

**PLAN COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, September 14, 2020**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Palmer

1. Roll Call.

Present: (In person) President Palmer, Mr. Long, Mr. Cashin, Mr. Kujawa, Trustee Michalski, Mr. Reineke (Virtual attendance), Mr. Jodie (Virtual attendance)

Absent: None

Also: David De Angelis, Village Manager, Thomas Harrigan, Zoning and Planning Administrator/Assistant to the Village Manager, Hector de la Mora, Village Attorney, Applicants and members of the public.

2. Review and act on meeting minutes dated 8/3/20.

Mr. Michalski motioned and Mr. Kujawa seconded to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried 7-0.

3. Review and provide recommendation on the conceptual redevelopment proposal for the property located at 13105 Watertown Plank Road (School Sisters of Notre Dame Campus) pursuant to §335-30G(1)(c) through §335-30G(1)(e).

President Palmer provided an overview of the protocol to be followed during this meeting. He highlighted there has been no formal application received for the proposed redevelopment of the School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND) property. The charge of the Plan Commission is to review and provide feedback on the concept proposal being presented by Mandel Development. After the Commission has concluded their comments, there will be a public comment portion of the meeting.

Barry Mandel, Chief Executive Officer of Mandel Development, and Philip Aiello, Chief Operating Officer of Mandel Development, were present before the Commission. Mr. Aiello introduced the development team which has put forth the conceptual proposal of the SSND property. Mr. Aiello also introduced Sister Deb Sciano, Provincial Leader of the Central Pacific Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Sister Sciano provided a historical summary of the School Sisters and explained the financial realities the Sisters are currently facing. This financial reality is compounded with an aging population of sisters who are facing an increase in health care needs. Sister Sciano explained that Mandel Development was chosen though a competitive selection process as the firm has demonstrated a strong interest in honoring the School Sisters legacy and heritage with the proposed redevelopment, and preserving key elements of the property. Notably, the School Sisters would continue to own and maintain the cemetery.

Mr. Mandel addressed the Commission and discussed the current real estate market as it relates to “life-style communities”. Mr. Mandel summarized the portfolio of Mandel Development and expressed great interest in preserving the legacy of the School Sisters by way of the proposed redevelopment.

Mr. Aiello provided an extensive presentation of the proposed concept plans before the Plan Commission. He explained the concept proposal enhances the downtown area and maintains consistency with the draft Downtown Master Plan. The development does not define the broader community, rather the community defines the development. Topics discussed during the presentation:

- Development goals
 - Create high-quality multifamily community.
 - Pay tribute to the School Sisters heritage.
 - Create aesthetic consistent with Elm Grove.
- Proposed redevelopment provides housing option for residents to remain in Elm Grove area without the demands of home ownership.
- Multiple neighborhood meetings have been conducted with stakeholders within the community.
- Overview of original concept plan which has evolved into two program options.
 - Option 1 – 230 apartments with 26 single family homes.
 - Option 2 – 230 apartments with 100 senior living units and 11 single family homes
- Anticipated average rent - \$2,500 per month.
- Anticipated average unit square footage – 1,331 square feet.
- Guest parking on new private roads within the development.
- Underground parking provided for development residents at a rate of 1.82 stalls per apartment, 419 underground parking stalls in total.
- Explanation as to how the proposed architectural style of the redevelopment was derived from existing architectural styles within the Village, combined with contextual sensitivity.
- Explanation of the Pocket Neighborhood concept.
- Discussion on the density context.
- Discussion on potential impact to the Elmbrook School District.
- Review of neighborhood views looking toward the proposed redevelopment from adjacent streets.
- Review of Traffic Impact Analysis and pedestrian safety.
- Review of property value studies.
- Discussion of potential municipal water extension.
- Review of drainage compliance requirements.
- Discussion of desire to preserve existing trees on the property when possible.
- Reviewed approximate construction timeline.
 - Apartment duration – 20 Months.
 - Senior Living Duration – 15 to 20 months.
 - Single Family Homes – Variable.
- Discussion of potential Tax Incremental Financing requests.

President Palmer asked the Commissioners for their questions.

Mr. Kujawa asked if the Commission could be provided an example of an existing pocket neighborhood within the greater Milwaukee area.

Mr. Aiello stated he would have to gather that information for the Commission.

Mr. Cashin inquired if any thought has been given to emergency vehicular access into the proposed redevelopment site, and if so, where would it be located.

Mr. Aiello commented that topic has been discussed, and there are several options where the emergency access could be provided to the site. One example being on the east side of the existing buildings on Watertown Plank Road.

Mr. Cashin expressed concern that 35 to 40 surface parking stalls available for guest parking seems inadequate. Mr. Long expressed similar concerns.

Mr. Aiello noted that the feasibility of provided guest parking underground is being explored as an option.

Mr. Michalski asked if Mr. Aiello would clarify what he stated about the existing building on Watertown Plank only being 43 to 50% efficient.

Mr. Aiello explained efficiency is determined by the amount of rentable space divided by the total square footage of the building. In this case, the efficiency is somewhere around 50% which is an operation inefficiency which needs to be overcome.

Mr. Kujawa noted that the Traffic Impact Analysis identifies residents working at the Medical College, yet the analysis does not reflect cars heading to the west on Watertown Plank Road.

Mr. Kenneth Voigt of Ayres and Associates stated he will look further into that inquiry.

Mr. Reineke commented the water supply issues appear to be acceptable, however are there any other concerns related to utilities, sewer, electric, gas or telecommunications.

Mr. Aiello explained that in preliminary reviews, there appears to be enough capacity for all discussed utilities.

President Palmer asked if the project moves forward, would the existing cistern remain onsite.

Mr. Aiello stated the cistern would be removed.

Mr. Jodie opined that he believes the Traffic Impact Analysis is well done. Mr. Jodie asked if a TWLTL (Two Way Left Turn Lanes) on Watertown Plank road have been explored as an option within the Traffic Impact Analysis.

Mr. Voigt stated he will look into it.

Mr. Michalski asked how Mr. Aiello derived an anticipated number of residents per unit at 1.5 people per residence.

Mr. Aiello explained this number was generated using comparable data from existing developments owned and managed by Mandel development.

For a comprehensive review of the presentation presented by Mandel Development, please link here:

<https://www.elmgrovetown.org/DocumentCenter/View/3073/SSND---Plan-Commission-Meeting---20200914-v2>

4. Public Comment

Michael Hamilton, 13130 Watertown Plank Road Unit 31 – Stated that he is skeptical of a traffic issues being created by the proposed development. It would be very unfortunate for the Village if Mandel Development were to “walk away” from the proposed redevelopment for any reason. The possible extension of municipal water into the downtown of Elm Grove would be a major benefit for the community. Prefers Lake Michigan water if municipal water is to be extended into the Village as it does not require softening.

Sheila Reynolds, 12850 Green Meadow Place – Expressed gratitude towards Mr. Aiello for his professionalism during this process. Density and proposed heights of the new buildings are too large, would have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. Traffic concerns, specifically related to drivers who may become lost in the neighboring subdivision. Moved to Elm Grove for the element of privacy which it provides. Single Family Homes are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and should be strongly considered.

Jennifer Stuckert, 14949 Juneau Blvd – Moved to Elm Grove because it is a charming community. This proposed development would change the feeling of Elm Grove because it is too dense at 230 Apartments. Has concerns regarding the traffic Impact Analysis, believes the Village should conduct its own. Prefers single family, owner occupied development. Appreciates the proposed private road on the inside of the new building footprints in order to provide additional concealment from the surrounding neighborhood.

Lisa Becker, 1155 Church Street – Expressed that Mandel Development is a respected developer and they create high-quality multifamily developments. However, the scale of the project is far too large for Elm Grove. An additional 230 apartments would increase the existing population by 10%. Prefers a gentle density plan with a diversity of housing types. The PDO proposal should not be approved.

Connie Malewicki, 12800 Meadow Drive –Feels there should be individual homes in the area.

William Hall, 12450 Stephen Place – Expressed concerns related to the impact of the development on the school district. Believes there is no logic to the Traffic Impact Analysis. The traffic study did not analyze cars heading east bound on Watertown Plank Road. Requests public transparency specifically related to conflict of interests of Commission members and Village Trustees with Mandel Development group. Expressed concern that in a post-COVID world, high density housing will not be a desirable, or responsible option. Questioned what percentage of rental units exist within the housing stock of the Village.

Tom Castile, 1865 Hollyhock Lane – Move to Elm Grove to be close to Tonawanda Elementary School. The Village has a unique charm. High density changes this charm. The Traffic Impact Analysis is in favor of development. Mandel Development does great work, but that does not matter as the proposal is too dense.

Andrew Williams, 1485 Notre Dame Blvd – It is nice the historical buildings are being saved. The development proposal is too large. The proposed development has brought the Village together, everyone is against it.

Robert Chang, 12850 Green Meadow Place – There are 75 new senior housing rental units now constructed on Bluemound Road. There may be negative impacts on the surrounding property values. Whether there is an impact or not on the surrounding properties, it is those property owners who assume the risk. Stated that he is the targeted demographic which Mandel development would be marketing towards. Does not have a desire to downsize to 1,500 square feet of living space and to pay rent on something that will not provide a return on equity. The development proposal is simply too dense. There should be lower density in Elm Grove. The proposed development on the south end of the property is an afterthought.

Deborah Robinson, 1065 Longwood Ave – The Traffic Impact Analysis reflects that cars will not be going away. Prefers Lake Michigan water if municipal water is to be extended into the Village. The proposed single family lots should be Rs-1 zoning (larger lot sizes). Some areas of the development should be kept as park space, perhaps incorporating educational components into it. Has concerns related to the impact on the school district.

Glenn Schrubbe, 1150 Red Barn Lane – Expressed that he agrees with what his neighbors have stated thus far.

Ellen Mary Cook, 850 Brinsmere Drive – Opposed to non-owner occupied development. There is a difference between apartments and condominiums.

Bruce Lanser, 12515 Stephen Place – Against the development as proposed. A 10% in population will have a significant impact on traffic.

Jeff Behring, 1100 Red Barn Lane – Thanked Mr. Aiello for his continued professionalism throughout this process. Stated that Elm Grove is a special place that he happened to find when moving from California many years ago. The Village is a quiet and safe community. There are no “strangers” here. There is an incredibly strong level of civic engagement. The proposed development would upset this balance. There would be increased density and traffic in the Village. The proposal should be scaled back.

Jenny Barcelona, 12955 Meadow Drive – Elm Grove is the best suburb in America. The development proposal should be slowed down. The density being proposed is undesirable. How many apartment units can Elm Grove support?

Robert Grede, non-Village resident. Was born in Elm Grove, his father was the first President of the Village. The Village has always been a rustic respite away from urban sprawl. His father would have recognized the need for change in the Village. Mandel Development is capable of creating a development that will complement the Village.

Susan Robinson, Village resident – The proposed development should be in the interest of all residents. As currently proposed, it is too dense. There should be larger single family lots. The Traffic Impact Analysis is flawed. Has safety concerns for student biking to St. Mary’s. Has new concerns related to the proposed storm water detention pond. Concerned about the long-term ownership of the development.

Dale Stritenberger, Village resident - Stated the proposed buffer being demonstrated within the development site plan is a good thing. The proposal demonstrates the preservation of trees. The proposed multi-family buildings are being proposed away from the existing single family homes. The development proposal is consistent with a walkable community.

Pete Moegenburg – Village resident – Stated the he believes Mandel development would be committed to the Village. Mr. Moegenburg is personally invested in several Mandel Development projects. IF the development proposal does not move forward, the SSND site could be vacated,

which is three times larger than the Reinders property in the downtown area. Mandel Development has demonstrated good faith in attempting to listen to the ear of the community. The real-estate market is not in a state of being able to accommodate condominium development. The anticipated demographics of potential renters in the development are such that existing residents in Elm Grove looking to sell their home and downsize, yet stay within the community, would have an option to do so. Is in support of the development proposal.

John Sayas, Village resident – The proposed development is too dense as there would be a 10% increase in the Village population.

Nancy Toelle, Village resident – Looking for less density.

Steve Mc Manus, Village resident – Has concerns related to EMS being able to provide the same level of service if the development is to be approved. The footprint of the proposed development could be significantly smaller. Providing offices and condos in the existing castle building should be explored. Has concerns regarding the Traffic Impact Analysis findings.

Lorrie Kalmer, speaking on behalf of Glen Langer (Village resident) – Read a letter composed by Mr. Langer which expressed concerns from the proposed development.

John Stollenwerek, Village resident – The Village deserves better than what is currently being proposed. The Village is a charming community. The Village should work with the School Sisters to develop a different plan.

Steve Kalmer, Village resident – The Village is already a community, we do not need to create a new one. Opposed to rental units in an owner occupied area. Opposed to new pathways located near residents backyards. Prefers owner occupied condos.

Janis Crego, Village resident – Prefers condominiums, not apartments. Has concerns related to traffic analysis. Concerns related to the School District.

Mary Inden, 14745 Watertown Plank Road – Not opposed to the proposed lot sizes in the pocket neighborhood at 1/3 of an acre. Noted many homes in the Village are on ¼ acre. Expressed concerns related to the proposed architectural design of the multifamily development. Stated this should be revised to reflect more “pizzazz”. There should be more enhancement on the buildings. Stated that the increase in tax base will pay for additional services if needed.

Dan Finn, 2000 Mt. Kisco Drive – The proposed development would bring in too many residents for the size of the property. Concerns related to safety, moved to the Village because it is a safe place to live. There would be a significant increase in traffic with this proposal.

5. Other Business

None.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Long motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Michalski, Motion carried 7-0.
Meeting adjourned at 11:13 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Harrigan
Zoning and Planning Administrator/
Assistant to the Village Manager