

MINUTES OF MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Members Present: Wilson, Coyne, Allen, DeMarco, Bishop

Presence Noted: Kathryn Kerber, Director of Planning and Community Development
Kate Straub, Planning and Zoning Coordinator

Council Members Present: Michael O'Boyle, Ward 2

Chairman Bishop called to order the February 21, 2024 meeting of the Rocky River Planning Commission at 6:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers of Rocky River City Hall.

1. CITY OF ROCKY RIVER SENIOR CENTER - 21014 Hilliard Blvd. -- Mandatory Referral - Senior Center Additions. Mr. Timothy Wagner and Mr. Don Rerko of Makovich & Pusti Architects, Inc., came forward to present the project. Also present is Rocky River Facilities Director, Michael Balla.

Project overview: Additions to the front of the existing building for a lecture hall to seat approximately 96 people and to the back for a fitness center/dance studio and new restrooms. A lot consolidation of two city-owned properties is required for this project. The project received final approval from the Design and Construction Board of Review on Monday, February 5, 2024. The Board encouraged applicants to consider providing variation in the material to break up the massiveness of the stone façade and providing more control joints in the EIFS panels in the rear.

Mr. Bishop said that he would like to go over some punch-list items and the Design Board approval. Mr. Balla said that the Design Board approved the project, but the Board did ask them to consider some additional ideas, which they have considered, but they are planning to stick with the original design. Mr. Bishop asked whether the concerns of the Design Board were conditions that are binding, or simply suggestions. Mr. Bishop said that they also talked about landscaping at the rear but it does not look like anything has changed. Mr. Balla responded that he does not think that will be part of this project, but they could do it in-house with the City Service Department after the project is done. This will keep the project in the budget they are trying to maintain. Mr. Bishop said that they should show it on the drawings and it doesn't matter who executes it. Mr. Balla agreed to add some low shrubs and small trees along the back of the building. Mr. Bishop said that when you are behind the building, there is not a big need for any additional buffering. The need for additional landscaping would serve to finish off the back elevation.

Mr. Bishop continued by saying that the resident next door brought up the Senior Center bus and where it is parked in the Senior Center parking lot. Mr. Balla said that there is no other place to put the Senior Center bus without moving dumpsters and if they put it in the lot, then it would take up a bunch of parking spaces. Mr. Bishop suggested they locate it in a couple of the first two front-to-back spaces in the court parking area. He agrees that it does take away from the Senior Center itself, the path, and the fact that the signage is right there. He feels it would look

better aesthetically to relocate the bus. Mr. Bishop said that two front-to-back parking spaces next to the island would amount to 36'. He said that is still up in the air for discussion.

Mr. DeMarco acknowledged that they received the Design Board minutes and asked the applicant to describe their conversation with them. Mr. Wagner said that Design Board was concerned about the elevation to the left of the front door, and suggested adding some siding because it was all stone. Mr. DeMarco pointed out that the minutes from the Design Board meeting reference the right side as you face the building, but it is the left side when facing the front door. Mr. DeMarco said that he thinks there are bigger implications for making the tall piece the front entry and programmatically and budget-wise, it can't work. Regarding scoring/control joint reveals on the EIFS on the back of the building, Mr. Wagner said that they will do the required control joints and since it is in the back, they did not go beyond the manufacturer recommended control joints to save some money. Mr. DeMarco said that it doesn't make it any less important, and even though it is the back elevation, it should still be somewhat visually appealing. He would like to reinforce the Design Board's comment from that standpoint. Mr. Rerko said that it was agreed they would show the control joints administratively. He added that the bollards out in the front will remain and be repainted to match the new color scheme. Mr. DeMarco asked if what they are showing is representative of what the signage will be because it seems to him that it would be more interesting if they took advantage of the opportunity to put the Senior Center logo as part of the signage with the waves and the sunburst pattern.

Mr. Allen said he would suggest that they add a contingency for the landscaping piece in the back to the motion. He had questions about the rear elevation and an earlier conversation about some potential lighting in the back but he does not see anything in the elevations. Mr. Balla responded that they will be adding the emergency lights to the back of the building. The Recreation and Service Departments are continuing the walking path that is behind the Senior Center (through the woods and to the west of the building), but there is no plan to add anymore additional lighting back there so they can discourage people from being back there at night. Regarding the west elevation with the big patio, he wants to make sure that they don't plan on removing any of the trees. Mr. Balla said that they removed the trees on the plans so that they could see the elevation, but the trees will remain.

Mr. Coyne said he has nothing to add that hasn't already been mentioned and he missed this item the first time it came before this Commission. He agrees with Mr. Allen that the landscaping portion needs to be reviewed by them for sure, but be sure that there is some comprehensive plan involved there. He agrees on the emergency lighting being added to the back from a safety perspective.

Mr. Wilson said he agrees with the lighting and landscaping because the walls on the back elevation look very stark. They had a comment from a resident about the look of that elevation and the drainage. Mr. Wagner said that they are not touching the wetlands. Mr. Wilson suggested that increasing vegetation back there and including trees should help because they

soak up a lot of rainwater. He appreciates that they will work with the Service Department to add species that are appropriate for that area.

Mr. Bishop said that the Building Commissioner is not here, but he would imagine it will go through engineering and asked if the site plan would address any need for a catch basin. Mr. Balla said they will not be grading to the east because that is where the wetland is, but they will be grading where they will be working and added that the storm drainage on the building will help. Mr. Wagner said that an engineering plan has not been done yet, but their engineer will provide that.

Mr. Bishop said that they could make this a conditional final approval, but the applicant can still proceed.

Mr. DeMarco moved to grant final approval to Rocky River Senior Center, 21014 Hilliard Blvd., conditioned upon the following items: *Applicant to return with enhanced landscaping that is noted on the site plan as a future phase as determined by the City; investigating the possibility of enhancing the signage, as was discussed; applicant to provide some commentary about how the drainage will be addressed; revise the plans to show the EIFS refinement of the scoring on the rear elevation, which was previously requested; exploration of some resolution on the van parking issue because those things were part of the conditions for the preliminary approval. Mr. Allen seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
APPROVED * as noted

2. RUFFING MONTESSORI SCHOOL – 1285 ORCHARD PARK DR. – PUBLIC HEARING – Mandatory Referral – Secured Entry Addition. Mr. Bob Bajko and Mr. Andre Khawam of HSB Architects and Engineers, came forward with Bobbie Krueger of The Krueger Group and Anne Lushutka, School Principal, to discuss the project.

Mr. Bishop said that this looks like a pretty basic project in terms of what this Commission looks at. It only involves the triangle section at the entrance, they are not taking away any parking, and it is for the security of the facility. He confirmed with the applicant that everything on the drawing is accurate and represents how it is intended to be constructed. He is satisfied with the submission.

Mr. DeMarco asked about the signage on the entry awning and if that is representative of the intent and the applicant confirmed that it is representative of their intent. He asked questions about the interior program and how it will change with this addition. The seats are listed with names of people who are all current personnel.

Mr. Allen asked about what they will do with the current area when the employees move to the new secured entry and whether they will repurpose it for something else. Ms. Lushutka said that their 3 and 4 year old children are currently not able to stay the whole day because they don't have room in the building for them. This repurposed space will allow some of those existing

students to stay longer. There will be no change in students count and no technical change to the number of classrooms.

Regarding the sign, Mr. Krueger said that there will be some signage on the front of the building to replace an existing sign that they plan to repurpose, but they haven't studied whether the Ruffing sign will be illuminated or not. He is aware of the fact that if a sign is illuminated, there are some sensitivities about brightness and hours of operation. He said that they will think through signage details and have an answer for the Commission when they come back.

Mr. Coyne had no questions. Mr. Wilson asked if there will be any impact to the existing landscaping and Mr. Krueger said that the tree Mr. Wilson reference will remain and the flagpole will be moved to where it shows on the plan. Mr. Bishop asked whether it would change the traffic pattern at the end of the day since they will be keeping the children longer. Ms. Lashutka said that there are about twenty 3 and 4 year olds and it may affect the traffic slightly but she is not sure.

Mr. Bishop moved to open the public hearing. Mr. Allen seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

There being no members of the public in attendance for comment, Mr. Bishop moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Allen seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

Mr. Bishop moved to grant preliminary approval for a secured entry addition to Ruffing Montessori School, 1285 Orchard Park Dr. Applicant to return for Final Approval with signage details, including lighting detail. Mr. DeMarco seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

3. WXZ DETROIT ROAD DEVELOPMENT – PRE-PRELIMINARY REVIEW – 19340-64 Detroit Rd. – Development Plan Review for a Retail Development. Mr. Dave Budge, of WXZ Development and Mr. Rick Benos of Arcus Group, came forward to present the project.

Mr. Budge said that they have closed on the purchase of the properties and the rezoning effort was successful. All properties involved are now zoned Local Business. Mr. Bishop said that it was discussed at their earlier discussion about the Commission preferring that the building be located on the corner but he can now understand why they are planning what they are presenting. He feels they have done a good job with what they have to work with and he can see the challenges they face.

Mr. Bishop said that the Code does not permit parking between the right-of-way and the building in a Local Business district, but the Planning Commission may grant an exception under certain conditions and in this case, it may require a 4' masonry wall at Detroit Rd. and Parson's Court. It looks like they will end up with a retaining wall at the south side (Detroit Rd. side). Mr. Budge said they are not proposing a retaining wall on the front side and there is about 4' of fall from the sidewalk to the very back of the lot. He said that they don't have a grading plan yet because of these issues and they don't know exactly how the parking will work. The idea is to have a landscape feature in the front that is somewhat elevated and then graded back to where the parking is. They will most likely try to taper it but it's up to the engineer whether they will need a retaining wall.

Mr. Bishop said he envisioned a cut and a retaining wall that could get them out of the necessity for a 4' masonry wall, and then like they did at Valvoline, they protected the drop with some black ornamental fencing. He feels there is a great opportunity to create sort of a pocket park or bench area to tie it all together. It is the trade-off for working with the Code and the retaining wall to help buffer the parking, versus the 4' masonry wall to buffer the parking. This is a great opportunity because this is a walkable area. Mr. Budge said that they don't have a landscape plan yet, but he thinks that with the grade change and the landscaping they will do, whether it is a bench or enhanced landscaping, they will be able to screen that parking almost completely from the people driving past. Mr. Bishop said that he would very much be in favor of placing a bench or small pocket park there to really enhance the corner.

Mr. Bishop said that they should clean up some things on the site plan. They are not showing that they are removing the concrete right in front of the existing portion of the building they are keeping and that they should get rid of the concrete that is in the setback. Mr. Budge said that there is an apron that is the whole width of the building. Mr. Bishop said that they will want that concrete removed and the apron handled somehow because we already have problems in other areas where things are re-developed and cars are pulling in over the curb, thinking they can park there. Mr. Bishop said that the parking requirement is based on gross square footage and he is coming up with 7,840 sq. ft., which requires 32 spaces. However, depending on their tenants, that formula could go up or down.

Mr. Bishop said that most, if not all, of the references to zoning is incorrect and should be revised. He went over the building setback, with 10' parking setback on the east property line but for the north property line, it almost implies that the 10' is outside of the property line. Discussion was had to clarify where the property line to the north is located. Mr. DeMarco asked them to note that what they are referring to is the line of the walk that is encroaching there. Mr. Bishop added that it is very difficult to look at this small of a print and asked for prints to scale for ease of reading. They requested clarification of the loading space(s) on the site plan.

The number of parking spaces on the site plan does not coincide with the numbers that are called out because the math does not add up. The width of the drive aisle needs to be labeled. Mr. Budge said that they also have an engineered drawing that is based off the survey, which is a

little more detailed. Mr. Bishop requested that they separate the site plan into two different pages of information, so that the site plan gives them all the information they are talking about, without the things they have overlaid on it. He would like the lot coverage called out, which is permitted to be a maximum of 30%. Going back to the parking lot and the idea of landscaping and buffering, he encouraged the applicants to pay attention to 1185.07 and 1185.09 of the Code. The masonry wall exception is located in 1167.11(b). They will require a consolidation of the plat and asked them to provide a copy of that.

Mr. DeMarco agrees that a larger scale plan would be helpful because there are a lot of demo lines overlaid on top of the site plan for all of the things that will be removed. He agrees with everything Mr. Bishop said. He noticed that the west property line abutting the unowned parcel in the middle, has a parking setback requirement is 10' and they have labeled it as 5'. He thinks that really dressing up that corner could work as a compromise. He may prefer the 2' to 4' cut as a retaining wall so they are dropping down to the parking level, then down again to the rear parking. He is definitely in favor of some decorative amenity space.

Mr. Allen made a suggestion to make the drive aisle connect to Beachcliff Market Square for additional access to the site and reconfigure parking spots to angled parking on the north side of the drive aisle and it was determined that there is not enough room to configure the site that way. It would also create too much through traffic on the site from Beachcliff Market Square and onto Parson's Court. Mr. Budge said that they added steps for connectivity with Beachcliff Market Square. Mr. DeMarco said he does not think there needs to be a vehicular connection to Beachcliff Market Square, but there should be a nicely landscaped, walkable connection. Mr. Bishop added that there is already a parking problem at Beachcliff Market Square and he does not agree that they should encourage parking for these new tenants over at Beachcliff when there is enough parking on this site.

Mr. Coyne said he does not have much more to add that has not been discussed. He would really like to encourage them to take advantage of the corner and the pocket park is an opportunity to anchor this corner, which is located adjacent to the bridal shop. Mr. Wilson said that this site plan is starting to feel much more pedestrian scale, especially with the addition of a mini-park on the southwest corner. He added that the suggestions made to further enhance the pedestrian connection with cut-throughs using steps and sidewalks are very good.

Discussion was had relating to the lower level plan. Mr. Bishop confirmed that tenant "D" will be an actual tenant leased space. He asked what the term "common space" means. Mr. Budge said that it is currently a garage, where the previous owner parked his delivery truck. It will be maintained as a loading space. Mr. Bishop encouraged the architect to label Tenant Space A, B and D, as "storage" because he is not sure what "extra" means. He requested that they identify spaces on the lower level as not finished/not leasable space. Mr. DeMarco suggested that they add a small chart or a table that identifies the leasable areas. The term "storage" can push the applicant into a different set of complications as far as Building Code is concerned. He is fine with them somehow identifying these spaces as extra instead of using the term storage because it can imply that there may be hazardous materials. He encouraged them to call it something that

means storage without using that word. A chart that calls out the total leasable space per tenant would help. Mr. Bishop requested that they include the ceiling heights of the lower level to determine whether it is occupiable space as it relates to the parking calculation. The applicant said that the tenants will be retail, service or office type space and they don't have any other tenants identified yet.

Regarding the architecture, Mr. DeMarco said that it is apparent that the intent is to make this look like an extension of Beachcliff Market Square, and he thinks they have done that well. He thinks it fits in with the character of the area. Mr. Bishop said that the blank west wall needs some work. Mr. DeMarco said that he thinks that the corner will be so dense that it won't be seen. He is also a big advocate of having a large mural like the program that Bay Village has.

The applicants thanked the Commission for their time and input.


4. **ORDINANCE 07-24** – A meeting date of March 19, 2024 was set for the Planning Commission public hearing for Ordinance 07-24.

Law Director O'Shea explained that our Charter has a section that defines what we do when it comes to zoning, as it relates to City Council. Then we have our Codified Ordinances that define what the Planning Commission does as well as additional provisions regarding notification requirements for zoning. Because Ordinance 80-23 affects more than 20 parcels, they don't have to send notices via registered mail of public hearings, whether it is Planning Commission or City Council. This Ordinance amends the Code to provide for the City to use Ready Notify at its discretion and also add it to the landing page of our website. The term "may" is used to indicate that it is at the City's discretion to use the additional notifications that are contained in 07-24. It was explained by Mr. Bishop that the reason the Code specifies 20 or less parcels is because 20 parcels is a practical number to be able to mail notices to. There is not the obligation to mail notifications when there are more than 20 parcels because it would be a much bigger task and not as practical. However, the other method of public notification in the newspaper is always required. Mr. O'Shea said that the ready notify can include a link to the City's website to lead people there for additional information. We are trying to eliminate the appearance that there is a lack of transparency at City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.



William Bishop, Chairman



Michael DeMarco, Vice-Chairman

Date: 3/19/2024

