



PLANNING COMMISSION

August 16, 2023

A regular Planning Commission meeting was held in the City Council Chambers, Petoskey, Michigan, on Wednesday, August 16, 2023. Roll was called at 6:00 P.M. and the following were:

Present: Cynthia Linn Robson, Chairperson
Betony Braddock
Matt McSweeney
Richard Mooradian
Rick Neumann
Ted Pall
Charles Willmott

Absent: Doug Buck
Carolyn Dettmer

Others: Jim Jewett, Architect for U.S. Properties Group
Jason Jordan, U.S. Properties Group

Staff: John Iacoangeli, City Planning Consultant
Lisa Denoyer, Zoning Administrator
Shane Horn, City Manager

Upon motion and support, the minutes of the July 19, 2023 regular meeting were approved with corrections. Motion carried 7-0.

Presentation from Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council on Stormwater Management

Anna McGlashen, Local Policy Manager for Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, gave a presentation on what stormwater is, nature based solutions like native vegetation and natural processes, ways to reduce stormwater and policy management options, such as a local ordinance that requires the use of nature based solutions.

Commissioners asked about problem areas within the City of Petoskey and what items would be found in a stormwater ordinance.

Ms. McGlashen responded that the City does not currently have any major issues and that a few things you would find in a stormwater ordinance would be a standard of no net run off, a greenbelt ordinance, and triggering actions.

Case #2-23 – Crestview Commons PUD Amendment, 1305 Spring Street

John Iacoangeli, City Planning Consultant, informed the Commission that the applicant had PetSmart as a potential tenant in the Crestview Commons shopping center and they were proposing a façade modification to make the store more appealing and consistent with current retail center design trends. Incorporated into the proposed façade modification was a retail sign for the PetSmart brand.

The proposal was for an additional 54.2 square feet of signage over and above that approved for Big Lots. Mr. Iacoangeli explained that if "grooming," "adoption," and "training" were removed from the proposed sign, the request would be for an additional 16.2 square feet. The height of the PetSmart sign letters at four-feet (48-inches) would be readable from Spring Street, according to most sign letter height visibility charts.

Commissioners asked if the previous approval for 148.5 square feet of signage was for the remaining 50,000 square feet of space, if the signage was based on the store frontage and if there were two requests before them, one for a façade change and one for signage. Commissioners also asked if the former garden center would be removed.

Jason Jordan, U.S. Properties Group, explained that when they received approval for the façade and sign changes for Big Lots, there was one other national brand looking to occupy the remaining 50,000 square feet of building space. PetSmart is looking to occupy 16,000 square feet and the remaining 34,000 square feet would likely be used by one, possibly two, other brands. Once these spaces are filled, they will begin working on filling the smaller retail spaces. He also added that the former garden center would be removed and a small loading dock would be added at the rear of the building.

Mr. Iacoangeli commented that he would like to have a conversation with the developer about creating a master plan for the site and discuss future buildouts of underutilized space.

Commissioners discussed the option of removing the tag lines from the wall mounted sign and listing them on the door and the need for consistent façade and signage to create a uniform look. They then asked if signage would also be installed on the freestanding signs along the right-of-way and if the façade for PetSmart would be the same as Big Lots.

Mr. Jordan responded that the tenants would have the option for signage on the freestanding signs along Spring and Sheridan Streets.

Jim Jewett, Architect for U.S. Properties, responded that the two storefront façades would be very close in size with PetSmart measuring 46-feet, two-inches and Big Lots measuring 46-feet, four-inches.

Mr. Jordan commented that the bounce portion of the sign takes up a lot of negative space and PetSmart was adamant that the services be listed on the front wall sign. Not all PetSmart locations offer all of the services listed for this location and that is part of the reason they would like to keep the services as part of the sign.

Chairperson Robson responded that the Commission could not change the way signs are calculated and therefore the sign area would include the bounce portion of the sign.

Commissioners discussed the square footage of the previous sign approval for Big Lots and minor façade changes between the existing and proposed storefronts and their desire for consistency when a new tenant comes in between the two locations.

Commissioners then asked about the need for a master plan for the site given the possibility of two more tenants between the existing and proposed locations and future tenants throughout the mall.

Mr. Jordan responded that their situation is unique due to their location below the main road and they have been working very hard to turn the shopping center around. Visibility is definitely an issue and a challenge when trying to get national companies to move in.

Commissioner Pall commented that visibility has improved and the site is much more visible since landscaping changes have been made.

Mr. Iacoangeli commented to the Commission that they should not let signage drive their decision relative to the revitalization of the shopping center. Reducing the signage in half would render it illegible from Spring Street. He then recommended to the developer that he come back to the Planning Commission with a full façade drawing for this entire section of the shopping center when he comes back with a third tenant to see how all of the signs will work together.

Commissioner Willmott asked if trash and recycling bins would be provided, where they would be located and if they would be shielded.

Mr. Joran responded the tenants would be responsible for their own trash and recycle bins. Currently these bins are kept at the back of the building and are not screened.

At this time, Commissioner Pall made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McSweeney, that based on the documentation submitted by the Applicant, the public, the public record, and the Planning Commission review of the façade and signage plan, to approve the design presented for the façade with the understanding that the width of the façade is 46-feet, two-inches and the height is 24-feet, approve a maximum total signage area of 148.5 square feet and the loading dock be subject to staff review and approval for its design. Motion carried 7-0.

Approval of the 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan

Shane Horn, City Manager, thanked the Commission for their commitment and time spent reviewing the 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and asked if they had any questions or feedback following their special meeting with City Council on August 8, 2023.

Commissioner Pall commented that the presentation and engagement at the special meeting was the best he has experienced in his 20 years as a member of various boards with the City. He expressed the importance of the CIP and the Planning Commission's role in reviewing projects as they move forward.

Chairperson Robson asked if there was a green energy budget and Mr. Horn responded that MPPA was working on behalf of all of its members on green energy opportunities and the City was working with a developer to install solar at the old landfill site.

Commissioner Neumann made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Willmott, to accept the plan and recommend approval by City Council. Motion carried 7-0.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Willmott asked if the Sign Committee had met to discuss changes to the Sign Ordinance.

Chairperson Robson responded that they had not but would be making an effort to do so soon.

Staff Updates

Mr. Iacoangeli informed the Commission that the Rental Inspection Committee would be meeting again tomorrow to review draft language for the Rental Inspection Ordinance. He also informed them

that there would be a presentation on the Housing Quality Assessment Report at their regular September meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 P.M.