

Present: Chairperson Jensen; Vice-chair Landsman; Members: Borowski, Freedman, Liberty, Ostrowski and Tillman

Absent: Walter and Wayne

Also Present: Building Official, Byrwa  
Planning Consultant, Wenzara  
Council member, Walsh

Chairperson Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

Jensen proposed that agenda item #6, “Review proposed draft questionnaire for neighborhood association” be moved to the February meeting agenda.

Motion by Ostrowski, second by Freedman, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion passed (7 – 0).

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA**

None

### **APPROVE MINUTES OF A REGULAR PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2005**

Motion by Landsman, second by Freedman, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on Wednesday, December 14, 2005 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed (7 – 0).

### **REVIEW SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL APPROVAL REQUEST FROM COVENANT ALLIANCE CHURCH AT 15858 W. 13 MILE ROAD FOR INCREASING AND IMPROVING THE PARKING LOT – SET PUBLIC HEARING DATE**

Planning consultant Caryn Wenzara from LSL Planning, Inc. submitted review letters addressing the request of Covenant Alliance Church for site plan approval and special use approval for expansion of the Church parking lot at 15858 W. 13 Mile Road. Church use in an R-2 Single Family Residential district is subject to special conditions. Because this proposal is an expansion to an existing conditional use, the Village will ascertain whether the expanded use will create an additional impact on the neighborhood.

A review letter from LSL dated January 5, 2006 examines the use application in accordance with the conditional approval use standards of the ordinance. Wenzara saw no negative impacts in her evaluation of the parking lot expansion. The only issue may involve expanding parking closer to a residential area. The Planning Board might want to take a look at landscaping measures that will soften the visual impact for residents whose homes face the site.

Jensen observed that the Church has an abundance of land. He questioned whether the Village has a restriction on the maximum number of parking spaces allowed on a site.

Byrwa responded that there are no ordinance restrictions on the size of a parking lot as long as it has no adverse affects on the abutting neighborhood. He has had discussions with the architect representing the Church and with Manager Spallasso relative to drainage and lighting of the parking lot. The parking area will be designed to drain by gravity north and east into a catch basin. No lighting is proposed. Landscaping of the parking area will be addressed as part of site plan review.

Wenzara stated that the parking lot is proposed to be expanded form 52 parking spaces to 106 parking spaces. A site plan review is required because the use is being expanded by more than 50 percent. The Planning Board will need to take action on the conditional use and on the site plan.

The site plan review letter covers basic elements of the application and finds that it generally complies with ordinance requirements. Those ordinance requirements that are not met in the proposal have been discussed with the applicant and will be addressed prior to the public hearing. Wenzara requested input from the Planning Board on two discretionary items in order to provide direction to the applicant.

The first discretionary item deals with pedestrian circulation. LSL recommends that a five foot wide sidewalk be installed along the site frontage on Thirteen Mile Road to connect to the existing sidewalk in front of the Kentucky Fried Chicken store to the east and the sidewalk to the west along Fairfax that extends to Thirteen Mile Road. This is an opportunity for the Planning Board to recommend closing the gap in that sidewalk. In response to an inquiry, Wenzara stated that recently adopted site development standards require sidewalks to be installed as part of new site plan. Because this is an expansion, consideration can be given to the degree of the upgrades required.

Applicant Bruce Lemons with Foresite Design, Inc. stated that sidewalk along Thirteen Mile Road could be added to the plan. This component was not incorporated into the plan for the reason that the parishioners are likely to be driving and not walking to the Church.

Jensen expressed the view that requiring this sidewalk would be discretionary and could not be made a condition of approval. Wenzara proposed that the Planning Board could attach the sidewalk installation as a condition of site plan approval.

Borowski remarked that he was more concerned about the existence of sidewalk along Fairfax, which is a crossing point for school children. It was indicated that there is a sidewalk on that side of the street.

Lemons explained that a primary reason for expanding the parking lot is to provide a shared use with Birmingham Public Schools during the construction and renovation of Greenfield Elementary School. Lemons did not know whether the Church and School District have an agreement to share the parking facility in the future.

Wenzara stated that there may be some discretion and room for negotiation with respect to landscape requirements. The literal interpretation of the ordinance would require 21 canopy trees within the parking lot and a hedge row along the edge of the parking lot where it fronts on Fairfax and Thirteen Mile Road. She suggested that there may be better use of resources than to require the applicant to provide all of that landscaping as part of an expansion. The concern of the planning consultant was to minimize the impact of the expanded parking area for residents living along

Fairfax by providing screening with more evergreen trees than proposed along the periphery of the parking lot.

Ostrowski commented that landscape islands in a parking lot serve to break up the asphalt but may result in maintenance problems in terms of snow plowing. He suggested a mixture of hedges and use of canopy trees and Evergreens along the periphery of the parking lot.

Borowski encouraged the Planning Board and applicant to find a reasonable middle ground in terms of landscaping to mitigate the large parking area. Jensen noted that the parking lot is not on a main road and is buffered by green space. He agreed that there is a need to provide screening along the residential area.

Landsman thought that the parking lot would benefit the community in terms of providing overflow parking when the school is used for elections. She would promote the installation of sidewalk along Thirteen Mile Road.

Freedman expressed a concern that the proposed parking lot expansion requested for a temporary need will more than double the current parking lot size. Board members discussed this point and proposed alternative temporary parking solutions. Lemons responded that the cost of removing stone and growing grass again would be more than paving the parking lot.

In answer to an inquiry, Lemons stated that Foresite Design had been hired by the Birmingham School District to engineer this parking lot for the church. Jensen stated that it would help the Planning Board to know the extent of any long-term agreement between the School District and the Church in terms of overflow parking.

There was discussion of the one-lane or alternate two-lane drive from the parking lot to Fairfax and the impact on traffic out to Thirteen Mile Road. Lemons stated that approval is requested on the basis that the School District would like to construct two lanes if funding is available. This will be a topic for further Board discussion.

The Building Official was asked to pursue additional information from the applicant on the School District's need for overflow parking and its potential long-term use of the church parking lot.

A public hearing was set for February 22, 2006 on the site plan and special use for Covenant Alliance Church Parking Lot expansion.

### **REVIEW MASTER PLAN**

Planning Board members have received draft Master Plan maps A through E prepared by Bob Bliven and a second draft of the sections of the Plan that the Board has reviewed as a group. Wenzara suggested beginning with a review of Chapters 5 and 6, which have not been scrutinized by the Board.

Wenzara related the rationale for changes and updates to text in Chapter 5, Community Facilities Plan. Text modifications were suggested by members of the Board and by Council member Walsh.

Language will be streamlined and revised to reflect the agreed upon changes. In addition to specific wording, the suggestion was made to rework text with negative implications.

The Board reviewed Chapter 6, Implementation Plan, which is a summary of tools available to help the Village implement the document. Key implementation strategies include the Zoning Ordinance, Village General Ordinances, Intra-Village Liaison, Inter-Community Liaison, Public Understanding and Support and Continuous Planning. Input was offered on this chapter.

Board members indicated that they would like to read the Master Plan text without the strikeouts and underlining. A clean copy will be provided to the Planning Board next month. Agenda items for February will include a public hearing on the site plan and special use request from Covenant Alliance Church for Parking Lot expansion, review of a neighborhood questionnaire, and begin review of the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of the Master Plan with the idea that the balance of the document will be undertaken in March. It is anticipated that Council will receive a copy of the draft Master Plan in April.

#### **PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS**

Liberty questioned how a few statements under Land Use Goals, Community Facilities and Services Goals and Environment and Natural Features Goals in the updated Master Plan can cover the multiple points that were deleted from the current Plan. He noted that Village staff members produced some of the maps for the Master Plan. Liberty suggested that Village staff could probably have updated the tables in the Plan using current data.

#### **PLANNING CONSULTANT COMMENTS**

None

#### **BUILDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS**

None

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

Motion by Borowski, second by Tillman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Motion passed.

**David Jensen, Chair**  
**Planning Board**

**Ellen E. Marshall**  
**Village Clerk**

**Susan Bernard**  
**Recording Secretary**