

Present: Chairperson Jensen; Vice-Chair Ostrowski; Members: Borowski, Freedman Liberty and Westerlund

Absent: Stempien, Tillman, and Wayne

Also Present: Planning consultant, Strader  
Building Official, Byrwa  
Council Liaison, Peddie

Chairperson Jensen 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 Borowski, second by Westerlund, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **APPROVE MINUTES OF MARCH 25, 2009 PLANNING BOARD MEETING**

Motion by Borowski, second by Ostrowski, that the minutes of a Planning Board meeting held on March 25, 2009 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

### **REVIEW INFORMATION PROVIDED BY LSL ON NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY WEST OF SOUTHFIELD ROAD AND SET PUBLIC HEARING DATE**

Board members are in receipt of a color-coded map showing recommended zoning changes in Area A and potential changes in Area B as a result of the nonconforming lot study for the west side of the Village.

Planning consultant Brad Strader from LSL Planning reviewed that the Planning Board looked at the neighborhoods west of Southfield Road. If there were areas where a majority of the lots were nonconforming, the idea was to consider what it would take to bring them into conformity. It was determined that there are 406 out of 433 lots that are nonconforming in Priority Area A, east of Evergreen and west of Southfield Road. A map has been prepared that distinguishes whether the nonconformities are due to lot width and minimum square footage.

Changing those areas into a new district would eliminate about 80% of the nonconformity. This would be an improvement that would assist people who are seeking loans. Property owners would be less likely to need a variance from the Zoning Board to upgrade their homes. There would not be a major increase in the intensity of use because the lots are all platted and developed. This zoning change would validate the majority of the existing lots.

The area in the western portion of the Village classified as Area B was evaluated with the consultant's GIS system. It was determined that there is a random pattern of nonconformity with

not that many nonconforming situations. Strader suggested that the Village might be best served to leave those lots the way they are. It appears that there are only a few cases that come to the Zoning Board of Appeals from this area.

Board members discussed Priority Area A. Westerlund questioned the width of the widest lot in the area. It was suggested that the Board evaluate this neighborhood to determine if there are conforming lots in Area A that would qualify for a potential lot split if the zoning requirements were reduced.

Strader encouraged the Board to think about questions that might come from the public and be prepared to address those issues prior to the public hearing. Intensification of use would be a concern of area residents. LSL will scan the lots for potential land divisions, but Strader did not think this would be an issue. Jensen mentioned that an applicant has to provide average lot sizes within 500 feet of the subject property as part of a lot split request. If there was a location where lots could be combined to create another lot, it would exist today because the dimensions will not change significantly.

Other issues that may be raised by the public are: 1) what is the benefit to homeowners; 2) why is the Village considering this; and 3) what are the advantages.

Borowski commented that the benefit of rezoning was clear on the east side of the Village due to the small lot sizes. Homeowners could not renovate their homes without violating setback requirements, which was the driving force for the rezoning. It was a positive thing for people to improve their residences and the value of their homes.

Jensen said that the Village has artificially restricted the ability of many people in Area A to be able to renovate their homes without going before the Zoning Board of Appeals and presenting a hardship. It was noted that 406 out of 443 lots are nonconforming.

Freedman asked that Byrwa to research how many variances have been requested at the Zoning Board of Appeals from property owners in Area A. It is a question that may come up at a public meeting.

Following a discussion of Priority Area B, it was the consensus of the Board to exclude Area B from consideration and focus on Area A in terms of amendments to the Zoning Map. The six lots in Huntley indicated in Area A were also eliminated from the study area. LSL Planning will update the map to illustrate the zoning changes agreed upon at this meeting.

Jensen remarked that the Planning Board will be meeting with Bob Gibbs next month. Strader will prepare material for the next meeting including revised data to reflect zoning changes discussed at this meeting and provide information to answer questions that may be raised at the public hearing. Board members can review this material and consider setting a public hearing for June 24, 2009.

### **DISCUSS SOUTHFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY**

At the last Planning Board meeting, Board member Stempien agreed to develop an agenda for the session with Bob Gibbs in May so that there would be a general understanding of what should be achieved in terms of a redevelopment plan for Southfield Road. Stempien, who was not present, emailed a draft agenda to the Board for its review.

Jensen related that he met with Bob Gibbs last week to discuss the agenda for the May meeting on a Village town center plan. Gibbs will be provided with follow up questions so he can prepare for the meeting.

Westerlund commented that the Planning Board should have a clear understanding of what it is trying to achieve with the help of Mr. Gibbs. Members should form their thoughts into a vision and buy into that plan in order to promote it to others. Westerlund wants this to be a special place located in Beverly Hills.

Jensen commented on features of the plan presented by Gibbs. It was suggested that the single most important thing the Village could do to change the entire section is to create a boulevard. That would change the way people access the business district and it would generate the opportunity to do other things. Without a median to create a sense of place, people will keep on driving 50 miles an hour along Southfield Road. Jensen thinks that the Board needs to capture what Gibbs is trying to communicate; then it will be ready for discussion of a plan.

Strader thought that there was agreement at the joint meeting with Council that everyone wanted to see a more walkable commercial district developed over time. People want to hear more about a median, then redevelopment. The next thing would be to determine how to redevelop and ask if the Planning Board and Council are comfortable and enthused about it. The Village will need to indicate what parts of the plan they like and what does not appear practical before proceeding with an overlay zone.

Strader suggested that Board members identify the hurdles and articulate their concerns so that Gibbs can offer an answer or an alternative. The result of the May meeting should be that you know how to tweak that drawing. He questioned whether on-street parking on Southfield Road is critical to making the plan work because it would be difficult to implement. After the Council and Planning Board agree on a vision and a plan, implementation strategies should be discussed.

Borowski proposed giving consideration to including property that runs from 13 Mile to Beverly and Southfield Road to the apartments and to the residential area that faces Beverly Road. There may be more efficient uses of the land and access to those properties. Westerlund agreed that there is a need to determine a boundary. This area has all the characteristics of a live-work multi-use neighborhood.

Board members discussed the scope of the development. It was agreed that the Planning Board and Council should achieve a better understanding of their goals and sense of the project before input is sought from residents and retailers. There should be answers to some of the questions before the Board can respond to the public. The plan is abstract and requires scrutiny and refinement with the assistance of Gibbs next month. The consensus was that there needs to be a

broad base of enthusiasm from more people than the Planning Board and Council if the Village is to establish a walkable town center.

Jensen reviewed the points in Stempien's draft agenda for the May meeting with Gibbs and discussed these items with the Board:

1. Corridor Development

- a. Mission statement (vision)
- b. Overlay zone definition language
- c. Short term/long term plan development
- d. Corridor development authority – updates to maintain vision

2. Master Plan

- a. Incentives for investment/development
- b. Examples of overlay district incentives (building heights, mixed use, building materials, etc.) to achieve development objectives
- c. Combining properties to achieve overlay district objectives
- d. Coordinating with municipalities to orchestrate the master plan (Southfield Twp., Southfield, Birmingham, Oakland County Road Commission)
- e. Which aspects of our master plan are a “must have” to achieve development goals
- f. Techniques for providing community awareness plan development and embracement
- g. Parking accommodations to support development
- h. Green space – development and maintaining
- i. Green build policy development
- j. Financing – grants, stimulus, sponsorships, etc.

Westerlund proposed additional discussion items as follows:

- k. Evaluate the linkages to the apartments, school, and Village offices, swim club, Corners shopping center
- l. Pedestrian and vehicular circulation
- m. Defining the boundary
- n. How do we achieve a sense of arrival
- o. Get an opinion on the crescent or T-shape plan
- p. What to regulate versus what the market decides in terms of design. What is the minimum for continuity or cohesiveness without over-regulating.

The agenda discussed tonight will be the basis of the conversation for the May meeting. Jensen will update Bob Gibbs on the Board's ideas so he can think about these items. Council members will be invited to attend a two-hour Q&A with Bob Gibbs and for further discussion of the Southfield Road corridor on May 27, 2009.

**PLANNING CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS**

Westerlund announced that the Village's Annual Memorial Day Parade and Carnival is coming up. He could use volunteers for the parade.

**BUILDING OFFICIAL’S COMMENTS**

Byrwa informed the Board that there will be a Council budget session on Tuesday, April 28 at 6:00 p.m.

Borowski asked Byrwa if he spoke with the headmaster at Detroit Country Day School regarding busses parked in the lot abutting Thirteen Mile Road. Byrwa responded that headmaster Glenn Shilling indicated that this was a temporary situation. Shilling was made aware that the site plan approved in November of 2007 did not allow busses to be stored in that location. The School agreed that it would not park busses on campus when the bus garage was removed. Schilling was asked for written confirmation as to when the busses would be moved. Byrwa will request Detroit Country Day School to discontinue this practice by May 1, 2009 or the Village will initiate legal action to gain compliance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Peddie commented that she was impressed by the Gibbs plan for future development of a town center area along Southfield Road. She commented on the goal setting process.

Motion by Liberty, second by Borowski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Motion passed.

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

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

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