

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF SOUTHFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 26, 2022
6:30PM**

Planning Commission Members Present: Culpepper, Griffis, Martin, and Stephens-Gunn
Planning Commission Members Excused: Miah and Willis

Staff Present: City Planner Croad and Planner Spence

Chairman Griffis called for a roll call. Planner Spence called the roll and determined there was quorum present to conduct business.

Chairman Griffis called for Approval of the Agenda. Motion by Commissioner Martin to Approve the Agenda as Written. Seconded by Commissioner Culpepper. Chair Griffis called for a Vote.

There was an affirmative vote for the Commissioners. Motion Carries

Let it be known that Commissioner Huntington has joined the meeting.

Chairman Griffis asked if there were any Announcements or Communications. Planner Spence noted that if there was anyone in the audience that was at the meeting for the Historic Designation Advisory Board Meeting, that meeting has been cancelled and will be rescheduled to a future date.

Chairman Griffis called for the first item.

PZR21-0006 is a Rezoning Request of Designhaus, on behalf of the Owner Finatech LLC, to rezone .51 acres of land from B-1 Neighborhood Business to B-3 General Business, property located at 28681 Northwestern Highway, Sidwell Parcel 2418-276-054 on the southeast corner of Northwestern Highway and Franklin Road, Section 18, City of Southfield, Oakland County, State of Michigan.

Planner Spence gave a brief overview of the proposal noting the petitioner was seeking to rezone the property to B-3 General Business from the current zoning of B-1 Neighborhood Business for the potential of a new gas station. He noted B-3 General Business exists directly to the west across Franklin Road and to the north across Northwestern Highway of the subject property. He reminded the Planning Commission to limit their discussion to the merits of the proposed rezoning only and not the Special Use or Site Plan. He introduced Mr. Mike Pizzola from Designhaus to explain the proposal further.

Mr. Pizzola explained the reasoning behind the request for rezoning.

Chair Griffis opened the Public Hearing for the rezoning.

Ms. Rita Soka representing the gas station owner to the west across Franklin Road and a liquor store owner, provided her opinions on why the rezoning should not be approved which included, a violation of the B-3 General Business Ordinance by not meeting the intent of one of the required standards, that the gas station and the convenience store serve the immediate needs of the

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community. She noted that because there are already existing gas stations within a mile of the subject site and an existing convenience/liquor store nearby, another isn't needed. She stated further that a new gas station would have an adverse effect on the community due to odor and fumes, and cited the dangers of having a gas station so close to homes and heavily populated areas. She noted the shift from gas-powered vehicles to electric that would eliminate the need for additional gas stations; and the traffic congestion that would result from a new station on the corner with access from and to Franklin Road.

There were no other speakers so Chair Griffis closed the Public Hearing and turned the discussion over to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Culpepper noted that this rezoning requests fit the Master Plan and this site deserved rezoning.

Commissioner Huntington noted the size and shape of the land posed issues for development.

Commissioner Stephens-Gunn zoning is part of the property.

There being no other comments, Chairman Griffis called for a motion. Planner Spence obliged.

The Planning Department recommends **FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION** of PZR21-0006 to rezone .51 acres of land from B-1 Neighborhood Business to B-3 General Business, for the following reasons:

1. The Southfield Comprehensive Master Plan indicates Regional Mixed Use for this property.
2. The change in zoning would be compatible with and similar to the existing adjacent zonings and land uses.
3. The proposal is in accordance with the standards for rezoning of property.

Chairman Griffis called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Culpepper for Favorable Consideration of PZR21-0006. Supported by Commissioner Martin.

Chairman Griffis stated all in favor say Aye -- there were five (5) Ayes.
All against say Nay -- there were no nays.

Chairman Griffis noted the motion passes.

Chairman Griffis called for the next item.

PSLU21-0011 is the Special Use Request of Designhaus, on behalf of the Owner Finatech LLC, to allow for a 2,846gsf gasoline filling station with convenience store, property located at 28681 Northwestern Highway, Sidwell Parcel 2418-276-054 on the southeast corner of Northwestern Highway and Franklin Road, Section 18, City of Southfield, Oakland County, State of Michigan.

Planner Spence noted this is the Special Use portion of the gas station proposal and provided a brief overview of the proposal. Planner Spence again reminded the Commissioner's to focus on the merits of the Special Land Use proposal -- should a gas station with convenience store be allowed to be located on this site -- and not the site plan at this time.

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Mr. Pizzola again provided an explanation of the proposal for a gas station with convenience store on this site.

Chairman Griffis opened the Public Hearing for the Special Land Use.

Ms. Soka again stated the reasons this should not be allowed on this site which included no evidence the proposal would bring any benefit to the surrounding owners and tenants, there is no safe way to build a gas station without harmful fumes, and the traffic generated would create a hazardous environment along Northwestern Highway and Franklin Road.

There were no other speakers so Chairman Griffis closed the Public Hearing and opened the floor to the Commissioners.

City Planner Croad noted Southfield already has about 26 gas stations and there is a concern with what happens to all the gas stations if they close due to the use of electric vehicles. He also had long term environmental concerns.

Mr. Pizzola asked if the owner of the property could respond to the concerns of Ms. Soka. He noted construction is very safe now and not like 50 years ago. He noted it made no sense for him to invest in the construction of a new gas station if it would be gone in 10 years. Regarding trucks on site to fill tanks, they come twice a week, and he plans on having one electric vehicle charging station on site. Hours of operation would likely be 5:00am to Midnight Monday through Saturday and 5:00am to 10:00pm on Sunday.

Commissioner Stephens-Gunn noted she had a concern with this development and wanted to see empirical data to support it.

Commissioner Martin noted he had a concern with what the community wants. He stated that in the beginning the owner wanted a 24-hour station and now it's reduced hours. He asked that an expert be on hand at the next meeting on this.

Commissioner Culpepper was concerned about sustainability adding another gas station to Southfield.

Chairman Griffis asked why Southfield Gas Stations gasoline prices are 20-30 cents more than other places. He noted, too, that there is no rule he is aware of limiting the number of gas stations in the City.

Commissioner Martin noted there would be an increase in traffic in the area. The existing gas station to the west has a light. He noted the station would have a vehicle charging station. He asked the owner when he thought gas-powered vehicles would be phased out.

Commissioner Huntington asked how often a gas tanker came to the site. The owner noted about 2 times per week.

Commissioner Stephens-Gunn asked what Capacity of Infrastructure meant in the Special Use memo. Planner Spence noted that it is the ability of the utilities, roads, traffic volume, etc., to manage a new use.

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City Planner Croad noted that with the comments made and his own concerns for traffic and whether there is a need for a new gas station, he wasn't comfortable moving this item forward. He requested the Planning Commission postpone the Special Use and Site Plan to No Date Certain to give the petitioner time to prove need - bring an expert in to discuss – and do a Traffic Impact Study.

Chairman Griffis asked if one of the Commissioners wanted to make a motion to postpone.

Motion by Commissioner Culpepper to Postpone PSLU21-0011 to No Date Certain per the reasonings of the City Planner. Supported by Commissioner Martin.

Chairman Griffis stated all in favor say Aye – there were five (5) Ayes.
All against say Nay – there were no nays.

Chairman Griffis noted the motion to Postpone to No Date Certain passes.

Planner Spence noted that the Commission would need to make a similar Motion for the Site Plan.

Motion by Commissioner Culpepper to Postpone PSP21-0012 to No Date Certain per the reasonings of the City Planner. Supported by Commissioner Huntington.

Chairman Griffis stated all in favor say Aye – there were five (5) Ayes.
All against say Nay – there were no nays.

Chairman Griffis noted the motion to Postpone to No Date Certain passes.

Chairman Griffis called the Approval of the Minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Stephens-Gunn to Approve the Minutes of December 1, 2021 and December 15, 2021. Supported by Commissioner Culpepper.

Chairman Griffis stated all in favor say Aye – there were five (5) Ayes.
All against say Nay – there were no nays.

Chairman Griffis noted the motion to approve the Minutes passes.

Chairman Griffis announced the Public Comment section of the meeting and opened the floor for Public Comment. There were no Public in the Chambers to make comments so Chairman Griffis closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

Chairman Griffis called for the approval of the Planning Commission Calendar for January 2022 through January 2023.

Motion by Commissioner Martin to approve the calendar. Supported by Commissioner Huntington.

Chairman Griffis stated all in favor say Aye – there were five (5) Ayes.
All against say Nay – there were no nays.

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Chairman Griffis noted the motion to approve the calendar passes.

Chairman Griffis the next item is the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2021.

Planner Spence noted the reason staff and the Planning Commission prepare an Annual Report each year and provided a brief PowerPoint presentation on the Planning Commission activities for 2021, Planning Initiatives for 2022, training, and highlighted some of the projects Planning Commission reviewed in 2021.

Commissioner Martin asked that the development values from 2020 be added as a comparison to the 2021 values.

Chairman Griffis called for a motion on the 2021 Annual Report.

Motion by Commissioner Martin for favorable approval of the 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report with the addition of a summary. Supported by Commissioner Stephens-Gunn.

Chairman Griffis stated all in favor say Aye – there were five (5) Ayes.
All against say Nay – there were no nays.

Chairman Griffis noted the motion to approve the 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report passes.

Chairman Griffis announced that the next item of business was Election of Officers. He called for nominations for Planning Commission Chair.

Commissioner Huntington nominated Commissioner Culpepper. Commissioner Culpepper respectfully declined.

Commissioner Stephens-Gunn was nominated as Chair. There were no other nominations. By a vote of 4-0 in favor, Commissioner Stephens-Gunn becomes Chair of the Planning Commission and assumes the Chair from Chairman Griffis.

Chair Stephens-Gunn announces nominations for Vice-chair of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Martin nominates Commissioner Culpepper. Commissioner Culpepper respectfully declines.

Commissioner Culpepper nominates Commissioner Martin for Vice-chair. There are no other nominations. By a vote of 4-0 in favor, Commissioner Martin becomes vice-chair.

Chair Stephens-Gunn announces nominations for Secretary of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Griffis nominates Commissioner Willis for Secretary. There are no other nominations. By a 4-0 vote in favor, Commissioner Willis becomes Secretary of the Planning Commission.

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Chair Stephens-Gunn asks if there are any Miscellaneous items. Planner Spence notes the next meeting of the Planning Commission will be on February 9, 2022

There were no other comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

Rob Willis (date) 02.23.22
Secretary/js