

MINUTES OF A REGULAR VOTING MEETING OF THE

FAIRFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION

December 10, 2014

Scott Lepsky, Chairman, called the Regular Meeting of the Fairfield Planning Commission to order.

Members present: Scott Lepsky, Don Hassler, Bill Woeste, Mark Morris, Ron D'Epifanio, Tom Hasselbeck and Bob Myron.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the previous meeting, held November 12, 2014, were approved as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Design Review Committee Items:

State Farm – 526 Nilles Road – Reface Monument Sign and Remove Vinyl Signs from Windows

An aerial was shown of the site and the monument sign where the panel is being replaced. Tim Bachman stated the new panel is a slight modification of the existing panel and Design Review recommended it be approved as submitted.

Scott Lepsky, seconded by Don Hassler, moved to approve the new sign for State Farm as submitted and recommended by Design Review.

Motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Senior Housing Facility – Patterson Drive

Tim Bachman stated the Design Review Committee turned down the elevations discussed at the Public Hearing. Jon Sines of Polaris Engineering, representing Clover Construction, the applicant, was introduced. Mr. Sines stated he represents both Clover Construction and Clover Management. They are a design, build and operate company. The president is Michael Joseph; he founded the company in 1987 and his background was an investment banker and real estate. In the 1980's he branched off and started building his own portfolio. Clover now consists of 150 properties in New York, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Georgia. They own, operate and maintain over 10 million square feet of property or about 6,000 units. Clover Construction was founded 6 years later; they design and construct the apartment buildings. Clover saw the need for the senior housing and has found their residents typically come from within a five mile radius of the building. Each unit has its own HVAC system, modern kitchen with breakfast bar and pantry and all the appliances including a washer and dryer. Pull cords and sprinkler systems are in each apartment. Other amenities offered will include monthly outings, newsletter, holiday parties, etc.

An aerial of the site was shown. It's approximately 5.6 acres and is in between the retail portion of Patterson Place and the retention pond. In 2010, a Concept Plan was approved for a 120 unit project built in two phases of 60 units each. It was to be a low and moderate income facility but never

received approval at the State level for their bonds. The elevation approved in the Concept Plan was shown. The Clover elevations were turned down by the Design Review Committee as the building was entirely siding with the exception of a 2' stone band around the bottom. Vertical and horizontal siding was proposed as their way of breaking up the elevation. A slide of Clover's second rendition was shown. This submission attempted to meet some of the concerns expressed by the Design Review Committee. The Committee's concerns included:

- Balconies - Some were open on three sides and items on them could be seen.
- Roof Pitch – The pitch in the approved 2010 approved Concept Plan was more substantial than what Clover is proposing.
- Lack of Masonry - The elevation closest to the retail center is 300' long and it was felt more masonry was needed. The Waterford is 60% masonry/40% siding and the Committee thought this building should at a minimum, do the same. Mr. Bachman stated the building approved in concept had less masonry product than the Waterford but other elements were used to break up the façade.
- Bump Outs - The Committee felt bump outs should be designed to break up the façade.

The second submission was reviewed by staff and suggestions sent back to the design team. Staff suggested the front be made more dominant by making the roof more dramatic at the entrance and adding additional stone. Staff also asked the long planes be broken up by making some of the units a little larger and introducing bump outs.

A **third rendering** was submitted today and shows the following:

Front Elevation: The entrance area has a steeper roof and the entire bump out is stone. Stone is shown on the first floor and added to the end walls closest to Patterson. Columns of stone are also proposed on the balconies. Staff is recommending additional stone be added to the front east and west wall elevations.

East Elevation: Discussion was held regarding additional stone on this elevation. Mr. Hasselbeck pointed out later in the meeting that if portions of the retail center are demolished as previously proposed, the east side would be completely visible and it makes sense to have 3 symmetrical sections of stone on this side.

West Elevation: This side will also be completely visible from Patterson. Mr. Bachman reviewed with the Commission where additional stone is now proposed.

Rear Elevation: The back is all siding but is hidden by the vegetation along the creek. Staff feels any stone proposed in the rear would have more impact if used on the front and sides.

Landscape Plan: Changes discussed by the Design Review Committee have been made. An additional curb cut from Patterson into the site has been removed and the existing one curb cut better defined to serve the Clover development and existing retail center. Mounding has been added on the south and east sides.

Mr. Bachman asked Mr. Sines if Clover has considered bumping some of the units out to further break up the long planes of the building. Mr. Sines had not approached the architect firm with this request. Currently, the units are very typical and easy to construct. It might be possible but would need to be discussed. Mr. Sines stated his mission this evening was to get the final comments regarding additional changes the Commission would like to see. The Waterford was built with government money subsidized rent; Clover is privately funded and the rents are market driven. They are different competitors and can't really be compared to each other.

Demolition of portions of the retail center was discussed. Jeff Chamot, Neyer Properties, stated they are working with a user to take almost half of the former Marsh space. It is still Neyer's intent to take down the building west of Planet Fitness. Mr. Woeste expressed his concern about additional residential being introduced into the area where the demolition is still planned. Mr. Chamot replied anything other than retail or office would have to go through an approval process. Potentially though, detached housing could locate west of the retention pond as discussed during the Concept Plan approval process. Mr. Bachman stated this is a re-development site. The City spent \$700,000 to remove a portion of the retail center and create the pond. If this project goes forward, it will set a standard of development for other projects in this area. In Village Green, a lot of the same materials and colors play off each other throughout the entire retail portion. It could be the same case here. Neyer owns 20 acres on this side of Patterson and portions will be new construction; others re-development. If the Clover project is approved, design elements from the building could be incorporated into other future buildings. Mr. Morris added Clover will be the first in if they are willing to meet the architectural requirements requested by the City and will set the standard for those to follow. They shouldn't be discouraged because no one knows what is going to happen on the adjacent properties. Mr. Bachman added development of Village Green started in 1993; it's taken 21 years to get where we are. No users were identified for the 120 acres when the project started. Kroger's decided to upgrade and move, the Waterford showed interest in the site and the City added public funding to construct buildings and the park. The only known was there were mechanisms in place (Design Review, Planning Commission and P.U.D. zoning) to assure an aesthetically pleasing outcome. Mr. Hassler was concerned about a change in clientele if it is not successful as a senior facility. Mr. Sines replied it is deed restricted to age 55 and above. Mr. Hassler also brought up the strain on City services it might cause; there are many runs to the Waterford. Mr. Bachman stated he spoke with the Fire Chief and was told people who cannot afford assisted living are trying to stay at the Waterford for as long as possible. Their health is catching up with them and it places a drain on City services. He has concerns with the Clover project and additional impact it might cause. Mr. Bachman reminded the Commissioners the Concept Plan for a similar facility was approved in 2010; this is not a rezoning but a Final Development Plan.

The rental rates were discussed. In different communities, Mr. Sines stated the monthly rent is \$900 to as high as \$1,400. Mr. D'Epifanio said the City adopted a housing mix of 70% single family; 30% multi-family. He was not aware what the current ratio is but was concerned with approving an additional 119 units. Mr. Lepsky stated with the aging population, senior housing is needed. Mr. Woeste again expressed his concern with the entire 20 acres being developed as senior housing if that's what the market is dictating. Mr. Sines reiterated that Clover makes their money by owning the buildings and maintaining them; they are not going to build it and sell it off right away.

Mr. Lepsky stated this might be the anchor that triggers development of the adjacent parcels (possible support services such as medical buildings). Mr. Hasselbeck pointed out that since this is in a Tax Increment Finance District, the funds generated could be used to purchase another EMS vehicle. Mr. Morris added there are not many options for Fairfield residents to go to when they decide to sell their house but want to stay in the City. This is a growing need throughout the county and communities who embrace it and get ahead of it, potentially will be the successful ones for attracting their residents to stay.

Mr. Bachman stated staff has suggested a few things we feel will make the architectural aspect more pleasing. He asked the Commission if other items should be added. Mr. Woeste praised the company for making some of the changes the City has requested. The sides needed to be broken up and an attempt has been made to do that. Mr. Woeste asked about parking and was told the ratio is one parking space per unit. A parking study prepared showed about 77% of their residents have cars. Ms. Donovan said the Waterford has the same ratio and there is always available parking. Land banking parking on the east side was suggested. Mr. Sines said most of their residents are still independent but don't want the house and don't want a car. They'll either use public transportation or the shuttle to get to the grocery and appointments. Usually, one shuttle will handle a couple properties. Amenities offered in the building include a hair salon/barber shop, and libraries on each end of the major wings. No medical services are offered; staff consists of the property manager and a maintenance person.

Mr. Hassler asked about covered parking and was told Clover does have a few facilities with covered parking. The problem they saw is the parking areas are being used for storage. Clover now is trying covered parking (garages, not carports) with an 8' storage area.

Mr. Bachman asked if the Commission was comfortable with tabling this item tonight and giving the design team additional weeks to review and propose additional revisions based on Staffs and the Commissions suggestion. Mr. Lepsky replied he would like to see the east elevation revised per Mr. Hasselbeck's comment (3 symmetrical sections of stone to balance that wall section). Mr. Hasselbeck also suggested exploring the addition of bump outs.

Mr. Bachman stated that the Commission is under a 45 day time clock from first reading to make a recommendation back to City Council. This time is up on Christmas Eve. Mr. Sines stated another option would be to vote on it this evening with the caveat that Design Review's concerns with the bump outs be satisfied. Mr. Lepsky stated that while it is an option, he felt the owner of Clover should be consulted with and agree to the changes prior to the Commission voting. Mr. Bachman suggested the design team make the changes Clover agrees to and resubmit for the January 14th meeting.

Mr. Sines requested the Commission table this item until the January 14th meeting. Scott Lepsky, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to table the proposed senior housing project on Patterson Drive until January 14th per the request of the applicants' representative. Motion passed unanimously.

Final Development Plan – Senior Housing Development – Patterson Drive

Scott Lepsky, seconded by Bill Woeste, moved to table this item per the previous request. Motion passed unanimously.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Scott Lepsky, Chairman

Peggy Flaig, Clerk