

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BERKLEY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM, MAY 28, 2024 AT BERKLEY CITY HALL BY CHAIR LISA KEMPNER.

The minutes from this meeting are in summary form capturing the actions taken on each agenda item. To view the meeting discussions in their entirety, this meeting is broadcasted on the city's government access channel, WBRK, every day at 9AM and 9PM. The video can also be seen, on-demand, on the city's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofberkley>

PRESENT: Mike Woods Josh Stapp
Joe Bartus Shiloh Dahlin
Lisa Kempner Eric Arnsman

ABSENT: Lisa Hamameh

ALSO, PRESENT: Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Michelle Marin, Planning Consultant

Motion by Commissioner Bartus to excuse the absence of Commissioner Hamameh. Motion supported by Commissioner Dahlin.

Voice Vote to excuse the absence of Commissioner Hamameh.

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: Hamameh

MOTION CARRIED

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APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Bartus to approve the agenda and supported by Commissioner Woods.

Voice vote to approve the agenda

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: Hamameh

MOTION CARRIED

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APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Woods to approve the minutes of the special Planning Commission meeting on April 10, 2024 and supported by Commissioner Bartus.

Voice vote to approve the meeting minutes of April 10, 2024.

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: Hamameh

MOTION CARRIED

Motion by Commissioner Bartus to approve the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting on April 23, 2024 and supported by Commissioner Dahlin.

Voice vote to approve the meeting minutes of April 23, 2024.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: Hamameh

MOTION CARRIED

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COMMUNICATIONS

The latest copy of the Michigan Association of Planning Citizen Planner was provided.

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CITIZEN COMMENTS

NONE

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OLD BUSINESS

NONE

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NEW BUSINESS

- 1. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PUD-01-23: The Columbia:** The applicant, Designhaus Architecture on behalf of WJ Ventures LLC, 2465 Columbia, 2475 Columbia, 2468 Columbia and 2476 Columbia and 2475 Cambridge, is requesting Planned Unit Development approval for a multiple-family development on the east side of Coolidge Highway, south of Cambridge Road and north and south of Columbia Road

Community Development Director Kapelanski went over the specifics of the proposal. She described generally what a Planned Unit Development (PUD) is and the approval process. A PUD must meet three of the seven public benefits identified in the Zoning Ordinance. The City's Planning Consultant, Carlisle Wortman Associates, provided a thorough review of the plans and an analysis of the public benefit standards. All reviewers were recommending approval of the plan. This is being reviewed as a new plan so a public hearing is required.

Planning Consultant Marin went over her review and noted the deviations from the ordinance the applicant was requesting as well as each recommendation of the review as it pertained to the required public benefits.

The applicant, Wayne Wudyka, presented the project, describing the physical changes to the site and addressed issues of previous concern including parking, traffic and building height. He emphasized the removal of the bridge over Columbia. He also presented how the project meets the required public benefits in the PUD ordinance. Other presenting team members included representatives from Designhaus Architects and Giffels Webster.

Chair Kempner asked clarifying questions on the plan set and site layout. She asked for additional information on trash pickup and recycling, snow storage and assigned parking.

Commissioner Dahlin asked how the compact car parking would work.

The applicant stated based on the operation of other multiple family parking in the area, they are anticipating a significant amount of tenants would have small to mid-size vehicles and they do own other properties in the area if parking becomes a problem.

Commissioner Woods confirmed the proposed setbacks and projections. The applicant will clarify this on the plans.

Chair Kempner opened the public hearing at 7:57PM.

Richard Basher, 2370 Columbia Berkley, is concerned that there is not enough parking on the site for residents' guests. There is already a parking problem on Columbia and Cambridge.

Steve Tomkoviak of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit addressed the Commission. He is concerned that there are no two-bedroom units or no three or more-bedroom units, which would better serve families. He is particularly concerned that lower-income families would not be served.

Jeremey Lock, Berkley, stated while this is a nice building, this is the wrong place for it. Traffic is a problem in this area and he is worried residents on the street will not be able to get onto Coolidge. He wanted families to move in. There is already a parking problem on Columbia. His view of the sky and sun will be blocked. The building is too large for the area.

No one else wished to speak.

Chair Kempner read the emails received into the record.

Maddie Stewart is concerned the building is too large. She is worried about flooding, infrastructure and increased traffic.

Paul Jordan is opposed. He thinks it lacks adequate parking and is worried about a development of this size.

There were no other comments and Chair Kempner closed the public hearing.

Chair Kempner was concerned about the new parking added east of the south building. She didn't think people could really get in and out. She had the same concern about the two parking spaces nearest the access drive at the north building. There appeared to be more impervious area in the pocket park area when compared to the previously considered plan. She felt like that put into doubt the 'extensive landscaping' standard. She was also concerned about the number of parking spaces provided. She hoped the applicant would reconsider the design. It appears too large and needs more articulation and strategies to reduce the massing.

Commissioner Dahlin also thought the parking was tight. It is a bit better with it being assigned. She was also concerned about the number of compact spaces proposed. She shared Chair Kempner's concerns about the massing of the building and the proposed height.

Commissioner Stapp noted there was a traffic impact study done that showed no significant degradation in the traffic operations in the area.

The Commission began talking about the required recognizable benefits. They agreed the following were met: Efficient consolidation of poorly dimensioned parcels; and That the project provides open space or a public plaza.

There was discussion regarding the extensive landscaping benefit. The Commission could not come to an agreement on this standard at this point. There was particular concern that additional impervious area had been added to the open space area when compared to the prior plan. The applicant could consider altering the park area to include less impervious surface and more plantings.

The Commission did not agree that the high-quality architecture benefit was met. They were split on what constituted high-quality architecture. Planning Consultant Marin thought it was reasonable for the Commission to request other elements be added, like a mural or a green wall, to better meet this benefit.

The applicant offered to eliminate the concrete sitting area in the park space to add in more greenspace and to change the pathway in this area from concrete to a permeable stone surface.

Chair Kempner thought if that landscaping change was made, this could meet the extensive landscaping benefit. Commissioner Woods agreed. She had larger concerns with the parking space circulation issues she identified earlier in the discussion.

The Commission suggested the applicant remove parking spots closest to the southeast entry on the north building and the parking spaces accessed across from the side street access on the south building and convert the three single spots on the south building lot into tandem spaces. The applicant agreed to this change.

The majority of the Commission thought the compact car spaces proposed over the amount allowed were an operational issue for the owner to deal with. They thought it would be helpful that spaces would be assigned.

The applicant agreed to take another look at the color of brick and see if the architecture could be softened.

The Commission agreed the standards of approval in Section 138-537 have been met.

Motion by Commissioner Bartus and supported by Commissioner Stapp to recommend approval of PUD-01-23 The Columbia with the following ordinance deviations:

- Deficient setback along Coolidge (10 ft. required, 2 ft. 1/8 in. provided – north building and 7 ft. 3 in. provided – south building);
- Deficient number of parking spaces (114 required, 77 provided);
- Deviation to allow for an overage on the total number of compact car spaces (30% permitted, 36% provided); and
- Deficient use (non-residential use is not provided on the first floor); and

With the following conditions:

- Site plan revisions to show clear vertical clearance dimensions of projections and labeled rear setbacks;
- An increase in landscaping and a change to a permeable path from the proposed concrete in open space area;
- Removal of the parking spots closest to the southeast entry on the north building and the parking space accessed directly across from the side street access on the south building;
- Converting the three single spots on the south building lot into tandem spaces;
- The PUD Agreement should reflect the street trees to be provided on Coolidge, landscaping offered to adjacent properties to be accepted and installed during construction and each unit shall be assigned at least one parking spot; and
- Submission of a representative sheet showing the requested additional information and required plan changes prior to the matter proceeding to the City Council; and

With the following findings:

- The minimum of three of the seven public benefits listed in Section 138-533 have been met including:
 - That the project provides extensive landscaping, beyond the site plan requirements;
 - That the project provides open space or a public plaza; and
 - That the project provides efficient consolidation of poorly dimensioned parcels; and
- The standards for approval in Section 138-537 are met.

Roll call vote on the motion to recommend approval of PUD-01-23 The Columbia.

AYES: 5

NAYS: 1 (Dahlin)

ABSENT: Hamameh

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LIAISON REPORT

Commissioner Bartus said the Chamber is looking for volunteers for art bash and their events in general.

Chair Kempner highlighted items on the last DDA meeting: murals, parklets and the BOSS social district.

Commissioner Arnsman said the Environmental Committee heard an update on the upcoming Zoning Ordinance changes.

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COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Councilmember Patterson reminded all the Commission about the volunteer appreciation luncheon.

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STAFF COMMENTS

Community Development Director Kapelanski reminded the Commission about the joint meeting of Planning Commission and City Council to go over the final draft of the updated Zoning Ordinance. Also, the parking lot at Garden Central was approved by Council to be leased for a public parking lot.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Bartus supported by Commissioner Dahlin.

Voice vote for adjournment

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: Hamameh

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 p.m.