

PLANNING COMMISSION

June 21, 2012

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of June 21, 2012 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Three citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Patterson, Wayne Stoffer, Miko Dargitz, Dave Felicijan, Paul Welch and Chairman James Cheesebro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Allan Reiff and Rick Bosch.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services; Michael West, Assistant City Planner and Charlie Bear, Assistant City Attorney.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Cheesebro led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the May 17, 2012 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was offered by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Preliminary Report: Conceptual Plan Amendment for Trade Centre Holdings LLC, 420 and 750 Trade Centre Way. Mr. Forth summarized the preliminary staff report dated June 15, 2012 regarding a request received from Trade Centre Holdings, Inc. to amend a previously approved conceptual plan involving property addressed as 420 and 750 Trade Centre Way. Mr. Forth provided background information regarding the previously

approved 2002 conceptual plan submitted by Furniture Row USA LLC that proposed construction of two hotels, one retail furniture store, two specialty retail buildings and two restaurants, and then summarized the conceptual plan amendment submitted by Trade Centre Holdings LLC that proposes the development of two hotels, one office building, and three restaurant/retail buildings. Mr. Forth discussed the 2003 construction of the Trade Centre I Office Building (three-story, 50-foot tall, 83,000 square foot) at 750 Trade Centre Way and the 2005 construction of the Trade Centre II Office Building (four-story, 65-foot tall, 110,000 square foot) at 950 Trade Centre Way. Since submission of subsequent specific (site) plans has not occurred in accordance with the approved program of development, Mr. Forth indicated the original 2002 conceptual plan has expired. Mr. Forth discussed the similarities between the 2002 conceptual plan and the proposed conceptual plan amendment, and, summarized the requested building height/number of stories modification, building setback modification and the conflicting land use screening waiver along the northern portion of the development site where adjacent the 50-acre City of Kalamazoo wellfield. Mr. Forth discussed the MDEQ permit involving planned modifications to a small portion of the 100-year floodplain and wetlands adjacent Portage Creek and the related wetland restoration project planned in downtown Kalamazoo.

Mr. Greg Dobson (representing Trade Centre Holdings LLC) and Mr. Todd Hurley (Hurley & Stewart, applicant's engineer) were present to explain the development project and support the amended conceptual plan. Mr. Dobson discussed the 2011 Amended Development Plan/Tax Increment Financing Plan for the associated public improvements. Mr. Dobson summarized the acquisition of the entire 32 acres of property by H & G LLC, from Furniture Row USA, and the development of the two Trade Centre Office buildings. Mr. Dobson stated the proposed conceptual plan amendment proposes only minor changes (addition of an office building) from the original 2002 approved conceptual plan. Mr. Dobson indicated the Courtyard Marriott hotel would be the first development project associated with the conceptual plan amendment and a site plan was expected to be ready for Planning Commission review at the July 5th meeting. Mr. Dobson reviewed the requested building height/number of stories modification, the building setback modification and the screening waiver along the northern portion of the development site where adjacent the 50-acre City of Kalamazoo wellfield site. Mr. Dobson indicated that he had spoken with Bruce Merchant of the City of Kalamazoo and stated the City of Kalamazoo was supportive of the proposed development project and wetland restoration partnership between the applicant, Nature Ventures and the City of Kalamazoo. Mr. Hurley explained the proposed floodplain/wetland modification and wetland restoration project that represented an approximate two-year collaborative effort with the MDEQ, MDOT and City of Kalamazoo. Mr. Hurley stated the Trade Centre development has resulted in identification and elimination of several illicit discharges to the Portage Creek project and has improved water quality in the area. Mr. Hurley discussed the proposed storm water management system that involved underground collection, storage and treatment of storm water prior to being released to the Portage Creek through a controlled rate discharge. No additional citizens were present in the audience to speak regarding the proposed conceptual plan amendment.

The Commission, staff and the applicant discussed various aspects of the development project including the 2011 Amended Development Plan/Tax Increment Financing Plan, differences between the 2002 approved conceptual plan and the proposed conceptual plan amendment, planned wetland/floodplain modifications, parking and storm water management. There being no further discussion, Mr. Forth stated the public hearing for the proposed conceptual plan amendment has been noticed and scheduled for the July 5, 2012 Planning Commission meeting.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher T. Forth, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services