

Minutes
City of Monona
Plan Commission
Monday January 27, 2020

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (7:00 pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Kathy Thomas, Mr. Chris Homburg, Ms. Coreen Fallat, Mr. Robert Stein, and Ms. Susan Fox

Absent: Mr. Brian Holmquist and Mr. Josh Peterson

Also Present: Mayor Mary O'Connor, City Administrator Bryan Gadow, City Planner Doug Plowman, City Planning Intern Elisa Guerrero and Tom Stolper - Community Development Authority Chair.

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Ms. Thomas, seconded by Ms. Fallat, to approve the minutes of January 13th, 2020 carried with no corrections.

Appearances

There were no appearances.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

A. Prehearing Conference on Request by Galway Companies for Approval of Phase II precise Implementation Plan (PIP) for “Yahara Commons” for a 140 Unit Residential Building. (Case No. 2-002-2020)

Mr. Fredendall, of JLA Architects, presented the PIP for Yahara Commons to the commission, saying that the general concept for the design was to create a connection with the Riverfront and the new city park. This connection is achieved through the green roof space on the building, which lines up with the city park, and will provide outdoor space, a clubhouse and potentially a pool for residents. Additionally, the same color pallet and materials as Phase I will be used, since the buildings are intended to be sister buildings. The building will consist of four stories of residential units and two levels of parking, one for residents and the other public. Following the CDA's recommendation, there will be a strong connection between the public parking and the city park. There will be additional bike parking in the design. The design and amount of parking was a sizable consideration in the design process, considering the parking challenges that have arisen, specifically during lunch and dinner rushes, in the rest of the development. The developers considered building a smaller building with just residential parking, but opted for more units with an entire level of public parking, since the parking for Phase I was inadequate.

Mr. Homburg said that he was happy with the addition of more public parking stalls, and suggested that the strain on parking might be alleviated by using the Avid hotel parking lot and by ensuring that parking underneath The Current was being fully used. He also recalled that one of the conditions from the Phase I PIP was that Phase II would need to compensate parking for Phase I. Mr. Homburg then asked what the distance was between the building and Bridge Rd, to which the presenters answered about 20 feet. Mr. Homburg expressed concern at the building

massing towards Bridge Rd, explaining that he worried that the current proposed building was a story and a half taller than what was originally discussed and he felt it might be too tall and large for Bridge Rd. He mentioned that designs from the GDP had shown a more articulated roofline, which helped cut down on the massing. He also expressed concern about the brick wall covering both levels of parking, stating that because it ran the length of the building it was not visually appealing, and asked if there was a way to mediate that. Mr. Fredendall replied that an earlier design had included a more varied roofline, to address some of the massing issues, but it could be revisited. To address the brick wall, they mentioned that a design similar to the metal screen on the other side of the building could be placed along the Bridge Rd wall. Mr. Homburg said he wanted to ensure that the wall ended up looking like something more than a parking garage. He mentioned that there are landscaping requirements per parking stall, and urged the architects to ensure they were meeting green space requirements, given that both levels of parking are covered. During conversations about the GDP, the consensus was that Phase II might need to compensate some green space for Phase I. Additionally, Mr. Homburg expressed concern about having a parking garage entrance/exit along Inland Way directly across from the park, explaining that he believed that having high vehicle and pedestrian traffic in that area could be a safety concern. He said that the architects should try to keep the parking vehicle exit on a less heavily trafficked area, while keeping a pedestrian entrance/exit to the garage facing the park, to facilitate connection between the two.

Ms. Fallat said that she agreed with many of Mr. Homburg's points, especially concerning Bridge Rd. She said that in previous plans, there had been walk up units along the Bridge Rd side of the building and asked where those units went. The architects responded that they could no longer do walk up units along Bridge Rd because of the two stories of parking. Ms. Fallat said that she liked the design of the green roof, but asked if it served any stormwater purposes and if it infiltrated at all, which might be a concern given the increased amounts of rainfall that the city has experienced. Mr. Homburg responded that rainfall and other stormwater considerations had been accounted for in the plan for the whole development and infiltration needs for the development have been met without the addition of the green roof. Because the city decided to be a leader in stormwater management and invested in permeable pavement for various parts of the development, the designs actually exceeded infiltration requirements. City Administrator Gadow confirmed these statements. Ms. Fallat then asked how often parking data was collected for The Current, and the architects responded that since the developer offices were on site, they were able to collect parking data every day. Lastly, Ms. Fallat asked if the proposed bike parking would be public or for residents, explaining that public spaces would be nice, considering the development is right along the bike path. The architects responded that they were not sure at that time, but that there would be public bike parking outside of the building.

Mr. Stein emphasized the need to maximize parking in Phase II. He also said that he would like to see more visual differences between the proposed building and The Current, so that they look similar but not so identical, to give the development a more metropolitan feel. He then asked if the metal screening in the front of the building was purely decorative, and the architects answered that it was a screen to cover pool filtration equipment, should a pool be added to the building. Mr. Stein then asked if there would be any noise concerns with pool equipment, and the architects responded that the equipment should not be very noisy.

Alder Thomas asked the architects if they had calculated their parking under snow emergency conditions, considering that all of the street parking along Bridge Rd is inaccessible during a snow emergency. The architects responded that they had not seen many people even using the street parking along Bridge Rd and speculated that, because there has been construction for so long, people are not aware that there is parking there. Alder Thomas said that she thought the proposed building was large, but that because there are smaller buildings on the other side of the street, the street does not feel too constricted. She added that she liked the parking, and

asked how much bigger the Phase II building is than Phase I. The architects answered that it is about 30,000 square feet larger.

Ms. Fox said that she liked the green roof and building design, including that the colors were cohesive with Phase I. She asked if changing the massing of the building along Bridge Rd would affect the number of units, and the architects answered that yes, if the massing changed, so would the number of units and it might be an opportunity to decrease the number of two-bedroom units in favor of more one-bed or studio units. Ms. Fox then added that she would like to see more landscaping along Bridge Rd, in order to make it more visually interesting.

Alder Moore brought up the topic of signage for all the parking, emphasizing that signage should be clear so the public is not confused about what parking spaces are public versus resident parking. She said that she envisions something like the clearly visible signage Madison has for its public parking garage, which Alder Thomas agreed with. She also suggested that the entrance for the covered parking should be wide enough to accommodate increased vehicle traffic, since it will be public and private parking. Alder Moore then mentioned that the design of the screen for the pool equipment was very important, because it is right across from Grand Crossing Park and she finds the current design underwhelming. Alder Moore also suggested a circular drive for the Bridge Rd side of the building, but the architects explained that there is not enough space for a circular driveway between the building and Bridge Rd. Finally, Alder Moore mentioned that she would like to see solar panels on the roof, to follow the city's desire of being a leader, like with the stormwater infiltration plan. She also suggested creating a true green roof that would allow stormwater infiltration, and offered to provide resources for either project.

City Administrator Gadow asked the commission members to clarify for the developers and city staff if they would change the parking requirement from what they required from Phase I. He stated that the Phase I requirement was about one stall per bedroom, and asked if they intended to require anything beyond that. Mr. Homburg said that the data the developers presented showed that the parking spaced they proposed were close to meeting the 1.3 stalls per bedroom that the commission originally requested for Phase I, but did not get. He felt that the additional level of public parking was a step towards meeting the condition for more parking in Phase II than in Phase I. He said that he thought that the developers' proposed stalls were only off by about ten spaces from what the commission would require by code, but included about 40 extra stalls of public parking. Mr. Homburg added that if the design of the building changed to have fewer units, then there would be additional parking stalls that could be public stalls. Mr. Gadow clarified that it would be helpful for the developers to know at this meeting whether the parking plans they presented would be accepted in a formal application, or if the commission would ask for a higher stall per bedroom requirement.

Alder Thomas asked who was responsible for maintaining the public parking and Mr. Stolper, chair of the Community Development Authority, explained that the developer will own and maintain the public parking, and after a certain amount of time, the city may help pay for continued stall maintenance, but that this is likely part of the negotiation with the CDA. Ms. Fallat asked if there were any concerns from the police at having a larger building, and Mr. Gadow responded that there were not.

Reports of Staff and Commission Members

A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.

1. Potential Upcoming Items

Mr. Plowman said that there were no upcoming items and suggested that the February 10, 2020 meeting be cancelled.

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Approved April 13, 2020

2. Upcoming Meetings: February 10, 2020 (Cancelled), February 24, 2020 (Tentative)

B. Plan Commission Requests for Information from City Staff.

Alder Moore requested information about the state bills that Mr. Gadow mentioned, which could impact the City's TIF incentives. She requested that the commission be informed about how to give input on the bill as it goes through the legislature.

Adjournment

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Ms. Fox, to adjourn carried. (8:15pm)

Respectfully submitted by:
Elisa Guerrero, City Planning Intern