



CITY OF PLYMOUTH
201 S. Main
Plymouth, MI 48170
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PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, October 12, 2016

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by Chairperson Mulhern.

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Frey; arrived at 7:10 pm, Jim Frisbie, Jennifer Kehoe, Charles Myslinski, Joseph Phillips, Scott Silvers, Karen Sisolak and Jim Mulhern

OTHERS PRESENT: John Buzuvis, Community Development Director
Sally Elmiger, City of Plymouth Planner

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Adam Szymczak, 333 Sunset, wanted some clarification on the location of garage with the new Ordinance for incentive garages. Mr. Szymczak would like the Ordinance revised to interpret easily what portion of the rear yard the garage would be allowed in and not for administrative review that can possibly change over time. Comm. Phillips responded that this Ordinance was for the existing garages only, not the newly built garages. Comm. Myslinski stated the reason the Ordinance was written vaguely was to prevent existing garages in the front yard, but discourage the garage being placed forward in the middle section of the property, and therefore not seen as part of a walking experience for walkability. There was some discussion and Chair Mulhern suggested tabling it for the time being.

Dave Rucinski, 1392 Maple, spoke about attending and asking questions at a meeting on October 10th regarding the Kellogg Park and the fountain changes and has not been contacted as promised after the meeting. Mr. Rucinski has spoken with the City Commission twice and once with the Historic Commission and he has also started a petition to stop the proposed work and listen to the citizens, stating any changes to the Park reflect the character & charm of what we have now, and also keeping the fountain in the same location. There also was a recent public meeting held on Monday with 170 people attended with 18 strongly opposing the design changes and 2 people who were in support of the changes. Mr. Rucinski has obtained 1,150 signatures on his petition from people opposed to the changes. Mr. Rucinski has had discussions with the City & DDA and was told they would discuss direction with him but Mr. Rucinski has had with no contact from them since, and he is concerned that this group is proceeding without the citizens input.

Chair Mulhern commented he was at the meeting and is a part of the group looking at the proposed designs. Comm. Sisolak felt Mr. Rucinski was taking the right steps in keeping the Community involved and felt his efforts will work out in the long run. Comm. Frisbie stated that he is on the DDA board and the design that was presented at Monday's meeting has not been approved by the DDA and will be a long involved process until one has been approved. Comm. Frisbie assured Mr. Rucinski that his input would surely be taken into consideration. Comm. Myslinski applauded Mr. Rucinski's efforts and (speaking as a private citizen) felt that

Kellogg Park is Plymouth Community's Park due to the soft green spaces used by children to tumble and dogs to play. Comm. Myslinski felt the removing of trees and increased hardscaping proposed may be used for the concerts, but is not a good use for the general public's interest. Comm. Frisbie stated that the DDA brought in an arborist that looked into the area of the proposed fountain and the arborist suggested that some of the matured and diseased trees should be removed and Mr. Rucinski responded that there are five good trees that he felt should remain.

Marie Everitt, 1240 Fairground, asked about last month's meeting minutes and felt maybe she wasn't clear, and what Ms. Everitt proposed was an incentive program to be created for street grates to be placed around the street trees, to prevent the sidewalks from lifting, and to be ordered through the City.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Comm. Philips supported by Comm. Frisbie, to approve the meeting minutes from the September 14, 2016, as amended, per Ms. Everitt's comments.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Comm. Frisbie supported by Comm. Kehoe, to approve the agenda, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Article II, 78-21, Definitions,
2. Article V, 78-53, Single-Family Dwelling Unit Standards
3. Article IV, 78-43, Single-Family Dwelling Unit Standards
4. Article XVII, 78-191, Notes to Schedule

Sally Elmiger, Planner, explained some examples were provided of floor area ratio (FAR) along with lot coverage requirements for single-family residential dwellings in the R-1 Single-Family Residential District, from other Communities. This zoning technique is intended to regulate the bulk of a building in relationship to the size of the lot. These examples show how other communities apply FAR to residential dwellings along with their Ordinance language and are from the City of Douglas, Grosse Ile Township, and Royal Oak, Michigan; and Palo Alto, California. Each Community shows a slightly different way of addressing residential building mass.

Ms. Elmiger felt the City of Douglas is the most similar in lot sizes to the City of Plymouth and requires a .4 FAR for single-family residential buildings, including garages in the gross floor area. Ms. Elmiger read the chart examples from Grosse Ile Township, Royal Oak and City of Palo Alto.

John Buzuvis, CDD, provided photos along with explaining the examples provided of randomly picked newly constructed homes with examples of their calculated FAR along with an allowed FAR of .4 and .5 calculations.

Ms. Elmiger stated she had added up all the lot coverages and FARs (excluding Park Place) and the calculation came to an average FAR of .43 and an average lot coverage of 31.25%.

Comm. Philips provided an analysis chart with some examples on how square footage would be allowed in relation to different sized lots, excluding garages, with current Ordinance comparing FAR calculations ranging from .3 up to .6.

There was discussion on the different sized square footages shown on the chart.

The Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding the following subjects:

Comm. Philips would like the chosen FAR to require the second story to be a lesser footprint than the first story and the total height to be also reduced also.

Comm. Silvers suggested using two different FAR ratios.

Comm. Kehoe felt the board is going in the right direction.

Comm. Myslinski suggested not using the 25-foot maximum height (halfway up the roof) and use a maximum ridge height instead.

There was discussion on different height scenarios with various types of roofs.

Public Comments:

Marie Everitt, 1240 Fairground, was in favor of the FAR .4 calculation and made the suggestion to include the garage, if left out she thought, it may cause loop holes. Ms. Everitt used this calculation and applied it to a few lots and felt it will control the massing. Ms. Everitt liked using the standard for the second floor plate. Comm. Sisolak responded that he felt the FAR .4 was without a garage and with a standard garage it would be more like a FAR .8.

Adam Szymczak, 333 Sunset, liked the board's direction with the FAR .4 calculation, he also liked that other Communities are also using the FAR calculation and was interested to know how well this has worked in other Communities, and if there were any consequences. Mr. Szymczak spoke about the City of Palo Alto's additional areas included in their calculations and also how this Ordinance uses roof pitches to dictate home heights and suggested we also include these into our proposed Ordinance. Mr. Szmczak also spoke about various homes within the City that this Ordinance could benefit from.

Comm. Myslinski suggested visiting Douglas City, the downtown homes are extremely large and the FAR .4 calculation does not seem to be controlling the large sized homes.

Mr. Szmczak liked a portion of the Palo Alto's Ordinance where the City uses one factor for the first 5,000 sq ft lot size and anything above that the factor is reduced, resulting in less gross floor area for the second floor. Mr. Szmczak asked what prevents a 10,000 square foot house from being built within the City of Plymouth and Ms. Elmiger responded that the lot coverage stops it, only 35% is allowed to be covered by structures.

Ed Krol, 1108 Carol, was in favor of the FAR .4 calculation along with the fixed height of the second story and asked about the size allowed for the garage and Ms. Elmiger responded that the lot coverage would dictate the size of the garage. Mr. Krol would like the garages to be included in the FAR calculations.

Public Comments portion was Closed at 8:16 PM

The Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding including garages in the calculations:

Comm. Frisbie felt garages or any ancillary buildings should be included to help curb the massing, everything needs to be included that is built on the site.

Comm. Silvers spoke about having the garage included in the floor area ratio, and suggested the detached garage would not be included if it was put in the rear 1/3 of the rear yard as an FAR incentive.

There was discussion on garages attached and detached (with the current Ordinance), lot coverage would be counted with the FAR calculation, and detached garages do contribute to the massing on a lot.

Comm. Myslinski explained when building a detached garage, at the rear of the main structure yard, it will then become a buildable second floor livable area with the full height. Mr. Myslinski further discussed, if you build a detached garage, it's still in your 35% lot coverage, but not in the FAR calculation for the primary residence because it's not attached and it doesn't have the second floor construction living area. If the garage is clearly detached, Comm. Myslinski suggested not including it in the FAR calculations.

Comm. Phillips discussed how most prefer more square footage added to the living area which leaves less for square footage for an accessory structure.

There was more discussion on lot coverage and the mid-point roof heights of garages.

Ms. Elmiger suggested the garages are included in lot coverage and should be included in the FAR calculations also.

Comm. Myslinski was in favor of creating an incentive for the detached garage creating the gap between the home & the garage, and to deter the rear attached garages that would have the 2- story -30 foot long side wall.

Ms. Elmiger suggested modifying the proposed Ordinance-

1. Detached Garage-Excluding: 528 square foot (footprint) for the detached garage in the FAR.
2. Detached Garage- (anything in excess of 528 square feet), on the second floor that is a certain height, (such as 7.6' of headroom), is included in the FAR.

It was decided to use the .4 FAR with 35% lot coverage to incentivize the detached garage.

The Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding the following subjects:

Comm. Kehoe discussed Section 78-21, Definitions, Floor area measurement. Comm. Kehoe would like to change the amount of headroom from seven feet six inches to five feet of headroom for any upper story.

Ms. Elmiger suggested adding "unenclosed" onto breezeway, located in the last sentence of Section 78-21, Definitions.

There was discussion on attic space, some board members wanted to exclude the unfinished attic space and some felt if you can build it, you should be able to use it.

Comm. Sisolak suggested lowering the height of the house, so that the attics will not have a tall ceiling and therefore will not appear like a third story home.

Ms. Elmiger suggested modifying the language to read, in which may not be made usable for human habitation, suggesting that it cannot be finished.

Comm. Frisbie asked Mr. Buzuvis about enforcement of these new Ordinances and Mr. Buzuvis responded that as long as the Building Official does not have to do extra math or extra steps to figure it out, and he feels this Ordinance appears fairly easy, especially because other Communities are already using this type of calculations, but Mr. Buzuvis would like to cross check with the building code to make sure that they will align.

Comm. Frey suggested a revision located under Page 1, Section 78-21, Definitions, Floor Area Ratio, that the example listed be changed from 0.5 to 0.4, to reflect the new calculation.

Comm. Frisbie stated from the chart of twelve listed addresses the 0.4 FAR would affect 58% of the homes, seven homes out of the twelve would be diminished in mass from what they are built today.

There was discussion on the chart calculation comparisons.

Comm. Phillips suggested reducing the height of the house from 25 to 24 or 23 feet, resulting in the ridge coming down two to four feet.

Comm. Frisbie suggested setting the eve height (as was done with accessory structures) and then adjust the height of the ridge, as needed.

Comm. Silvers would prefer setting the top plate of the second floor.

Ms. Elmiger discussed having completed height studies for the City of Northville, and felt Plymouth has the lowest heights of all the surrounding Communities. Ms. Elmiger stated most Communities have a height maximum of 30 or 35 feet, measured the same way.

Mr. Buzuvis discussed a previous Ordinance amendment that removed the allowance of an increased home height if the setback was reduced and some of the existing homes have taken advantage of this incentive with homes up to 29 feet tall.

Comm. Frey was not comfortable with the restriction of limiting the home height and felt there does not seem to be a benefit to it.

Comm. Kehoe was concerned with the outcome and ultimately getting shallow roofs and this will not add to the look of the homes.

Comm. Myslinski discussed one of the chart examples where the 0.4 FAR calculation was applied and explained the outcome would be a 50% shallower depth, (width would then exceed the depth) and with this the architect and/or truss company will no longer be incentivized to turn the ridge line perpendicular to the sidewalk and this will also no longer have the full gable front, the ridge line would disappear along with the height and therefore suggested the board to move forward without any adjustment to height.

Comm. Frisbie was not in favor of changing the height and suggested moving forward with the 0.4 FAR changes as discussed.

Chair Mulhern would like the discussion of home heights to continue with next month's meeting.

A Motion was made by Comm. Philips and supported by Comm. Kehoe to approve the following changes to Article II 78-21 Definitions, Article V 78-53 Single-Family Dwelling Unit Standards, Article IV 78-43 Single-Family Dwelling Unit Standards, Article XVII 78-191 Notes to Schedule:

- 1. To change 10,000 with a maximum of "6,000",**
- 2. To change breezeways to "unenclosed" breezeways,**
- 3. Reducing the headroom reduced from 7' 6" to "5' "**
- 4. The unfinished attic- which may not be made usable for human habitation**
- 5. To use the FAR 0.4 calculation, including the garage if attached, but not included if detached.**

to recommend to the City Commission for adoption:

YES FREY, FRISBIE, KEHOE, MYSLINSKI, PHILIPS, SILVERS, SISOLAK AND MULHERN.

NO NONE.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding the following subjects:

Comm. Philips discussed a home where it appeared to be connected by placing a structure (with no walls) between the house and the garage, where there should be a ten-foot separation, only separated by inches and Ms Elmiger responded that it may be the Building Inspector's interpretation of the ten foot between the accessory structure and house, such as not including the deck.

Mr. Buzuvis will discuss this with the Building Inspector to determine if this is an issue that may need to be revised within the Ordinance.

Comm. Kehoe discussed accessory structures and how they are counted into the lot coverage.

Chair Mulhern stated the Ordinance allows two accessory structures, that are included in your lot coverage and are not habitable.

Comm. Frisbie stated the shed is included in the lot coverage, but is not habitable by definition, therefore it is not included in the FAR.

Ms. Elmiger stated that she would include the shed to the list of not included.

Comm. Frey asked that it be put onto the list as an accessory structure which would include the shed, gazebo, porte cochere, etc.

Mr. Buzuvis mentioned also using raised patios and swimming pools

Comm. Frisbie suggested simplifying the FAR by limiting it to habitable areas, by using habitable areas it rules out the possibilities of any new types of structures in the future.

Comm. Silvers would like to just leave it as it is, with no changes and stated the FAR is just a planning tool measured from the exterior.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Street Trees/Tree Ordinance Discussion

Comm. Silvers discussed an idea to obtain more street trees. Comm. Silvers stated street trees create a sense of security within the neighborhood; streets that do not have trees give the street walkers a different sensation than a street with the tree canopy.

The trees would be placed between the street and sidewalks and also at median strips.

Comm. Silvers discussed the idea of when building a new home the applicant would be required as part of the permit process to donate a portion of money towards the street tree fund to be used by the City to repopulate street trees within the City. For existing homes being remodeled, there would also be some kind of requirement but, if someone wanted to opt out they could instead invest into the street tree fund which would also support the replacement of old or diseased trees reforesting Plymouth and benefitting everyone.

Chair Mulhern suggested publicizing each tree planting with a small sign that reads:

Our Great City of Plymouth planted this tree, through the street tree program, why not try one in your yard? Chair Mulhern asked about the tree program being located within the Master Plan and Ms. Elmiger responded that most Master plans will mention a tree program but not in any great detail.

Mr. Buzuvis stated the City DMS department currently plants trees for your yard, if you purchase one, they usually run approximately \$150 and \$20 for a tree watering bag. The City Commission has made it one of their goals and the proposed reforestation Ordinance language on street trees is currently being drafted by City staff which should be ready for the November meeting.

Comm. Frisbie asked if the draft language will be geared towards funding or tied to building permits for remodeling, additions or new residential homes and Mr. Buzuvis responded that it will be aimed at both so that it has options for the residents. This will be an incentive based Ordinance for planting so many trees and if that's not possible then the other option would be to pay into the environmental reforestation fund, this Ordinance will also be tied into storm water management mitigating the runoff.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Comm. Kehoe discussed the upcoming mileage for Wayne County RESA (regional educational service agency) which gives an additional \$385 per student towards school funding. The home values are directly linked to the schools performance, and these home values will drop if they do not maintain the current level of education needed.

Chair Mulhern thanked Comm. Myslinski and Comm. Philips for all their hard work in their researching, visuals and considerations relative to home massing.

9. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

Master Plan Review Update:

Ms. Elmiger explained that they are about 30% complete, with no new changes made to the Master Plan and the next proposed meeting will be sometime in November.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Comm. Frisbie and supported by Comm. Philips to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marleta S. Barr,
Community Development Department
Office Manager