

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
Planning Commission
September 6, 2016
Northville City Hall – Lower Level, Meeting Room A

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Steve Kirk
Carol Maise
Matthew Mowers
Mark Russell
Anne Smith
Jeff Snyder

Absent: Dave Mielock (excused)
Christopher Miller (excused)
Jay Wendt (excused)

Also present: Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant
1 resident

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Motion by Russell, support Mowers, to approve the agenda as published.
Motion carried unanimously.**

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: August 16, 2016

**Motion by Mowers, support Smith, to approve the August 16, 2016 minutes as published.
Motion carried unanimously.**

5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None.

6. REPORTS:

- A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: None.**
- B. CITY COUNCIL: None.**
- C. PLANNING COMMISSION: None.**
- D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: None.**

7. DISCUSSION:

NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS – OLD VILLAGE SCHOOL AND MAIN STREET SCHOOL
CONCEPT PLANS

Mary Kay Gallagher, Superintendent, and Michael Zopf, Assistant Superintendent, Northville Public Schools, were present on behalf of this discussion item.

Superintendent Gallagher said they had requested to be on the agenda in order to share an update regarding the Old Village and Main Street Schools. They were hoping to release a request for proposals and they wanted to share the same information they had shared with the Historic District Commission on June 15, 2016, and answer questions and receive feedback from the Planning Commission.

Utilizing a presentation distributed to the Commission, Mr. Zopf explained that the Old Village School (OVS) had been empty since 2012, and was insured as a vacant building. In 2012 the School District had an opportunity to consolidate the Special Education (Act 18) programs at OVS with those at Cooke School. The Office of Civil Rights mandated that if any future programs or activities were conducted at OVS, OVS must be comparable to other District facilities and services. While the outside of OVS was in reasonable shape, the inside needed a lot of work.

The District had studied the possible co-location of city and school administrative functions at OVS. However, this would require a \$9.5 million investment, an amount determined to be unaffordable by District and City leadership.

They had also looked at the cost of renovating 501 W. Main Street. Those costs came in at \$8 – \$10.4 million. 501 W. Main Street had several site, infrastructure and architectural deficiencies.

As OVS was an available unused building, and the cost to renovate Main Street was prohibitive, the District's real estate consultant, Great Northern Real Estate Consulting, suggested marketing both properties, either separately or together.

Two RFP's would be issued: one for Old Village School, and one for Main Street. The RFP's would probably go out within the next few days, and would be due back October 26.

Great Northern Consulting had developed two different concept proposals that were aligned with Master Plan recommendations and they had shared these concepts with the Historic District Commission. They were not seeking to do anything radical, but rather the developments would be in line with the Master Plan. Preserving Old Village School was a priority. A precondition of the RFPs was to maintain the exterior of OVS.

Commissioner Maise asked when Main Street School was built. Mr. Zopf said it was built in 1937.

Commissioner Russell asked how the Historic District Commission reacted to the possible demolition of the Main Street School. Mr. Zopf said he felt the HDC was most concerned with what would replace it. Ms. Gallagher said the RFPs were clear that proposals could show Main Street School retained. However, Bill Bowman from Great Northern Real Estate Consulting thought there was more potential for Old Village School to remain than for Main Street School.

Mr. Zopf said they had had developers go through both buildings. These developers thought they could do something with OVS, but that Main Street was unworkable in its current configuration, and would be too costly to renovate.

Commissioner Maise asked how many employees were housed in Main Street School currently. Mr. Zopf said that approximately 40 employees were housed in Main Street School, including administration and early childhood staff. Additionally the basement housed shop areas.

In response to a further question from Commissioner Maise, Mr. Zopf said that school administration was considering moving close to or adjacent to one of the existing school buildings. The District would also need to find a good space for the early childhood programs, which were very popular in the community.

Vice Chair Kirk commented that his understanding was that if and when the Main Street School was not used for a school, it reverted to the original owners, the Gazleys.

Mr. Zopf said they had done a title search, and this requirement was not on the title.

Vice Chair Kirk asked if the buildings had elevators. Mr. Zopf said both OVS and Main Street did have elevators.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said that Commissioner Mielock had called her today and asked that she relay the thought that since the Master Plan didn't really identify much more than multifamily or senior residential uses for the subject properties, the Commission might consider doing an area plan for the properties in order to give structure and guidance as to what the Commission wanted to see happen there.

Planning Consultant Elmiger also noted that the HDC liked concept plan A (single-family housing) more than concept plan B (multi-family housing). However, the Master Plan actually called for higher density for this area.

Commissioner Maise remembered that there had been opposition to more dense uses here.

Vice Chair Kirk said that he liked the buffer shown between other residential neighbors on both concept plans.

Commissioner Russell asked if the RFPs were by invitation only. Mr. Zopf said the call for RFPs was open to the public.

Ms. Gallagher said they were not obligated to accept any of the proposals that came in. They had a subcommittee that would review proposals in greater depth, but ultimately the entire School Board would approve any final proposal.

In response to a question from Commissioner Russell, Mr. Zopf said the developers who had visited the site had favored a condo development.

Commissioner Smith said her understanding was that the Main Street School had more architectural integrity than OVS. She pointed out that there were many buildings like OVS throughout southeastern Michigan.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said that there was an article written about the Old Village School when it was built, extolling the new ideas that the architecture of the school was incorporating. She suggested school personnel locate that article online.

Commissioner Snyder wondered how any new development would impact parking for the library. Commissioner Maise said this had been a concern in the Joint Subcommittee when they studied the Master Plan. The Master Plan called for early childhood and senior living uses on the property. It would be interesting to combine those two uses in close proximity to each other.

The Commission thanked Ms. Gallagher and Mr. Zopf for their presentation.

OTHER DISCUSSION:

Planning Consultant Elmiger mentioned some items in the Zoning Ordinance that would be brought to the Commission for discussion and action including:

- Clean up contradictory language regarding rear entry signage.
- Take-out restaurants in Section 10.03 were listed as both a permitted use and special use.
- How to count covered porches in lot coverage.
- Review and perhaps update the tree protection ordinance.
- Residential driveways/hard surface coverage in front yards.

8. ADJOURN

As there was no further discussion, Vice Chair Kirk asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Maise, support Mowers, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as published September 20, 2016