

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
Northville Community Center
303 W. Main Street, Northville MI
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2022
7:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Tinberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and explained that per the Open Meetings Act members of the public could either participate in person or participate via ZOOM webinar platform. Members of the Commission must be physically present to participate in the meeting.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Thomas Barry
Paul DeBono
Jeff Gaines
David Hay
Steve Kirk
Carol Maise
William Salliotte, Jr.
Donna Tinberg
AnnaMaryLee Vollick

Absent: None

Also present: Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant
Patrick Sullivan, City Manager
Brian Turnbull, Mayor
Barbara Moroski-Browne, Mayor Pro-Tem
Marilyn Price, City Council
Andrew Krenz, City Council

Approximately 83 audience (28 in person; 55 remote via Zoom)

3. APPROVE MINUTES: January 4, 2022

MOTION by DeBono, support by Barry, to approve the January 4, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: (limited to brief presentations on matters not on the agenda)

None.

5. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. CITY ADMINISTRATION:

City Manager Sullivan

No report.

Building Official Strong

No report.

Downtown Development Authority Director Ward

DDA Director Ward said that per earlier discussions, the DDA will request that the Cady Street Area Retail Market Analysis conducted by Bob Gibbs be placed on an upcoming Planning Commission agenda.

Mayor Turnbull

- Thanked the Planning Commission for their many hours of work and everyone in attendance, including The Downs development team, for their participation in this public process.
- Encouraged everyone to look out for their neighbors during the impending snowstorm event.

B. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Gaines, Historic District Commission

- HDC met January 19 and heard 4 cases.
- Next meeting February 16, 2022.

Commissioner Maise, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

- Next meeting Tuesday February 8, 5:00 pm.

Commissioner Barry, Sustainability Committee

- Committee continues to meet. Subcommittee formed to study the tree ordinance; members met with Building Official Strong for background information.

Commissioner Hay, Farmer's Market Task Force

- Presenting to City Council Monday, February 7, 2022.

Chair Tinberg, Board of Zoning Appeals

- Next meeting scheduled for February 2.
- Letter writing campaign continues to urge the state legislature to allow remote meetings when COVID numbers remain high. More information is on the City website.

C. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS:

None.

D. CORRESPONDENCE:

The Commission received the following correspondence regarding The Downs application for preliminary site plan approval:

- January 20, 2022, email from John Roby, regarding Roadways for Our Neighborhoods: Fulfilling the needs of NOW.
- January 27, 2022, letter from David Marold and Sheila York, 443 Grace Street, stating concerns regarding density.
- January 27, 2022 letter from Jeff and Terry Snyder, regarding Downs Proposal.

- January 28, 2022, memorandum from Kathleen Spillane regarding Northville Downs Preliminary Site Plan, focusing on walkability and placemaking.
- January 28, 2022 memorandum from Nancy Darga regarding Planning Commission Review of Downs Preliminary Site Plan, focusing on Walkability Expert Dan Burden’s comments at the December 21, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.
- January 29, 2022 letter from Jeff Snyder, Executive Director of The Block Foundation, regarding Proposed Farmers Market.
- January 31, 2022 email from City Manager Sullivan in response to Nancy Darga’s memorandum, and outlining the scope of work which Dan Burden was contracted to perform.
- January 31, 2022 letter from Marie McCormick, Executive Director, Friends of the Rouge regarding Site Plan Considerations.
- January 31, 2022 email from Thomas Barry to Dianne Massa, presenting feedback from Don Webb PE regarding The Downs Groundwater Study

6. APPROVAL AGENDA

MOTION by DeBono, support by Vollick, to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of agenda items generally will follow this order:

- A. Introduction by Chair
- B. Presentation by City Planner
- C. Commission questions of City Planner
- D. Presentation by Applicant (if any)
- E. Commission questions of Applicant (if item has an applicant)
- F. Public comment
- G. Commission discussion & decision

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

8. SITE PLAN AND ZONING CHANGE APPLICATIONS

9. **The Downs Planned Unit Development/Preliminary Site Plan Review/Hunter Pasteur Northville LLC** [Vacant parcels on the south side of Cady St (between S. Center & Griswold), the Northville Downs racetrack property south of Cady St. (between S. Center and River Streets), and two areas on the west side of S. Center St.]

Chair Tinberg introduced this agenda item, and encouraged everyone to understand that all were partners together in this project, and asked that everyone treat each other with civility and respect by focusing on two concepts: 1) assume positive intent on the part of everyone involved, and 2) seek first to listen and understand.

Chair Tinberg explained the PUD process as laid out in Article 20 of the Zoning Ordinance, and explained that tonight the Planning Commission would focus on whether the preliminary site plan application was *generally complete*, which was the term used in the Zoning Ordinance. If the Planning Commission felt the plan met this standard, they would schedule a public hearing.

Chair Tinberg further explained that the PUD process was lengthy. After the future public hearing, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to City Council regarding the PUD with its

preliminary site plan. City Council will then be the authority who approves or denies this PUD. If approved, the applicants will return to the Planning Commission within 6 months with a request for final site plan approval. After final site plan approval, the project will move forward with building permits and other approvals.

CONSULTANT REVIEW: Planning Consultant Elmiger

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Northville Downs PUD Preliminary Site Plan Review, City of Northville, February 1, 2022*, Planning Consultant Elmiger summarized her January 7, 2022/revised January 26, 2022 written review for this application.

The applicants had submitted a plan on December 14, 2021. After reviews by Planning Consultant Elmiger and the City’s Engineer (OHM), the applicants revised the plans and resubmitted them on January 20, 2022. Both plans are available on the City’s website.

Consultant reviews were based on the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, conditions contained in the Planning Commission’s motion for PUD eligibility, and recommendations made in Dan Burden’s walkability presentation.

Tonight’s application for preliminary site plan review

Was the Preliminary Site Plan *generally complete*? If “yes,” the next step is for the Planning Commission to schedule a public hearing, after which the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to City Council.

The project was deemed “PUD Eligible” on November 2, 2021. Compared to the plans presented during the eligibility hearing, tonight’s plans have been refined based on ordinance requirements and conditions in the PUD eligibility approval motion.

Review summary

Applicable Criteria

per Sec. 20.04 General Design Standards.

First Standard:

Evaluate the plans against the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance; many of the zoning requirements also speak to other General Design Standards. Deviations may be granted provided the project achieves the objectives of the General Design Standards.

The applicant has provided:

- Information requirements of 20.06.
- Information requested in PUD eligibility approval motion.
- Information requested previously by the Planning Commission.

Preliminary Site Plan Requirements

New information generates new questions. Recommend assessment of new information by City Engineer, DPW Director, and Building Official:

1. Transfer of ROW along Griswold?
2. Soils investigation report in relation to basements
3. Environmental conditions reports
4. River restoration design/permitting description

Dimensional Standards: Area, Width, Height, Setbacks

Planning Consultant Elmiger evaluated the requested deviations from dimensional standards as to 1) deviations that would be beneficial to the project and 2) calling out “unresolved” deviations that need

to be addressed by the Planning Commission. Planning Consultant Elmiger also suggested a new beneficial deviation.

Beneficial deviations included:

1. Apartment building: location of 5th story half way between Cady St. and Beal St. is a good use of the change in topography going south from Cady Street.
2. Single family lots: Area and lot widths are smaller on 17 lots than the R-1B standard, thus providing more affordable lots.
3. Single family lots: Front setback smaller than R-1B standard, moving porches closer to the sidewalks, thereby encouraging neighbor interaction, which was a goal of the walkability studies.
4. Townhomes: Front setback 15' along the south side of Beal, creating a more urban street front.
5. Townhomes: Front setback 15'-17.5' along S. Center St., meeting Planning Commission goal for S. Center to be a more urban-type street.

Suggested new beneficial deviation:

6. Townhomes, side facades: Locate townhome “High Visibility Side” facades 10'-15' from Hutton, if possible, to match the single family homes to the south.

Unresolved deviations to be discussed/resolved with Planning Commission:

7. Townhomes, Floor area ratio (FAR): This may not actually be a deviation. Based on the townhouse applicant showing cost estimates for their contribution to public benefits in relation to the estimated project cost, this may meet FAR “bonus” provisions.
8. Townhomes, building height ½ story taller than ordinance/Master Plan calls for along S. Center and in Racetrack area: Provide illustration of view looking south from Fairbrook sidewalk to evaluate the impact of 3-story townhomes behind single-family homes.
9. Carriage Homes, front facing garage: a rear-accessed garage building design will require a driveway behind the carriage homes, directly adjacent to River Park and open space. While the 2-story carriage house is a desirable housing type, is there another design available that would not have garages jutting out?

Natural resources

1. Applicants provided tree information
2. “Removed” trees must be identified on survey/tree list
3. Suggested site plan modification: very large trees (31”-48” diameter) be retained if possible.

Building location and site arrangement

Question regarding residential units “in” River Park and possible relocation of the Griswold Street extension to connect to 7 Mile, per the walkability consultant.

Parking

- Change “Private Road A” to public road, making it possible to potentially add on-street parking.
- Walkability consultant recommended eliminating 18-space parking lot along Cady St. north of Central Park; this change would increase parking deficiency to 22 spaces.
- Total number of parking spaces for apartments and condos deficient by 4 spaces.

Site Access and Circulation

- The site plan was compared to the walkability consultant’s recommendations; City Engineer also weighed in.
 - Plans show many of the walkability consultant’s recommendations.
 - Some items suggested by walkability consultant are not possible (e.g., speed limits and ROW widths for public roads).
 - City Engineer has carefully reviewed walkability consultant’s suggestions. Where City Engineer recommends a different standard than the walkability consultant, use the City Engineer’s recommendations to revise the site plan.
- See improvements identified in the Traffic Impact Study and City Traffic Engineer’s comments.

Landscaping and Streetscape Amenities

- Streetscape amenities are identified on Grissim Metz plan sheets; all new and existing streets within the development will receive amenities.
- There is now proposed sidewalk along River Street, but without a curb to protect pedestrians from vehicles.
- Confirm that streetlights will be installed on new streets and along S. Center St. (Lighting details to be provided at Final Site Plan review).

Floor Plans and Elevations

- Historic District Commission will review buildings within the Historic District boundary.

Project Phasing

- Phasing plan to be reviewed by City DPW Director and Building Official. The City Engineer has provided comments.
- Townhome developer is developing the racetrack, and will therefore likely be responsible for daylighting the river. However, Phase I construction (townhomes on west side of S. Center Street) does not include any public benefits (river daylighting or River Park).

Is the submission generally complete?

There are six outstanding topics that could significantly impact the site layout:

1. Approach to funding public benefits
2. Extending Griswold across Johnson Creek to 7 Mile
3. Intersection improvements at 7 Mile and Sheldon/S. Center Street
4. Change “Private Road A” to a public road with 60-foot right-of-way and on-street parking
5. Status of 18-space parking lot
6. Proposed phases of project construction that don’t include any “public benefits.”

A form provided to each Commissioner asks:

- Is the information provided for each topic complete?
- What if any additional information is needed to decide on the six outstanding issues?
- Are there Commission questions related to other topics that require additional information?

Planning Consultant Elmiger concluded her review.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Members of the development team who would be presenting this evening included:

Randy Wertheimer, CEO, Hunter Pasteur Homes

Seth Herkowitz, Hunter Pasteur Homes

Tim O’Brien, Oboron, Northville

Mr. Wertheimer reviewed the history of the PUD application process to date. The developers had originally submitted for PUD eligibility in 2018, when they received considerable pushback from the community, and they paused to reflect on what they had heard. In 2020 the Planning Commission did a lot of work on revising the Master Plan. Simultaneously, Hunter Pasteur spent time listening to residents and business owners who participated in the Master Plan revision process. At the end of 2020 and early in 2021 they assembled a world-class team to put together a world-class plan for this site, which would include open space and parks to be used by residents for decades to come, along with diversified housing with price-points for all types of buyers. After putting together their team and their plan, the developers met with 9-10 community groups in the spring of 2021, including the DDA. They took feedback, synthesized the further comments they heard, and brought the plan to the Planning Commission. During the PUD eligibility hearing on November 2, 2021, the Planning Commission again gave feedback, and tonight's plan reflected those comments.

Mr. Wertheimer emphasized that the development team had financial depth, with the financial capability to complete this project, no matter what occurred in the economy in the next 5-10 years.

Mr. Wertheimer believed that tonight's application was *generally complete*, and asked that after tonight's discussion, a public hearing be scheduled.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Herkowitz discussed 4 primary topics, as outlined below:

1. Revisions to the site plan and site plan issues.

Revisions since the November meeting included building placement and orientation, layouts and massing, setbacks, open space, circulation, adjacent relationships, and interactions between various housing types.

- There were six primary housing types: apartments, condos, townhomes, row houses, carriage homes, single-family homes

Apartments: 174 apartments fronting Cady Street, Hutton Street extension and Beal Street extension. Building will include 9,270 square feet of commercial space along Cady. 295 parking spaces will include 187 garage spaces, and 108 outdoor surface spaces. All parking will be hidden from street view.

Design principals include articulation of buildings along the street, breaking up of facades with different widths, heights, architectural details, color, and materiality. Distinctive and individualized store front and residential entrances will create a strong, active, and inviting base.

Condominiums: No design changes to condo building since November.

Condo building fronts Cady Street, Beal Street, and the pedestrian promenade. 53 condos, with 4,850 square feet of commercial space. 108 parking spaces provided, 42 in below grade garage, and 66 outdoor spaces. All parking will be hidden from street view.

Restaurants planned at opposing corners, with outdoor seating.

Row Houses. Changes since November include:

Replaced 7 townhomes at Beal and Griswold with 6 row houses

Replaced 5 townhomes at Beal and Center with 4 row houses

Additionally there will be seven 3-story row houses on Cady Street with brick cladding, and 14 row houses on Griswold. All will have 2-car rear entry garages.

Townhomes. Changes since November include:

Townhomes have been repositioned throughout the site, with new placement along the South side of Beal and the east side of Center Street. 151 townhomes represents a 19-unit reduction.

Applicants agree with tonight's suggestion to establish a front setback of 10'-15' along Center and Beal Streets.

Applicants also agree that FAR requirements are met, due to public amenities meeting 10% of estimated projects costs.

Single Family homes. Changes since November include:

Reducing setback for the townhomes along Beal allows additional 10 foot setback for the single family homes in the block south of the townhomes. Single family homes will have varied lot widths and depths, with variation in floor plans, square footage, and elevations, creating a diversity in price point to attract a broader spectrum of home purchasers.

Carriage homes.

26 carriage homes, representing a new housing type, located along the southern portion of the site, primarily backing to Johnson Drain and naturalized wetland. Design of front façade with porches and front facing garages allows the front porch/entrance to dominate.

- Step-down configuration from apartments to multi-family to single family achieved by changes in the site plan.
- Reduced density. In 2018 599 total units were proposed. At the November 2, 2021 PUD qualification meeting, 481 total units were proposed. Tonight 474 total units were proposed, a total reduction of 125 units.

Mr. Herkowitz reviewed site-related plan issues as follows:

- 18-space surface parking lot. The First Presbyterian Church had asked if there was a way the plan could help alleviate congestion drop-off and pickup times at the preschool. As a good faith gesture the 18-space surface parking lot was included on the north side of Central Park. However, the most recent review letter suggested removing this surface lot. The applicants asked the Planning Commission to provide direction regarding this issue.
- Location of log cabin. The structure is within the future designed embankment of the daylighted river, and maintaining it in its current location is not a viable option. Due to the log cabin being on a slab, moving it will be extremely difficult; the only viable option appears to be reconstruction, at an estimated cost of \$250K; this cost was included in the resubmittal package. The developers will commit to share the expense of moving and reconstruction 50/50, with a ~~\$225K~~ \$125K cap. In return for this contribution the applicants asked that the appropriate city department or task force coordinate the move and reconstruction of the log cabin.
- Conceptual site lighting plan. Lighting plan will be refined; conceptual plan shows street lighting throughout the development.
- New proposed sidewalk along River Street. The applicants will coordinate with the City and River Walk Task Force to finalize the final pathway design.
- Cady Street commercial. Gibbs Planning Group written report suggests existing Cady Street area will be able to support additional 50,000 square feet of new retail and restaurant space

and generate new annual sales of as much as \$23.4M. The report considers The Downs development as well as other approved and potential developments along the corridor, including underdeveloped properties along Cady Street. The report acknowledges that The Downs project will significantly increase Cady Street retail market potential, as well as provide additional support to local businesses throughout downtown Northville.

- The development team continues to be cautious in their retail assessment, as vacant retail is worse than no retail. Based on market analysis, Hunter Pasteur's experience, and the report provided by Friedman Real Estate, they believe their commercial footprint as proposed is appropriate.

2. Review of geotechnical environmental conditions and how the conditions affect the site plan.

Mr. Herkowitz acknowledged the desire to step down density as development moved south. One suggestion was to locate the single family homes in the southernmost area of the site. However, the high water table constrained the footing locations for single family homes in this area. Regarding constructing homes without basements, Toll Brothers believed there was no market for homes without basements at this price point in Michigan. Constructing a basement in or near the water table was not an option. Raising the grade 5'-8' would still constrain the basement footing locations and prohibit the ability to have acceptable basement wall heights.

Mr. Herkowitz provided technical information regarding the completion of soil borings in the southern portion of the site. The water table appeared to be an average of 4' below the existing ground elevation, with a range from 3.5' to 7'. The existing geotechnical conditions precluded single family homes from feasibly being located in the southernmost area of The Downs site.

Mr. Herkowitz pointed out that the water table issue was a separate and distinct issue from the flood plain; there was no connection between them. Upon completion of The Downs project and the river daylighting project, there will be no floodplain on The Downs site or adjacent properties along River Street.

Other environmental considerations:

- The stormwater management system, combined with the daylighted river, will contribute to habitat and plant life restoration and create enough room to convey a 100-year flow within the banked area. River flows will never exceed the top of the river bank and will remain within the river channel. The river embankment is estimated to be 160' wide top of bank to top of bank.
- Additional investigations are needed in the soils throughout the development; there was likely abandoned concrete footings and utilities that will require removal and offsite disposal. Asbestos surveys will be required for buildings on the property that are currently in use and have not been completely assessed. Prior to demolition, asbestos abatement and hazardous material removal activities will be required.
- The 10" sanitary sewer located within Middle Rouge at the Beal Street Bridge will be relocated.

Regarding daylighting the river:

- The length of the daylighting project is 1100 feet, one of the largest river daylighting projects in recent Michigan history.
- The list of tasks that have to be accomplished include data collection, design and municipal approvals, preparation of construction documents, EGLE water resource permitting, FEMA CLOMR application, and SESC and Wayne County approvals, with an estimated time frame of 85 weeks to complete design and obtain all permits. Once started, construction will take approximately 6 months.
- The applicants will begin this process upon preliminary site plan approval.

- The applicants are committed to begin construction within 6 months of final government approvals. 2024 is a conservative estimated start date; construction will start earlier if approvals come through.
- Daylighting the river will take collaboration with the River Task Force and the City.

3. Funding of public benefits, daylighted river, River Park, Central Park

Mr. Herkowitz explained that one of the conditions of PUD qualification was for the development team to work with the City Assessor regarding tax revenue estimates, and they had done this. The City had verified their information and confirmed, via the February 1, 2022 memorandum from Sandi Wiktorowski, Finance Director/Treasurer and Mitchell Elrod, City Assessor, that the data and estimates are reasonable and conservative:

- Tax revenue to the City and DDA projected increase from \$99,305 in 2022 to \$2,132,171 in 2028.
- Total property tax generation projected increase from \$302,721 in 2022 to \$5,731,635 in 2028.

The City will incur additional ongoing operating costs in maintaining Central Park and River Park. While the applicants deferred to City staff to estimate the exact costs of those services, they had created a conceptual budget in coordination with a landscape service and the applicants’ landscape architect, with an estimate of \$150,000 per year for maintenance of the two parks.

Per Ms. Wiktorowski’s memo, the City will not have to invest in infrastructure in The Downs development for at least another 20 years. The revenues generated by the development far outweigh the increased costs to city services.

Mr. Herkowitz said that for purposes of tonight’s discussion, the public benefits only include the River Park, Central Park, and the daylighted river. However, the applicants’ investment creates infrastructure benefits well beyond those three benefits, as discussed in detail at the November 2 meeting.

Funding the improvements to River Park, Central Park and the daylighted river is projected as follows:

Public benefit costs:	
Land:	\$4 M
Demolition and asbestos remediation:	\$1.5M
Environmental remediation	\$2 M
Open Space improvement	
Central Park	\$2 M
River Park & Daylighting River	\$5 M
Contingency	\$1 M
 Total costs:	 \$15.5M
 Investment sources:	
Brownfield TIF financing	\$10.5 M
Developer contribution	\$ 3 M
Grants & foundations	\$ 2 M
 Total funding	 \$ 15.5 M

The developer will fund 100% (\$15.5M) for the public benefits upfront.

Mr. Herkowitz gave an overview of how Brownfield Tax Increment Financing (TIF) worked:

- Developer spends private dollars upfront.
- Developer builds a project and creates a tax generating development.
- After development is finished and assessed, a portion of the new taxes is used to reimburse defined eligible costs – this is the tax increment. The TIF agreement protects the existing tax base; no portion of the existing tax base can be used toward eligible costs. The TIF is also time limited, and tax value after termination of the TIF will benefit all entities receiving the taxes.
- The incentive is not guaranteed to the developer, but is only available if the developer achieves a development that increases property value. The amount of the taxes recouped cannot exceed the costs identified in the approved Brownfield Plan; the incentive amount is an “up to” maximum. The maximum can only be achieved if the value of the development rises enough, and the developer expends the projected costs.
- The \$10.5M estimated for eligible activity costs includes demolition, hazardous material abatement, due care, remediation of contaminated soils, and the cost of infrastructure construction. The recoupment is estimated to be complete in 4 years.
- The DDA, City, County and State would start to collect all new tax revenue in 2028, assuming construction regarding daylighting the river starts in 2024.

Mr. Herkowitz emphasized that sourcing the funding for River Park, Central Park, and daylighting the river is a true definition of a public, private, and philanthropic partnership, in order to create historic public benefits that will serve Northville and the region for generations to come.

4. Review of Dan Burden’s walkability analysis and his presentation to the Planning Commission as it relates to The Downs development

Mr. Herkowitz said that many concepts presented by Walkability Expert Burden were applied to the site design and architecture of The Downs project since its inception.

- Regarding housing diversity, 6 housing types were offered: apartments, condos, townhomes, row houses, carriage homes, single-family homes.
- There was also diversity of product type, in terms of size, floor plan, elevation, location, and price point. The project catered to a wide variety of buyers: empty nesters, young families, millennials, snowbirds, singles, etc.
- Open space: the site plan referenced more than 30% open space, with a 1.2 acre Central Park, 9.5 acre River Park, the daylighted river, 1 acre Greenway Park, and liner pocket park adjacent to the row houses. Every housing type was within 3 minutes of open space (a metric used by Mr. Burden).
- Central Park will be a grand outside living room, used for passive activities as well as larger programmed events.
- Mr. Burden recommended that highest density development be located closest to the downtown. The Downs’ highest density uses (apartments and condos) were located on Cady Street, adjacent to downtown. The townhomes were located so that they stepped down the intensity, moving away from downtown, and transitioning to a more residential scale on the south side of the development.
- Mr. Burden recommended creating at least one social/retail street. This was done in the plan by placing the 17,500 square feet of commercial space along Cady Street, with 2 restaurant locations with outside dining at opposing park corners.

- Mr. Burden suggested honoring adjacent land uses and historic cultural context. The Downs' use of historic buildings along main street as precedent for buildings in The Downs accomplished this. Local architects Presley and Miller oversaw development of row houses, single family homes, and carriage homes, ensuring a design approach consistent with adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Mr. Burden suggested constructing buildings that “watch over the street.” All streets in The Downs are designed with housing types that watch over the street, and that provide ground level activation at all levels.
- Mr. Burden recommended applying the 50% rule to achieve walkability: ½ street space be devoted to active transportation, and ½ space be devoted to walk-supportive space. Bike lanes and other buffers are counted as walk-supportive space. The Downs showed street spaces of 36' of the 60' ROW, or 60%, being applied to walk-supported space. For example, the street section on Beal showed a 5' walk, 5' street tree buffer, 8' for parallel parking, and 11'6" drive lane for vehicular and bicycle traffic. This was consistent throughout the development.
- The Downs design also aligned with appropriate speed controls as shown in Mr. Burden's presentation. Mr. Burden recommended 10' traffic lanes; The Downs' lanes vary from 11.5-14', with most being 11.5', consistent with OHM's recommendation of a minimum 11' travel lane along segments of parallel parking, to account for the door swing.
- Mr. Burden referenced pedestrian scale street lighting and street trees that define the edge, and street parking that creates a buffer to the sidewalk. All those elements were incorporated throughout The Downs' plan.
- The development team concurred with Mr. Burden's speed limit recommendations. However, Michigan law precludes the posting of any speed limit on a public road of less than 25mph. The Downs' design of intersections and streets complied with Mr. Burden's presentation illustrating how to design for appropriate speed in residential areas, including curb extensions, on-street parking, street trees, buildings watching over the street, and pedestrian scaled lighting.
- The Downs' site plan creates significant porosity and pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity through east/west and north/south connections. A pedestrian bridge will create access to Beal Town residents and pedestrians utilizing the new River Street sidewalk to the River Park and the future daylighted river. The pedestrian promenade prioritizes the pedestrian experience, and there is pedestrian connection to the downtown. The plan helps make walking the safe and easy choice.

Mr. Herkowitz pointed out that there were ecological, jurisdictional, legal, and natural constraints which related to several of Mr. Burden's proposals:

- Per Wayne County regulations, the detention pond cannot be placed in the flood plain.
- As already explained, it was not feasible to place single family homes at the southern end of The Downs' site.
- The development team would defer Mr. Burden's comments regarding healing the city-wide street system to the Mobility Network Team.
- Mr. Burden suggested extending Griswold to 7 mile and Hines and adding a roundabout to the intersection. This was a challenged recommendation, as extending Griswold south would interfere with the embankment of the future daylighted river, and adversely affect the functionality and future design of the River Park by drastically reducing its size and the amount of useable green space. Further, 7 Mile is a Wayne County Road, who would need to participate in any discussions regarding connections to 7 Mile. Finally, traffic experts and the Police Department have noted that the connection to 7 mile at East Hines is not necessary, in that the proposed road network is fully adequate without an additional connection to 7 Mile and Hines. They argue that making the connection of Griswold further south over the Johnson Drain creates

the added risk of Griswold operating at a far more intense level of vehicular traffic than what is desired and adversely affecting The Downs development.

Mr. Herkowitz noted that the next step in the PUD process was to determine that the preliminary site plan submission is generally complete, and he requested that the Planning Commission schedule a public hearing upon the conclusion of tonight's discussion.

Commission questions.

In response to a question from Chair Tinberg, Planning Consultant Elmiger explained that the term *urban* was used in comparison to a residential street. Downtown Northville was an urban environment. Mr. Wertheimer added that the goal for the development was not to look like a subdivision; using urban as a term tried to communicate that.

Commissioner Vollick asked if the \$2M set aside for daylighting the river included restoration. Mr. O'Brien said the applicants' intent and conceptual budget was intended to restore the river to its natural state.

Commissioner DeBono asked if the costs and funding estimates included construction cost inflation. Mr. Wertheimer said the estimates were put together at the end of 2019, with a 30% add on based on the increase in construction costs, and with the addition of a \$1M contingency. Further, a Brownfield agreement did not automatically increase its funding if there was a cost over-run; rising cost was the developers' single biggest risk.

Commissioner Barry was concerned that Central Park was not activated. Will the park be designed to attract people? It needed to be more than lawn and tiered concrete seating. Will there be public restrooms? Kiosks? Summer and winter activities?

Mr. Wertheimer said the park would be City-owned. The applicants could make design improvements, but specific plans to activate the park should be developed by the City. He pointed out that the parks in Plymouth and Birmingham were widely used. Also, two restaurants with outdoor seating will bookend the park, with other commercial space nearby.

Commissioner Barry remained unconvinced. The park in Plymouth was surrounded by activity, not residential uses.

Commissioner Gaines thought Central Park was the best thing in the development. One of the ways to activate the park was to have enough commercial space on both sides, providing uses that will draw people in. The parking spaces at the north end, however, were doing nothing to activate the park and should be removed.

Commissioner Gaines asked if the applicants, having reduced the number of residential units by 125 since first coming to the Commission, felt confidence in the program they had presented this evening in terms of being able to deliver the benefits and perks described.

Mr. Wertheimer said they were comfortable with the amount of commercial space proposed. Regarding density, it was true they could not reduce by any more units. The development was predicated on the Brownfield Authority and City Council approving the \$10.5M in brownfield funds, and the developers continued to work with Nancy Darga and the River Task Force to achieve \$2M in grants from County, State, or philanthropic organizations. There was strong interest on the part of a

philanthropic organization as long as they were the “last money in.” Again, the developers would be contributing \$3M.

Commissioner Kirk thanked the architects for the design of the row houses on Griswold.

In response to questions from Commissioner Kirk, Mr. Wertheimer explained there was a walking path connection at the cross walk at the corner of River and 7 Mile Road; this would be highlighted in the next presentation. If there was a roundabout there they would be happy to contribute, though most of the funds for that would come from the State. However, their traffic consultant did not think a roundabout was necessary.

Chair Tinberg asked if a roundabout at 7 and Hines would require a redesign of the site plan. Mr. Wertheimer said they might lose 1 or 2 townhomes on the Farmers’ Market side, but nothing else would be impacted. The submittal showed that possibility.

In response to a question from Commissioner Barry, Mr. Wertheimer said they would be happy to discuss traffic calming patterns in Beal Town with Walkability Expert Burden, specifically focusing on Beal Street. Commissioner Kirk said River Street should also be part of this conversation.

Commissioner Gaines said that the intersection of 7 Mile and Center Street was an important gateway, but did not appear to be addressed in the site plan.

Mr. Wertheimer said they would like to plan a landscaped gateway, but until a decision was made regarding constructing a roundabout, they didn’t know the space they had to work with. He agreed this was an important gateway location.

Commissioner Kirk asked why there were no curbs on the River Street sidewalk.

Mr. Wertheimer said that installing curbs would require street work; redoing River Street was not part of their development plans. They planned to construct a sidewalk with pedestrian lighting, providing walkability in that area.

Regarding the Brownfield TIF, Commissioner DeBono asked if there was a detailed spreadsheet regarding tax absorption, including values of each lot, site, housing type, etc.

Mr. Wertheimer said that information was submitted to the Planner, and could be shared with the Commission.

Chair Tinberg said that with the reduction of dwelling units, only 13% of the bedrooms were represented by single family homes. 24% were from the apartments, with the remainder from various types of multi-family units. This did not seem to be consistent with the existing character of Northville. How did the applicants come to the conclusion that this was an appropriate mix?

Mr. Wertheimer said the development offered products that didn’t currently exist and were desperately needed in Northville: high end condos with elevators, luxury apartment rentals, carriage houses with first floor masters similar to St. Lawrence estates products, and townhomes. In terms of single family, Northville already had a majority of single family homes. Diversity of housing product did not mean creating only single family homes. A young family could live in a row house, for example.

Chair Tinberg asked if there was a retail market analysis for home sales for this development. Mr. Wertheimer said Toll Brothers had a very detailed market analysis.

Commissioner Barry asked about potentially relocating the Farmers' Market to The Downs. This was in the 2018 plan but not this one. The owners of the proposed alternative Farmers' Market site were in conversation only.

Mr. Wertheimer said the Farmers' Market was an important part of the Northville community. If the Farmers' Market Task Force chose to locate in The Downs, there were 3 or 4 great locations that could accommodate that. The applicants were supportive of the alternative location as well.

Commissioner Salliotte asked about the methodology used for determining the water table elevation. His experience was that monitoring wells were used over time to determine water tables, rather than direct observation immediately following a boring.

Mr. Wertheimer said they were happy to provide information regarding their methodology. He appreciated that Commissioner Barry had an outside consultant look at the information regarding the water tables, but he thought perhaps that consultant was using 8' basements for his determination. At their price point, the basement walls would be 10' and footings 1', for a total of 11' below grade. If the water table was anywhere close to that, there was no single family home builder in the country that would knowingly put a basement close, because of the liability and risk involved. There was no one on the development team that would think about taking on multi-million dollar risks of lawsuits and liability by knowingly putting single family home basements close to a water table.

Commissioner Salliotte clarified that he was just looking for accurate representation of the water table. Mr. Wertheimer said if they needed to provide more information, they would be happy to do so.

Commissioner Gaines suggested that single family homes without basements could sell in Northville. Such an option would allow greater flexibility in the placement of the homes.

Mr. Wertheimer said with a price point of \$700,000 to \$1M, they did not want to be pioneers in building homes without basements. Their risk was focused on daylighting the river.

Noting that per Community Center contract the meeting had to end and everyone needed to be out of the Community Center by 10:30 pm, Chair Tinberg opened the floor for public comment at 9:35 pm.

Kathleen Switalski, 218 Lake Street, asked the following questions:

- 1) In the site plan application different dwelling unit totals were given. What was the final number of units, and could that number change again?
- 2) Regarding funding the public benefits, did the applicants have money up front to start construction on the site and see the project through to completion?
- 3) The parking totals appeared to provide spaces for approximately 1400 cars. This was significant additional traffic to be coming and going daily.

Bill Stockhausen thanked Hunter Pasteur for contributing 50% of the log cabin preservation. He gave some of the history of the log cabin, which had been constructed with hollowed logs. For historic preservation funding purposes, the best location was to leave it on its original site. A secondary location would be to place the log cabin in the park as an interpretative center. A third location might be to serve as restrooms at Ford Field.

Nancy Darga, 516 N. Center, chair of River Task Force and co-chair of the Mobility Network Team, said the goal of development in the City was to build a viable and lovely Northville. She had been excited when the walkability expert was hired, but then later disappointed when his recommendations were not based on a knowledge of the land, making some of his recommendations unrealistic. If Mr. Burden was engaged further, he needed to collaborate with the engineers dealing with the site plan. Also, she felt the parking spaces at the north of Central Park were essential.

Carl Giroux, 127 S. Rogers, did not think the application was complete, due to no mention of traffic impact or solutions to the significant increase in traffic congestion. Regarding density, was it possible to get state or federal grants to help fund this project and thereby reduce density? Last, the plan needed to show the inclusion of the Farmer's Market.

Lenore Lewandowski, 119 Randolph, noted that during public engagement, at least one of the board games emphasized creating a green buffer on Center Street, to avoid a canyon effect. The reduced setback described this evening might instead emphasize a canyon effect. Also, the traffic study did not seem to include other new and proposed construction, which by her count would provide over 130 more dwelling units in the immediate area. Last, regarding diversity of housing, diversity was not just for empty nesters or people who could afford \$700,000 or higher homes. What were the price points for all the units? Without affordable units, housing diversity could not be achieved.

Nancy Chiri, 661 W Main Street, asked if an actual environmental site assessment with deep soil bores would be done. She was concerned that if funding did not come through, Northville taxpayers would be asked to foot the bill for environmental mitigation. Was Northville purchasing the land listed as a \$4M land acquisition? If so, what land was being purchased? Would the developer be willing to limit the number of townhouses and condos that could be rented, so that Northville did not become an investor community? Could the apartments be constructed at the end of the development? Last, would the developers consider the north/south road being Griswold and not Hutton?

Greg Swanson, 542 Carpenter Street, was glad to see progress from the first meetings. He thought the traffic increase needed to be addressed. There was some confusion about the proposal, in terms of what was being suggested and what was being stated was not possible. He agreed \$700,000 - \$1M homes did not represent diversity. He liked the idea of getting other funding sources. He suggested repurposing the log cabin within Central Park, adding to the draw of the Park. Last, he felt daylighting the river, which he supported, was being oversold in the renderings, which made it look unrealistically perfect.

Joe Laura, 47706 Dunhill Ct., Novi, did not feel the project was complete because it lacked specificity. Northville was very upscale and what happened here would affect the western Detroit metro area. 474 units would destroy the City. If the developer could not reduce the density, he should just walk away. He noted that the regional area to the west of Northville was being developed with no thought of infrastructure. This development needed to be thought out with specificity regarding traffic patterns. He urged the Planning Commission to have more meetings before scheduling a public hearing.

Jim Koster, 204 St. Lawrence Blvd, spoke regarding the character and culture of Northville. He was concerned about the visual effect as someone drove down Sheldon Road. He wanted to see something that would say, "This is my town." He did not feel the application was complete because it did not address traffic.

Ashley Pieper, 1945 Smock, Northville Township, agreed with comments regarding density and character. The proposed development lacked design and Victorian charm. She was also concerned

with the lack of parking downtown, and echoed concerns regarding the Farmers’ Market. Affordable housing was also an issue, as was traffic.

Michelle Aniol, 402 Yerkes, said she thought the developer had met the requirements to schedule a public hearing, even though there were still details to work out. She applauded the developer for providing recognizable and material benefits, and for providing the money upfront for the benefits such as the River Park. She supported redevelopment of The Downs site, and noted she lived on the River Street side, which currently looked horrible.

Regarding other issues, Ms. Aniol made the following points:

- Higher traffic volume was not a reason to avoid extending Griswold to Hines. The project will generate increased traffic overall. The citizens of the City and Beal Town should not have to compromise mobility best practices so that new residents of The Downs development weren’t inconvenienced by higher traffic volumes on a north/south extension, which extension was badly needed.
- Will daylighting the river with its associated grading require changes to the Beal Street Bridge?
- Forebay and detention basins are counted as part of park acreage, but it appears they will have steep slopes that might require fencing. If fenced, they could not be counted in the park area.
- The City needs a north/south connection that goes to 7 Mile Road.

At 10:21 Chair Tinberg noted that the time, per contract, that the Commission was able to use the Community Center was now up. She asked for a motion to table this request for preliminary site plan approval, in order to continue discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Wertheimer expressed strong displeasure at not being able to continue the meeting tonight.

MOTION by Barry, support by Maise, to table discussion regarding The Downs Planned Unit Development/Preliminary Site Plan Review/Hunter Pasteur Northville LLC until the next Planning Commission meeting.

Roll call vote:

Barry	yes
DeBono	yes
Gaines	no
Hay	no
Kirk	yes
Maise	yes
Salliotte	no
Vollick	yes
Tinberg	yes

Motion carried 6-3.

MOTION by Maise, support by DeBono, to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 pm.

Roll call vote:

Barry	yes
DeBono	yes
Gaines	no
Hay	no
Kirk	yes

Maise	yes
Salliotte	no
Vollick	yes
Tinberg	yes

Motion carried 6-3.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as amended 02-15-2022