, requesting a proposed amendment to the City of Romulus Zoning Map to conditionally rezone 84.7 acres of property from the current designation of RC, Regional Center District to M-1, Light Industrial District to allow for the development of an 857,000-sq. ft. warehouse/distribution/delivery building on portions of Parcel #80-038-99-0001-000, #80-038-99-0002-701, and #80-038-99-0004-703

Brad Strader, MKSK, 681 West Forest Street, Detroit, MI 48201, consultant to the City of Romulus, gave a brief overview of the project.

- Mr. Strader explained that the site is currently zoned RC-Regional Center District. The site is on the south side of Ecorse Road, just east of what would be Vining Road, extended. The request is for a large scale distribution center that would be under the M-1, Light Industrial District. The site and the area along I-94 to Ecorse Road is zoned RC-Regional Center District and was originally envisioned to be a mixed use with hotels, office, restaurants, with residential and possibly some lighter industrial uses with research as one big center. Over the years there have been a number of requests under the RC-Regional Center District, or what’s been called “the planned development district,” like the horse track and outlet mall, for example and none of these projects worked out. The Planning Commission has looked at this site over the last couple of years to see if any of the projects were right for the zoning. The City has just readopted the new Master Plan and this area has been discussed specifically because there has been requests for (3) warehousing buildings on this site and the Planning Commission felt uncomfortable with that rezoning because of the concern with the amount of trucks traveling down Ecorse Road. Also, with the new investment in Vining Road, the trucks traveling there as well. This could detract from future commercial development, residential and other types of uses. Therefore, that applicant did not proceed.

- Mr. Strader stated that this new applicant is proposing a use that has not been proposed in the past. The type of use that the applicant is proposing will bring a large number of employees, from 1,600 to 3,500 employees. Therefore, the amount of traffic will be mostly employees and about a third trucks, which is a lot less than the previous use. When zoning to an M-1, Light Industrial use, any other M-1, Light Industrial uses could be allowed and the city, Planning Commission and City Council were concerned that it could produce a lot of trucks and would have a negative impact on the current residential use and not be a stimulant and could possibly be a deterrent to the other types uses that the city would like to see along Vining Road.

- There is a provision in the State law and City Ordinance called a conditional rezoning, which allows an applicant conditions to say that they will rezone the property but, we’ll put restrictions on the M-1 property. The Planning Commission was concerned about the road improvements needed so, the applicant has made a commitment as part of the rezoning to make road improvements. The Planning Commission was also concerned about the use changing in the future. The applicant is offering provision that if the use changes in the future they will have new traffic studies done with analysis and new approvals from the Planning Commission.
and City Council. There are also timing issues so, if this use doesn’t go forward this use would go back to RC-Regional Center District.

- These restrictions are in a conditional rezoning agreement provided to the City of Romulus and the city’s attorney, Steve Hitchcock, who has spent a lot of time going over the agreement to make sure it is consistent with the standards of the ordinance and meets the expectations of the city.

- Mr. Strader expressed that the city, the city’s attorney and the Planning Commission are comfortable with the conditional rezoning agreement and the proposed site plan and that it is consistent with the Master Plan and the City of Romulus Policies. While it was not the type of use envisioned in the RC District, the way that the development is being crafted with the extension of Vining Road, this could be a stimulus for the development that the city has been looking for over the last 20 years for other employment and types of uses that the city would like to see in that area.

- Mr. Strader noted that the city, Wayne County, who has jurisdiction over Ecorse Road, the applicant, traffic engineer, and city engineers had a meeting and went over the traffic impact study. They came up with a list of improvements and the applicant is going to extend Vining Road and build it as a boulevard. They will put in new signals along Ecorse Road, including a new signal at the main entrance of this facility. They will widen Ecorse Road with a center turn lane and making improvements at the site access point to facilitate the number of employees going into and out of the site throughout the day.

- Other factors in the zoning ordinance is if the site will be compatible with the adjacent or surrounding land use. Much of the RC District is vacant right now and there are residential, a school and other uses along Ecorse Road that had to be taken into consideration. With the restrictions offered, improvements to the roads to be made and the restrictions to the trucks being directed up and down Vining Road and not along Ecorse this use will be compatible the existing land use pattern and the rest of the RC zoning district.

- Mr. Strader informed the Planning Commission that the applicant has submitted a preliminary site plan that he feels could be approved with conditions and that a final site plan addressing any issues found by the ARC Committee can be administratively approved. They are asking for a few waivers from the Planning Commission and those will be addressed during site plan review. There are also variance that will need to be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals as part of final approval, as well as the rezoning being adopted by the City Council.

- Ms. Maise informed the Planning Commission that there is a sample motion in front of the commissioners with the list of conditions if they chose to make a motion to recommend to City Council.

Johnathan Stites, 7001 Orchard Hill Court, Colleyville, Texas, 76034, stepped forward on behalf of the applicant to speak.

- Mr. Stites expressed that he and his team are excited to be here and that they hoped they have hit all of the key aspects of the proposed project. The applicant has hopefully fine-tuned all of the requirements associated with the project since they have a number of facilities around the country. He believes that there is great potential to stimulate growth in the area with this project and a number of great infrastructure improvements. This facility is an institutional quality and high-end development, as it is intended to be the home for many years to come. This is a long-term commitment for decades.
Jim Butler, PEA, Inc., 2430 Rochester Court, Suite 100, Troy, MI 48083, stepped forward to speak on behalf of the applicant.

- Mr. Butler presented a site plan and a power point presentation to the commissioners of the proposed project. He also explained that there will be 5 points of access for the site for cars and trucks, with predominate truck traffic coming and going from Vining Road. All other points of access to the site will be along Ecorse Road and one additional off of Vining Road; these will be for car traffic.
- Mr. Butler continued to explain the proposed site plan with site improvements and road and infrastructure improvements. He noted that the entire site will be curbed and that they intend to add sidewalk along Ecorse Road, therefore there will be no need for those waivers, as previously discussed.
- Mr. Butler and Mr. Stites also presented the building elevations with explanation to the commissioners about the proposed materials. They explained that they were available to answer any questions that the commissioners may have.
- Ms. Maise pointed out to the commissioners that there also was staff present at the meeting to answer any questions by the commissioners.

Chairperson Freitag opened the meeting for questions and comments by the Planning Commissioners.

- Mr. McAnally asked the petitioners to explain why they chose this particular site.
- Mr. Stites explained that there are a lot of factors that go into deciding on a new site. Size is always something that is looked at to accommodate the facility and parking. Road infrastructure and freeway access is another reason for choosing this location.
- Mr. McAnally also questioned the traffic impact on the community and asked Mr. Stites if it was a possible to stagger start times to help control the flow of traffic.
- Mr. Stites noted that they are the developer of the site but, the user’s business is a finely tuned machine, as far as operations go. They take extra steps to make sure that they are maximizing their time efficiently.
- Mr. Glotfelty asked if there will on-site truck fueling and/or repair.
- Mr. Sites stated that there was no intent to repair or fuel on-site but, there will be trailer storage.
- Mr. Paul asked Mr. Stites if he plans to work with the city on pedestrian walkways throughout the parking lot for the employees.
- Mr. Stites replied yes.
- Mr. Frederick asked Mr. Stites if there will be security on site.
- Mr. Stites acknowledged that there is a significant budget for security and that the employee is very employee-centric.
- Mr. McAnally asked for clarification of the rezoning agreement. He asked that if the deadline for the project was not met and the development doesn’t happen, would the rezoning revert back to the RC District?
- Mr. Hitchcock stated that if there was a default in the agreement, the zoning would revert back to the previous RC District.

Chairperson Freitag opened the public hearing portion of the meeting for questions and comments from the public.

Let the record show that an affidavit of first class mail has been shown and is on file.
Chairperson Freitag asked if anyone would like to speak.

Kathy Abdo, 36899 Mario Ann Court, Romulus, MI 48174 stepped forward to speak.

- Ms. Abdo was concerned about the amount of trucks entering and leaving the site and asked if there was a number that could be estimated.
- Mr. Strader stated that there was an estimated 555 trucks per day.
- Ms. Abdo also asked who was going to pay for the extension of Vining Road and the improvements to Ecorse Road.
- Mr. Hitchcock replied that there has been a lot of discussion in regards to that. There will need to be a separate agreement entered into with the State of Michigan, Wayne County and the City of Romulus.
- Ms. Abdo was concerned that there could be city money used to fund some of these improvements. She stated that it should be a consideration by the Planning Commission before it is voted upon.
- Mr. Hitchcock directed Ms. Abdo to speak to Tim Keyes, Economic Development Director, in regards to how it breaks down.
- Mr. Strader pointed out that there may be some taxpayers dollars that are used for the road improvements, like other developments are but, that there would also be money from the developer, the State of Michigan and Wayne County, as well.
- Ms. Abdo asked if there was any guarantee that the trucks will use Vining Road to enter and exit the site.
- Mr. Strader stated that there is not an ability to restrict truck traffic because Ecorse Road is a county road.
- Ms. Abdo wondered if the road improvements would be implemented before the warehouse/distribution center was built.
- Mr. Strader couldn’t guarantee the timing of the road improvements.
- Ms. Abdo questioned the zoning if the warehouse/distribution center closed after a few years and wondered if it would stay M-1, Light Industrial.
- Mr. Hitchcock stated that there would be restrictions on the M-1, Industrial and that any new use would have to go through approval processes.

Mike Labadie, Fleis & Vanderbrink, 2960 Lucerne Drive, Suite 100, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 stepped forward to speak

- Mr. Labadie stated that the actual number of trucks per day entering & leaving the site is 466. The majority of the trucks will be using Vining Road but, since the site has more than one access point there could be occasional truck traffic on Ecorse Road. Wayne County is aware of this and ok with truck traffic on Ecorse Road.
- Mr. Stites pointed out on the site plan the intent of the truck traffic, via Vining Road.

Pastor Frank Howard, Living Rock Church, 33200 Ecorse Rd., Romulus, MI 48174 stepped forward to speak.

- Pastor Howard noted that looking at the site plan, it appears that one of the employees entrances to the proposed site is directly across the entrance of the church and wondered what the proposed plan for traffic are.
• Pastor Howard asked if the Master Plan called for four lane Boulevard with a center turn lane on Ecorse Road from Hannan Rd to Inkster.
• Pastor Howard also wondered if the operation would be 7 days a week/24 hours a day and when the project will start.
• Mr. Labadie noted that the signal light will be located at the center entrance of the site. There will be many improvements to traffic flow with the installation of signals and road improvements.
• Further discussion was had about the Master Plan and road improvements.

E. Stephanie Edwards, 6910 Sargent, Romulus, MI 48174 stepped forward to speak.

• Ms. Edwards stated that her street is off of Ecorse Road and she opposes this project since she cannot get her street paved.

Virginia Williams, 35774 Abbey, Romulus, MI 48174 stepped forward to speak.

• Ms. Williams stated that her street is also off of Ecorse Road. She understands the shift times proposed by this project and that the city has existing factories and large scale companies with employees that do not live in Romulus and travel I-94 to Ecorse to go to the GM plant or continue travel on Ecorse Road to Haggerty to go to the Ford Motor Company plant. Then there is a plant on Van Born, which all of this traffic needs to be considered.
• Ms. Williams commented that her husband has been a truck driver for over 30 years and when he is routed for a delivery his company routes him to a freeway and wondered if this proposed company will route their drivers to Ecorse Road and how this can be monitored.
• Ms. Williams was also concerned about the pedestrians walking down Ecorse road from Merriman to Wayne Road and has concerns that this type of project is not right for our residential community. She mentioned that Romulus has so much vacant land and that those should be considered for this type of use.

Brenda Williams, 35210 Ecorse Road, Romulus, MI 48174 stepped forward to speak.

• Ms. Williams was concerned about traffic congestion on Ecorse Road and if the road is widened will it interfere with the resident’s property.
• Mr. Paul stated that the developers cannot touch residential property without the permission of the homeowners.
• Mr. Butler stated that there is a dedicated 60 foot right-of-way on the South side of Ecorse Road for any expansions.

Chairperson Freitag closed the public portion of the meeting and opened it up for more questions and comments from the commissioners.

• Mr. Paul commented that the concerns of the residents are valid and are being addressed with the site plan and traffic study with the installation of turning lanes, sidewalks and signal lights.
• Ms. Talon-Jemison was concerned that Tim Keyes was able to address the financial responsibilities of the infrastructure and road improvements.
• Mr. Keyes stated that the city projects the infrastructure and road improvement costs along Ecorse Road and Vining to be roughly 13 million dollars and that part of this includes upgrades to traffic signals at Wayne and Ecorse, Merriman and Ecorse, Middlebelt and Ecorse, in front
of the proposed facility and at Vining Road. This also includes sidewalks along portions of Ecorse Road and will take care of some of the issues in regards to pedestrians traveling along Ecorse Road.

- Mr. Keyes noted that the city has been working with the State of Michigan and Wayne County and that they are pledging roughly 8 million dollars towards the infrastructure and road improvements and the remainder is proposed to be financed through the Tax Increment Finance Authority.

- Mr. McAnally commented that he has lived in Romulus for over 50 years and that when he looks at the proposed 3,500 possible jobs coming into the community, he wonders that even with a lot to consider, what other employee/business stimulants will this drive.

- Ms. Freitag commented that this will be a positive move for the city and Ms. Roscoe agreed.

- Ms. Williams asked Mr. McAnally where he is getting his numbers from and if the city can guarantee that the residents will be guaranteed jobs from the new tenant. She stated that she had spoken with Mr. Keyes and that there were only anticipating roughly 2,000 jobs and that by law, the city could not guarantee that residents would be considered for the new jobs. So, she asked the commissioners if they knew if there was a way to guarantee jobs for Romulus residents first.

- Ms. Freitag stated that the Planning Commission and the City of Romulus cannot legally ask the tenant to consider Romulus residents jobs.

- Mr. Hitchcock stated that we can open communication with the tenant and the residents to advertise job opportunities.

- Ms. Talon-Jemison stated that the numbers for employment are projected numbers and that based on how well the company does, the numbers could go higher. As far as previous submittals for this site, they were not approved because one concern was for the safety of the pedestrians and residents but, the current proposed project has far succeeded with those concerns. The safety of residents is a major concern.

Motion by Paul supported by Zilka to recommend approval to City Council for RZ-2017-003; **Project Mercury** for a conditional rezoning from RC-Regional Center District to M-1, Light Industrial District to allow the development of an 857,000 sq. ft. warehouse/distribution/delivery building on portions of parcel #82-038-99-0001-000, #80-038-99-0002-701 and #80-038-99-0004-703. The conditional rezoning shall be subject to:

1. City Council approval of the Conditional Rezoning Agreement;
2. City Council approval of the Special Land Use since the building is greater than 80,000 sq. ft.;
3. City Council approval of the vacation of Venoy and Henry Ruff Roads; and
4. Administrative review and approval of a Final Site Plan.

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

5. New Business

A. SPR-2017-013; Project Mercury requesting site plan approval for the development of an 857,000-sq. ft. warehouse/distribution/delivery building on portions of Parcel #80-038-99-0001-000, #80-038-99-0002-701, and #80-038-99-0004-703. Zoning – RC, Regional Center District (proposed changed to conditional M-1, Light Industrial District.)
• Ms. Maise stated that the Planning Commission was given a technical review from the ARC Committee. There are outstanding, resolvable issues for the site plan that can be handled administratively.

Motion by Glotfelty supported by McAnally to approve the Preliminary Site Plan for SPR-2017-013; Project Mercury subject to:

1. Approval of the Conditional Rezoning (Zoning Map Amendment) and Conditional Rezoning Agreement by the City Council;
2. Approval of the Special Land Use by the City Council;
3. Approval of waivers to the following:
   a. Section 8.04(b)(1) to allow the detention pond to be located in the front yard.
   b. Section 13.06 to waive the enclosure requirement around the trash compactor.
   c. Section 13.02(c) to reduce with width of the greenbelts based on proposed setback variances.
4. Variances as identified in the Final Site Plan; and
5. Submittal of a Final Site Plan addresses all comments of the Planning Commission and ARC (Administrative Review Committee).

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

6. Adjournment

Motion by Roscoe supported by Glotfelty to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Roscoe, Glotfelty, Zilka, McAnally, Talon-Jemison, Frederick, Paul & Freitag. Nays – None. Motion Carried.

[Signature]
Michael Prybyla, Secretary
City of Romulus Planning Commission