

Present: Vice-Chair Ostrowski; Members: Borowski, Freedman, Liberty, Stempien, Tillman and Westerlund

Absent: Jensen and Wayne

Also Present: Building Official, Byrwa
Planning Consultant, Borden
Council member, Berndt

Vice-Chairperson Ostrowski called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Tillman, second by Liberty, to approve the agenda as published.
Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2007

Motion by Tillman, second by Liberty, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on June 27, 2007 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

APPROVE REQUEST FOR A 10' x 3' SIGN TO BE ERECTED AT METRO/SPRINT SOLO WIRELESS, 31243 SOUTHFIELD ROAD

Before the Planning Board for review was a request for a 10' x 3' wall sign to be erected at the Metro/Sprint Wireless store at 31243 Southfield Road at the 13 Mile and Southfield Roads strip mall. Byrwa indicated that drawings submitted are in compliance with the overall maximum size of 30 square feet; restrictions on colors and lettering styles meet ordinance requirements. Byrwa recommended approval of the sign.

Board members discussed the sign request. The sign is internally lit. David Duda from Universal Signs indicated that the sign will be placed on a timer to comply with the ordinance. Stempien noted that the ordinance does not allow the use of brand names on signs. Duda commented that Sprint is a carrier that will activate the service.

Motion by Tillman, second by Liberty, to approve the sign request for Metro/Sprint Solo Wireless at 31243 Southfield Road as requested contingent on review by the Village Attorney of ordinance restrictions relating to brand names.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion passed (7 – 0).

REVIEW INFORMATION FROM LSL ON THE SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL USE APPROVAL FOR DETROIT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL PROPOSAL, 22305 W. 13 MILE ROAD

Detroit County Day School is requesting special use and site plan approval of a 2-story gymnasium addition to the existing 3-story middle school. The 32,600 square feet of new space would be located at the northeast side of the middle school. The request represents Phase 1 of an athletic master plan that would connect the middle school and upper school and provide new indoor practice space for the campus athletes.

The Detroit Country Day School site is zoned R-1 Single Family Residential and contains about 53 acres at the southwest corner of Thirteen Mile and Lahser roads. The site currently contains a private middle school and high school and a number of related facility buildings and athletic fields. It has vehicular access from both Thirteen Mile Road and Lahser Roads. Private school accessory structures are permitted uses after special approval in an R-1 zoned district.

Brian Borden, planning consultant from LSL Planning Inc., stated that LSL has reviewed the use permitted after special approval for Detroit Country Day School to construct a gymnasium addition to the existing middle school building on the southerly portion of the property. The overall project also includes a small expansion of the existing parking lot north of the middle school and the demolition of an existing maintenance building and other areas of impervious surface. The submittal includes an overall athletic master plan for the site including several future additions that will connect the middle school with the upper school. The portion requested for approval is identified as Phase 1.

Borden referred to his review letter of August 15, 2007, which provides comments based on review standards set forth in Section 22.08.300(h). A public hearing on a special use approval is required by State law. Special land use standards relate to the project's compatibility with items such as adjacent land uses, surrounding zoning districts, the intent of the Zoning Ordinance, compatibility with the natural environment, and potential impact on public services and facilities. In general, the review letter indicates that the project is consistent with the special land use requirements of the ordinance.

Borden pointed out an item for discussion, which is whether the project relates to the standard of compatibility with existing and future capabilities of public services and facilities affected by the proposed use. This standard requires a more detailed engineering review to determine the impact of the proposal on storm water, drainage, sewer system, etc. Compliance with this standard could be attached as a condition of approval, or the Planning Board could postpone approval and request a report from the Village Engineer and Public Safety Department given the size and intensity of the proposed use.

Borowski read standard #4 of the special use review letter: "Due to the size of the proposed addition (32,600 SF) the project is likely to place additional impacts on public services and facilities. However, in order to fully determine the extent of such impact, LSL recommends that the project be reviewed by the Village Engineer."

Glenn Shilling, headmaster for Detroit Country Day School, was present with Tim Casai, representing TMP Architecture. Casai stated that there have been numerous upgrades to the Country Day facilities in the last 15 years as funding became available. Their firm was asked to review the master plan for the school and focus on an upgrade of athletic facilities.

Part of the goal of the school has been to connect the middle school with the upper school. The middle school was built in 1991 without a gymnasium or athletic facilities. Casai used a projector to display a rendering of the entire master plan for Detroit Country Day School and present the ideas that the school would like to bring forward for consideration. He pointed out Phase 1 and future phases that might include a fitness center, ice rink, field house and another gymnasium. It was noted that the State lost a lawsuit that resulted in changing sports seasons, which placed pressure on schools to offer more gym space.

Casai informed the Planning Board that final soil reports were received since this application was made to the Village for site plan approval about a month ago. He pointed out the steep hillside and related that that soil reports for the area near the slope indicated about 30 feet of fill, which would not support a building. TMP architects met with DCDS officials and suggested reorganizing the plan to move the location of the gymnasium further away from the hillside, eliminate the ice arena, and relocate the fitness center and include it in the Phase 1 proposal. Casai and Shilling are present tonight to describe the project and the athletic master plan to the members, knowing that Detroit Country Day School would have to return with a formal revised site plan.

Casai exhibited a drawing of the current Phase 1 project involving a two-court gymnasium, two locker rooms, toilets, office space and a lobby entry. He displayed a 3-D model of the overall project and described what is contemplated in terms of the master plan. Casai related that the revised proposal will move the gymnasium to the north and retain the connection from the middle school to the gym; the revised Phase 1 project will include a fitness center/weight room.

Casai answered questions from Planning Board members with the understanding that action will not be taken until a modified plan is submitted. The drawings submitted to the Planning Board include the detailed engineering needed to analyze water, sewer, fire safety, etc. Casai added that the architects had two preliminary meetings with Village staff to discuss engineering and planning issues relative to the application. There will probably be minor modifications in terms of positioning utilities as part of reconfiguring the structures because of soil conditions.

Freedman asked if the school envisions increased traffic with the addition of the gymnasium. Casai responded that the number of people who come and go will not change; there could be a slight adjustment in the traffic pattern. Freedman commented on the heavy traffic on 13 Mile Road and asked if consideration has been given to providing entrance and egress on Lahser Road. Casai recalled that there was discussion with the Planning Board 13 years ago about connecting the upper parking area with the lower parking lot; the Village prohibited the school from doing that. An entrance was added on Thirteen Mile Road at that time for ingress only. Casai commented on site dynamics related to traffic and parking lot use.

Westerlund questioned whether the number of sporting events will increase. Shilling responded that the gymnasium will allow students to remain on campus for practices and middle school games. Country Day has not added any indoor athletic facilities to the campus since 1980. Shilling noted that the Michigan High School Athletic Association has publicized the lawsuit that resulted in changing athletic seasons. Women's and men's basketball will be played in the same season placing additional pressure on limited facilities.

There were inquiries from Board members about the athletic facilities and school sporting events. Specific questions on the proposed new construction and the demolition of an existing maintenance building were addressed by the applicants.

It was questioned whether other portions of the site will be improved as part of this expansion. Casai pointed out new construction on the campus resulting from the 1995 expansion noting that the façade on the west side is the only area that has not been improved. The school intends to make that improvement in the long term.

Borden stated that a special land use review is an opportunity to make upgrades or address deficiencies of a site. He has not noticed anything significant in terms of landscape deficiencies. Country Day should evaluate whether there are areas that impact adjacent residential property and address any gaps in screening as part of the project.

Ostrowski commented that the plans indicate that some trees will be removed to facilitate the new construction. If there are opportunities to relocate that material to the west property line or elsewhere on the campus, it should be shown on the plan. Casai stated that DCDS plans to upgrade the site by installing underground electrical as part of the new construction. If trees survive relocation, the school will replant them.

Ostrowski commented that the Village advertised a public hearing tonight on the special use approval and site plan for Detroit Country Day School. Considering that the plans submitted will be modified, he asked if there is a need for an additional public hearing on the revised submission.

Borden was of the opinion that there is not a technical need for a second public hearing. A public hearing is required for a special land use permit related to a 30,000 square foot gymnasium addition to the site. Consideration is given to the general impact on surrounding properties, adjacent zoning, and impact on facilities and services. Modifications to the specifics of the project are related to the site plan. The site plan does not require formal notification of a public hearing. Beverly Hills could go through the process again if it was thought that changes to the site plan warranted a second public hearing. However, the Village's requirements will be met tonight for a special land use public hearing.

Freedman expressed the view that a second public hearing should be held and residents re-notified due to the absence of a report from the engineering department on the impact of the new construction on public services or facilities.

Ostrowski opened the public hearing at 8:31 p.m. on the special use approval for the gymnasium addition proposed for Detroit Country Day School.

Don MacDonald of 31208 Foxboro, vice-president of Metamora Green Homeowners Association, stated that he did not support the proposal. He expressed the view that Detroit Country Day School has not been a good neighbor for the last 15 years. Football field lights are left on late into the night. There are reports from neighbors who hear swearing on the fields during games and practices. MacDonald had issues with the commercial use of athletic fields in a residential area. He was concerned that there may be more commercial use of the new fields and additional traffic in the area. MacDonald suggested that the Department of Environmental Quality should be involved to determine the impact of building in the watershed area. He thinks that the Village needs assurance before proceeding with this proposal that Detroit Country Day will discontinue commercial use of its facilities and do a better job of managing its athletic fields.

Fritz Hauser of 31119 Sleepy Hollow stated his house is within view of DCDS. He thinks it would be a mistake to approve plans for a large addition considering the amount of traffic that will be generated on 13 Mile Road. He was opposed to leasing the athletic fields for outside use. Hauser related that he hears bad language coming off the field from school coaches and people who lease the fields. Lights are left on at night. Hauser was opposed to approving additional facilities when the school cannot manage its current facilities.

Shilling stated that he would be happy to speak with the individuals in the audience about their concerns. He will look into reports of lights left on in the fields and other issues raised by area residents. Country Day has been in that location since 1957. When people move into an area, they know there is a school there. Shilling said that DCDS intends to be a good neighbor.

With regard to leasing the gymnasium or fields, Shilling stated that Detroit Country Day has schools for lower and junior children located in Bloomfield Village. These students use the facilities on the weekends for flag football and basketball. DCDS has leased its field to soccer teams; he will look into the extent of that arrangement.

No one else wished to be heard; the public hearing was closed at 8:47 p.m.

Planning Board members asked for additional information on the entire campus and the extent of leasing arrangements for use of Country Day facilities. It was suggested that a photometric study of lighting in the parking lot and football field may be required to determine the impact on the surrounding area. The special land use review for this expansion proposal is an opportunity to assure that the interests of the entire community are protected.

The plans submitted should be clarified in terms of the material used for the walkway into the new facility. Plans to relocate planting material should be noted on the drawings. Board members questioned whether the ordinance requirement for sidewalks with new construction is a topic for discussion due to the complexity of the site topography.

Motion by Freedman, second by Borowski, to table special use approval and site plan review of a proposal from Detroit Country Day School to construct a gymnasium addition to the existing Middle School building in order to receive the additional information discussed by the Planning Board.

Roll Call Vote

Motion passed (7 – 0).

Freedman was in favor of holding a second public hearing on the site plan and special use approval due to the significant change in the gymnasium proposal and considering items raised at tonight's meeting.

Board members discussed the need to have a second Planning Board public hearing on the special use approval with notification mailed to residents within 500 feet of the school. Borden reiterated that the Village has met its statutory obligation to hold a public hearing for special use approval. There will be a public hearing held on this proposal at the Council level. It was noted that Detroit Country Day School will submit a modified site plan, which will be reviewed in detail at an upcoming meeting. Residents can attend the public meeting and comment on the proposal.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Tillman commented that Detroit Country Day School has always been a valuable asset to the community, and we will figure out a way to continue to work together.

PLANNING CONSULTANT COMMENTS

Brian Borden welcomed the newly appointed members to the Planning Board.

BUILDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Byrwa commented that the Village will be doing asphalt resurfacing on Thirteen Mile Road north of the football field at DCDS within the next month or two.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Motion by Borowski, second by Liberty, to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Motion passed.

George Ostrowski, Vice-Chair
Planning Board

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary