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The City of Bloomington Plan Commission (PC) met on August 10th, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via a virtual web conference, due to COVID-19. Members present: Burrell, Cate, Cockerham, Enright-Randolph, Herrera, Kinzie, Kopper, Sandberg, Wisler

ROLL CALL

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED: July 2020

****Kinzie moved to approve the July 2020 minutes. Cate seconded. Motion carried by voice vote 8:0—
Approved.**

REPORTS, RESOLUTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: Enright-Randolph said the County is still in the process of the Consolidated Development Ordinance and more information can be found at monroecdo.com. Further updates will continue to be shared.

PETITIONS:

PUD-17-20 **McDoel Business Center, LLC**
300 W. Hillside Drive
Request: Amendment to the preliminary plan and district ordinance for the Thomson PUD to allow 88 multi-family dwelling units and 21 single-family lots on Parcel E.
Case manager: Eric Greulich

Cockerham recused himself from the hearing and the vote as he has a financial interest in the project.

The property is located at 300 E. Hillside Drive and is zoned Planned Unit Development (Thomson PUD). This 3 acre property is located at the east end of the Hillside Drive stub. Surrounding zoning includes the Thomson PUD to the north and south, Residential Small Lot (R3) to the west, and Mixed Use Institutional (MI) to the east. The surrounding properties have been developed with a mix of single family residences to the west, a storage warehouse to the north, Crosley Warehouse (community center) to the south, and the Switchyard Park to the east. This site has been developed with a 150,000 square foot warehouse that has a property line about 2/3 through the warehouse. The northern 1/3 of the warehouse, which is owned separately and contains Storage Express, is not part of this petition.

The petitioner is proposing to remove the southern 2/3 of the warehouse and redevelop the property with 2 multi-family buildings and 21 single family lots. The proposed site plan for this property shows two 5-story multi-family buildings, one each at the north and south end of the site with two rows of single family lots between them. Each multi-family building is proposed to have 44 units with 68 bedrooms for a total of 88 units and 136 bedrooms. A public road and alley is shown connecting to Hillside Drive to access the multi-family buildings and single family lots. Approximately 4,000 square feet of the ground floor of the southern multi-family building would contain commercial space and a portion of the northern multi-family building has been shown with optional commercial space. Both buildings would have parking on a majority of the ground floor. A 5' wide tree plot and 5' wide sidewalk from this site to Rogers Street has been shown along the north side of Hillside Drive. The petitioner has stated that the multi-family buildings will be LEED silver certified. The single family residences will also be built to a comparable requirement. One of the main areas for discussion with this petition is the desired housing type and density along 3 the Switchyard Park. Last year, at the request of the Administration, a conceptual design for the redevelopment of two large areas adjacent to Switchyard Park was envisioned by the design consultant of Switchyard Park.

One of the two areas in the study was this location. The other location in that study is the area where Night Moves was located and Meineke currently exists on S. Walnut Street. The desire of the Administration was to explore redevelopment opportunities of these important properties. The study aimed to provide a guide for appropriate

development that would place as many eyes as possible on the trail for security, provide optimal utilization of a public open space and park, add housing stock to the community, and provide high quality development along a major open space and trail system reflective of the City's substantial investment in the Park. The Consultant's design showed four story buildings along the entire frontage of the park with the 4th floors stepped back. A commercial component along the ground floor of the buildings is also desired to provide services to the residents, neighborhood, and trail users. The plan scaled back to two stories closer to the neighborhood to the west with a parking area along the back for further separation from the neighborhood. Although that study and conceptual design was an internal request and not a publicly approved document, it showed a design that complimented the Switchyard Park and its purpose was to envision a development that placed an appropriate design and density along the Park.

The Planning and Transportation Department recommends that the Plan Commission forward this petition to the required second hearing.

Doug Bruce, Tabor/Bruce Architecture & Design and petitioner's counsel, said that since the Switchyard Park area was developed, the zoning needs of the area have changed, and have also made the current warehouse on the parcel unsightly. He explained the strategic reasoning behind the multi-family buildings, commercial space, and single-family lot layout, and that the property location was carefully considered for this proposed development.

Tom Brennan, petitioner, introduced himself and spoke about his experience as a long-time Bloomington business owner and as a former tenant and owner of the warehouse at the petition's property address, operating it as a packaging business. He spoke about the warehouse's different uses over the years and the potential to transition the property into housing for different types of residents.

Plan Commission Questions:

Burrell asked Greulich what the plans were for the parcel containing building one. Greulich said the petitioner plans to give the lot south of Hillside Drive to the City to meet the community's housing needs. Scanlan said the City administration would like residents in the multi-family buildings to live next to the park alongside the single-family lots.

Cate and Greulich discussed that tonight's decision will be whether to approve the petition, forward it to a second hearing, or deny it. He added that the Department recommends forwarding the petition to a second hearing. Cate and Greulich also discussed the South Walnut parcel's time frame, and Scanlan added that a developer has been picked for the former Night Moves location, but the parcel is still in early development stages and the site has no renderings yet.

Wisler asked Greulich if the Plan Commission would review the development again after site plan approval. Greulich said yes, the preliminary plan and the district ordinance that governs the parcel would need to be approved for the development.

Kinzie asked staff about the choice behind the R4 zoning designation and if other designations were considered. Greulich said R4 is the most compact, urban designation in the Unified Development Ordinance and has the smallest sideyards and setbacks. The petitioner wants to lower the standards even more to increase compactness. Staff said they shared the consultant study recommendations with the petitioner, but that the petitioner ultimately decides the district. Greulich said the consultant's study was a multi-family design and Scanlan explained the massing rendering with several multi-family buildings and some commercial space. Kinzie said she is concerned about Hillside Drive as the sole entry point since the area is tight. Greulich said the site has no other entrance options, unless the Storage Express property is redeveloped in the future.

Enright-Randolph asked for clarification concerning the residential lot number. Greulich confirmed the site has 21 lots.

Public Comment:

Members of the public that spoke: Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Greg Alexander, Elizabeth Cox-Ash, Jessica Hite, Kevin Romanak, Jack Baker

Piedmont-Smith, District 5 City Councilwoman, said neighbors were not able to weigh in on the study and this is important. She understands the need for denser housing and supports more housing to meet the housing demand and to lower prices, but finds the two multi-family buildings unnecessary in this neighborhood. A single, three-floor building, such as townhomes, would be better. She also said the streets need more connectivity to address emergency vehicle concerns, and she thinks this is possible.

Alexander said the development is near a home that doubled in price in six years and sold for nearly \$450,000, and this price is not affordable. The multi-family bookend buildings contain 88 units and changing them to single-family lots will reduce the number to eight units, greatly reducing much needed units. He echoed Piedmont-Smith's connectivity observation, and that this lot will have greater pedestrian connectivity than car connectivity. This petition is an opportunity to encourage pedestrian-friendly connectivity.

Cox-Ash, McDoel neighborhood resident, said Brennan previously proposed a lower height, townhome-type development that the neighborhood residents approved, and the currently proposed development's height is much higher. She is concerned about safety and emergency vehicle access. She finds the parking lot variance problematic, as the lot will only have enough spaces for half the units. She asked how the extra cars will affect the neighborhood. She explained that the neighborhood has had density in the past and this resulted in sewage issues due to old infrastructure. She fears the neighborhood can't handle such a large increase in density. Cox-Ash also pointed out Hillside Drive's narrow width and the inability to demolish historically protected homes or cut through Switchyard Park to widen the street. She said the street will dead end at the park and the two five-story buildings will loom over the surrounding houses.

Hite, a neighborhood resident and park user, said the proposed apartments are luxury, located on the B-line, and will not be affordable. She is in favor of dense housing, but this is not the location. The streets surrounding the property become gridlocked during rush hour and they cannot be widened. She said the B-line and the new park are amazing resources and dense housing here will transform resources into a congested, unusable area. Having lived near multi-family developments before, she said they are cheaply made and become outdated and fall into disrepair quickly, decreasing the value of surrounding neighborhoods.

Romanak, a chemist at Indiana University, asked if the parcel has had any issues with heavy metals in the area from the warehouse's decades-long presence. He is against the four and five-story apartments and believes the density will exacerbate current traffic issues. He agrees with Cox-Ash and Piedmont-Smith that townhomes are a better option, and that the parcels lack of connectivity with Grimes is problematic.

Baker said the proposed development has changed throughout the process from all single-family lots to denser housing. Baker said the Comprehensive Plan says stock must be added to meet housing needs for families and young professionals, and the Planning Department says single-family homes serve the needs of the few and are too expensive. Baker asked why the proposed units are deemed too expensive at this site, but not too expensive further north on the B-Line. He said he doesn't understand why a market-rate single family home doesn't fit here but a townhome of the same price is fine. He said he also doesn't understand the Comprehensive Plan's statement about single-family homes serving a select few when he thinks single-family homes feels more neighborly and secure.

Plan Commission Discussion:

Sandberg says she agrees with comments from neighbors and Piedmont-Smith. She will be voting in favor of continuing the petition to a second hearing. She wants to see the site plan reduce the multi-family buildings from five stories to townhome height. In regards to the consultant's safety study, the "more eyes" in the area can just as easily come from townhomes. Sandberg is concerned with increased density negatively affecting traffic. Overall, she thinks the study does not square with the neighborhood fit.

Kinzie asked for Piedmont-Smith's question about street connectivity to be answered. Greulich said no public streets stub into this property and he showed an aerial photograph. Wisler asked about the right-of-way that was once there and if something is built there now. Greulich said the right-of-way was vacated and given back to the property owners. The petitioner could ask the owners to give over the property in order to return it to a right-of-way. Cate asked about the prospect of redeveloping the Storage Express property. Greulich said he can't speak to the possibility, it's unknown.

Kinzie asked about land quality and contamination. Greulich said these are questions for the petitioner. Bruce said this proposed development has been examined for eight years and no property owners are interested in selling the property for a right-of-way. Bruce has also spoken with the Storage Express owner and doesn't believe this business will be moving any time in the near future. He said, as far as narrow access, the site will still meet the required turn radius for emergency vehicles. He is unsure about an environmental study, but said banks typically require these studies for financing.

Enright-Randolph said the Plan Commission is looking at 124 bedrooms on 21 lots, and this is a huge contrast. Before a vote, he would like Commissioners to have more direction on how to review this petition. He said parks are great assets, especially when surrounded by neighborhoods, like Bryan Park, and three stories is still really high to the adjacent neighborhood. Enright-Randolph said the lot is 2.8 acres, but the development could disrupt the surrounding 12 acres. He doesn't like having to make a decision knowing the study was done without public input. He is also unclear if Driscoll is a platted alleyway.

Herrera asked how the neighborhood comments were taken into account when making decisions about the development, given the proposed development has changed. Bruce said he, Brennan, and Baker had intended to meet with neighborhood residents before the pandemic occurred. Bruce said the second multi-family building was added after meeting with staff, since the City wants more housing created. Bruce said he is open to more public discussion and assured Plan Commissioners it would happen. Brennan said a phase I environmental study had been completed for bank approval.

Plan Commission Comments:

Kinzie agreed with Enright-Randolph that public opinion about the project is important and said she would motion to continue the petition to a second hearing for further discussion. She likes a lot about the petition, and is eager to see multi-family living in this space, but wants the Commission to carefully weigh decisions about the site plan. She will be reading the consultant report more in depth before the second hearing. She thinks it's a great idea to offer housing for families along the park, and is looking forward to seeing renderings, setbacks, and how the development will be integrated into the park. She said three story buildings are more reasonable than five stories, but she is still concerned about limited access to the site via Hillside Drive. She would also like the petitioner to think about how to enhance the bicycle/pedestrian potential in this space. She said she likes the LEED silver aspect, she thinks it's great that the development's front yard is Switchyard Park, and she is excited to see how that space adds to the aesthetic.

Burrell said she appreciates the public presence and comment throughout the hearing because it gives a larger picture of the development within the context of the neighborhood. She said density is important, but the proposed multi-family buildings are too tall and will overshadow the neighborhood and greatly increase traffic. As a real estate agent, Burrell also knows how expensive new buildings are and that this development will not be affordable. She said density is important, but the project has evolved from lower height townhomes to two tall, denser buildings and she encourages the developers to consider the neighborhood and its residents going forward.

Kopper said he thinks this site is a good location for multi-family units and it is not a good place for single-family homes along the park. He said the City is lacking in a much needed number of units.

Cate agrees with Kinzie and Kopper. She recognizes it is a tough site, but density is important. Switchyard Park is an enormous public resource, and this development is an opportunity to create affordable housing for many residents. She thinks the South Walnut parcel is a more suitable site for high-density buildings. She would like to

see the warehouse site developed with fewer stories and transition more smoothly from the current neighborhood housing height.

Enright-Randolph added that the amendment to the Thomson Planned Unit Development (PUD) is needed because the area has changed a lot since the PUD's designation.

Wisler said he recognizes that it's difficult for the petitioner to develop a site and provide enough affordable housing. He said density is important to Bloomington, and he understands the City administration's desire for more density and the developer's attempt to deliver this. But he sees a problem if the site is so dense it cuts off others' access to and view of the park. Wisler believes the site plan can be improved by replacing single-family homes with townhomes and possibly making the two multi-family buildings bookending the parcel into four buildings, though this would cost more. The restructure may also handle egress and ingress issues. He likes the parking plan, but knows it will put more cars on the street. He said these are public streets, though, and any development here will increase parking. He is looking forward to hearing about the site in greater detail at the next hearing.

****Kinzie moved to forward PUD-17-20 to a second hearing. Cate seconded. Motion carried by roll call vote 7:0—Approved.**

Meeting adjourned.