

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

Absent: Liberty, Tillman and Walter

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

Chairperson Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Borowski, second by Wayne, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion passed (7 – 0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

None

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Wayne, second by Ostrowski, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on Wednesday, January 25, 2006 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

PUBLIC HEARING FOR COVENANT ALLIANCE CHURCH AT 15858 W. THIRTEEN MILE ROAD FOR SITE PLAN & SPECIAL USE APPROVAL TO IMPROVE AND INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE PARKING LOT

Jensen asked that the petitioner present his proposal for site plan and special use approval for expansion and resurfacing of the existing parking lot at Covenant Alliance Church at 15858 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

Architect Bruce Lemons with Foresite Design, Inc. stated that his firm was engaged by Birmingham Public Schools to assist with the design and layout for the parking lot expansion for Covenant Alliance Church. Revisions have been made to the original site plan based on comments made at the January 25 Planning Board meeting. Lemons described modifications made to the landscaping plan.

Wenzara related that a majority of the items outlined in the LSL site plan review letter dated January 5, 2006 have been addressed, and the site generally complies with the Village ordinance standards. She listed the remaining outstanding items.

Shared Access Agreement - A shared access agreement must be provided for review by the Village Attorney and staff to confirm that both parties are amenable to the shared parking and sidewalk connection.

Landscaping - A primary concern has been screening for the benefit of nearby residential areas and upgrading the landscaping on the site to bring it closer to compliance with new landscape requirements. The landscaping plan has been revised to locate a mixture of evergreen and ornamental deciduous trees on the west side of the parking lot. The planners continue to recommend a three foot tall continuous hedgerow along the edge of the parking lot to shield headlight glare onto residential properties. LSL also recommends that the ornamental trees be naturally dispersed in front of the evergreen tree groupings, and that all plants be located in separate planting beds.

Waste Receptacle – Details of the screening enclosure must be provided. The materials used for the enclosure should generally match the materials used on the church building.

Engineering – LSL defers all site engineering issues to the Village Engineer.

Lemons stated that the above mentioned items will be provided in the final site plan. Jensen opened the public hearing at 7:40 p.m. on the site plan and special approval request of Covenant Alliance Church.

Bob Walsh of 20655 Smallwood Court asked questions about the plans for reconstruction of Greenfield School. He also questioned the need for the parking capacity being requested.

Neil Campbell, executive director of facilities for Birmingham Public Schools, responded that the old Greenfield School is being occupied during construction of the new school. The new building is currently on schedule to be ready between the start of the school year and Christmas break this year. The old building will then house students from Harlan Elementary School for one year while Harlan is being rebuilt. After that time, the old building will be demolished. Campbell displayed a copy of the new site plan for the Greenfield School site. The new site has a parking lot and separate access for parent and bus drop off. The main parking area has about 108 parking spaces.

Campbell explained that there will be two elementary schools on that site for one school year and a need to provide parking for the entire staff and transient population of those schools. The proposed plan allows the school to have a maximum amount of space on the property for recess, lunch break and play areas for a second school on the site and to maintain a more appropriate educational environment for the children. He stated that the cost of creating temporary parking and restoring landscaping was explored, and it was found that the cost was more than what would be spent to increase the size of the church parking lot. It seemed like a good situation for the school district and the church community to create parking that would serve a permanent purpose.

In response to an inquiry, Campbell stated that the school does not have a long term agreement to continue to use the church parking lot. The school and church have been good neighbors throughout the years, and he does not see a reason for that to change. Campbell does not anticipate the need for a formal agreement on the use of the church property after the term of the shared use.

Woodrow asked if there is a need for the Church to expand its parking space. Randy LeCompte, board member at Covenant Alliance Church, stated that the church currently shares the facility with the Grace Alliance Church, a Vietnamese church. There are two congregations operating out of the building with the goal being to maximize the use of the facility. There is currently an AA group meeting at the church.

With regard to the joint operating agreement, LeCompte stated that the church has developed a good relationship with Greenfield Elementary School over the years. There have been occasions when people who attend school functions park in the church parking lot. There will be a letter of understanding agreement drafted to cover the joint use of the parking lot while the school is being built.

Gladys Walsh voiced concerns with parking lot lighting, landscaping, lack of parking islands, and creating another access drive. She had issues with the special use approval for an expanded parking lot. Walsh quoted from Section 22.28.010 of the ordinance dealing with off street parking facilities and understood that a written agreement regarding joint usage has not been submitted. She believes that the document is necessary in order to make a decision on the proper use of this site.

G. Walsh expressed the view that there is a need to enhance the open property on the church site rather than diminish it by installing an asphalt parking lot. She does not want to see the landscaping requirements minimized. Appropriate screening should be afforded to the adjoining residences. There is no plan for lighting of the parking lot. The flow of traffic has not been determined in terms of a one or two-lane driveway. Walsh questioned whether the intent of the ordinance was being upheld in this proposal.

Ron Berndt questioned why the Birmingham School District has the money to renovate school buildings and not to provide a full number of course periods available to students in the higher grades or to continue arts and advance study programs.

No one else wished to be heard; the public hearing was closed at 8:00 p.m.

Freedman expressed concern that this proposal represents a significant change in use for a residential area. She observed that the building appears to be dwarfed by the expanded parking lot. Without a stronger case being made for increased permanent parking, Freedman does not think that anything more than a temporary parking lot is necessary. She questioned why Beverly Hills should be asked to bear the detriment of increased asphalt over a previously green space.

Wayne questioned the use of White Pine trees on the site because that species loses needles in the fall and would not provide the amount of screening that a Spruce or Fir tree would. Ostrowski also recommended the use of White Fir on the site. He also thought that a hedge should be provided along the south border of the parking lot along 13 Mile Road. With effective hedge plantings, he thought that the visual impact of the parking lot expansion will be negligible on the site overall. Landsman expressed the view that the parking lot expansion is a needed improvement.

Borowski commented that the expanded parking lot appears to be a reasonable solution for the school district for the next two years. He thinks that landscaping and drainage are site plan issues that can be successfully addressed. He expressed concern in terms of the parking lot specifications and the driveway accessing the site from Fairfax. Borowski is interested in the long-term maintenance of a large parking lot and the long-term effect of the driveway.

At Wayne's request, LeCompte elaborated on the Church's plans for growing the congregation. He mentioned that it is the goal of Covenant Alliance Church to increase its membership and expand on the land that they own.

Jensen commented on the practicality and efficiency of the plan presented. A representative from the Church has indicated that Covenant Alliance Church is in the process of expanding its use. He noted that there is an abundance of green space on the site. The request is to expand the parking lot for use by the church and for the temporary use of a neighboring property. The Village engineer will review the drainage issues. It is understood that a shared access agreement must be submitted as part of this proposal.

Motion by Landsman, second by Ostrowski, to recommend special use approval as requested by Covenant Alliance Church at 15858 W. Thirteen Mile Road for parking lot expansion.

Woodrow cited his experience in the asphalt business and related that the parking lot specifications appear to be typical for jobs of this type. He would not be concerned with the specifications submitted.

LeCompte clarified that there is an existing gravel driveway from the church to Fairfax.

Roll Call Vote:

Jensen	- yes
Landsman	- yes
Ostrowski	- yes
Wayne	- yes
Borowski	- yes
Freedman	- no

Motion passed (5 – 1).

Motion by Ostrowski, second by Wayne, to recommend approval of the site plan for parking lot expansion at Covenant Alliance Church at 15858 W. Thirteen Mile Road subject to the conditions noted in the review letter from LSL Planning, Inc. dated February 16, 2006 and with the condition that the White Pine trees noted in the plan be substituted with White Fir trees and that a hedge be provided along the new parking lot adjacent to Thirteen Mile Road.

It was indicated that the Village engineer will review the plans for parking lot drainage. Woodrow believes that the two drains indicated on the plan submitted would adequately drain

the parking lot. However, it would not be overly expensive to provide a third drain if it was deemed necessary by the Village engineer.

G. Walsh questioned how specific the site plan approval should be in terms of ensuring compliance with ordinance requirements. It appeared to her that there were details that have not been addressed.

Roll Call Vote:

Landsman	- yes
Ostrowski	- yes
Wayne	- yes
Borowski	- yes
Freedman	- no
Jensen	- yes

Motion passed (5 – 1).

REVIEW OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD QUESTIONNAIRE

Due to the importance of completing its review of the Master Plan, the Board agreed to postpone this item to an upcoming meeting.

REVIEW THIRD DRAFT OF THE MASTER PLAN

Board members have received draft #3 of the Master Plan for review and discussion. Wenzara commented that the review should focus on ensuring that the findings and recommendations in the document are consistent with the vision of the Planning Board. The document distributed by the planning consultant eliminates the strikeouts and underlining.

The Board completed a portion of its review of Chapter 1, Existing Conditions. The material in this chapter provides a summary of data to understand the current conditions, trends, and issues facing the Village. Members went through Chapter 1 page by page, reviewing the subject matter and discussing whether the text accomplishes what the Planning Board set out to do in terms of updating the plan. There were a number of text revisions, deletions, and clarifications proposed by Board members along with grammatical suggestions. It was noted that much of the material in the Existing Conditions Chapter was compiled and written by previous planning consultants and planning boards.

Questions and comments were forthcoming from resident Ron Berndt regarding the conclusions in the paragraph entitled, “Age of Housing” on page 13 and regarding text included in the paragraph on page 5 entitled, “Nonconforming Lots and Structures”.

Robert Walsh questioned how many 40 foot lots exist in the Village. Byrwa will look into this and advise the Board.

Gladys Walsh commented on non-conforming lot issues. She suggested that the Board look at the Introduction in terms of how it relates to the types of neighborhoods that exist in the Village.

Jenson suggested that the Planning Board begin its March meeting at 7:00 p.m. and focus on reviewing the balance of the Master Plan. The Board needs time to deal with issues that come up as a result of its thorough review on the contents. There was agreement that it is critical to remove editorial and value judgment issues from the document.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

None

PLANNING CONSULTANT’S COMMENTS

None

BUILDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Byrwa questioned the status of the neighborhood questionnaire. Jenson clarified that it has been tabled in the interest of time. The Housing and Neighborhood Study is a priority issue that the Planning Board will begin to address following completion of the draft Master Plan during the lengthy adoption process.

Byrwa informed Board members of a County Planning Seminar to be held on March 25, 2006. Members interested in attending will be reimbursed by the Village.

Freedman and Borowski have indicated that they will not be in attendance at the March meeting. They will forward their comments on the Master Plan to the Planning Board chairperson.

Jensen informed the Board that the Village is in the process of soliciting Requests for Proposals for planning consultant services. This is a standard requirement for accepting Community Development Block Grant funds for use towards planning expenses. Interviews of representatives from three planning firms will be held on Friday, February 24 beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the Village municipal building.

Motion by Borowski, second by Freedman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

David Jensen, Chair
Planning Board

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary