

Minutes
City of Monona
Plan Commission
Monday June 26, 2023

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (6:00pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Patrick DePula, Ms. Susan Fox, Ms. Coreen Fallat, and Mr. Chris Homburg

Excused: Mr. Robert Stein, Mr. Chris Conrad, and Mr. Brandon Gries

Also Present: Doug Plowman, Planning Director

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Alder DePula, seconded by Ms. Fallat, to approve the minutes of June 12, 2023 carried with no corrections.

Order of Business

A motion by Alder DePula, seconded by Mr. Homburg, to hear items 7A-B under New Business before items 6A-D under Unfinished Business carried unanimously.

Appearances

None.

New Business

A. Public Hearing on Request by McConnell Agency, LLC dba American Family Insurance for Approval of a New Awning Sign at 320 W. Broadway Suite B. (Case No. S-014-2023)

Mr. Scott McConnell of McConnell Agency presented the application. He is proposing an awning sign at the new American Family Insurance location at Yahara Terrace. The sign has historic value and is the original awning sign from the American Family Dream Bank location in downtown Madison. The sign is 3 ft. tall, 5.5 ft. wide, and 2.67 ft. deep. The property owner has given permission for the awning sign and to move the suite lettering if needed.

There were no other appearances and the public hearing was declared closed.

B. Consideration of Action on Request by y McConnell Agency, LLC dba American Family Insurance for Approval of a New Awning Sign at 320 W. Broadway Suite B. (Case No. S-014-2023)

Planning Director Plowman shared the staff report. The request is for a new 16.5 sq. ft. awning sign facing northwest. The property is zoned Community Design District (CDD), and the Commission approved a Comprehensive Signage Plan (CSP) for the building in 2015. The CSP does not allow for awning signs, and instead allows for blade signs. The applicant has approval from building management to deviate from the CSP, but is seeking an exception from the Commission. Buildings in the CDD are allowed one awning sign per business that faces a public street, with a maximum size of 1 sq. ft. per linear foot of frontage. The sign faces the pedestrian walk way, and the applicant has 26 ft. of frontage. The Sign Code requires awning signs to be 8 ft. above a sidewalk, and as proposed the sign will be 7'7.5" above the sidewalk. A balcony above the sign imposes height limitation. No

zoning permit was needed for the new use, as the space was vacant for less than six months and the new use closely aligns with the previous use.

Mr. Homburg had no issues with the sign. He proposed that Condition of Approval #2 be modified to say that a design from a licensed engineer is required if the sign requires extensive structural support. He also proposed that Finding of Fact #2 mention that the height exception is minor.

Ms. Fallat and Chair Moore felt that the sign would help with business identification and acknowledged the challenge other businesses have had in Yahara Terrace. Ms. Fox appreciated the historic nature of the sign. Alder DePula had no issues and liked the sign.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Alder DePula, to approve a sign permit for one new awning sign, as requested by McConnell Agency LLC dba American Family Insurance, to be located at 320 W. Broadway Suite B, as proposed and according to Chapter 480 Article XII of the Zoning Code of the Monona Municipal Council, with the following findings of fact and conditions of approval:

Findings of Fact:

1. An exception from the previously approved Comprehensive Signage Plan to allow for an awning sign is warranted given the need for business identification from the pedestrian walkway and the building's parking lot.
2. A minor height exception is warranted given the limitations caused by the existing balcony above the sign location.

Conditions of Approval:

1. All required state and local building permits shall be obtained.
2. If the sign requires extensive structural support, the support shall be designed by a licensed professional engineer with final approval from the City's Building Inspector.
3. If the Plan Commission deems the sign to obstruct pedestrian movement, then the Plan Commission may require adjustments to the sign.
4. The existing window address sign shall be relocated if City Staff deems that the current location is obstructed by the placement of the awning sign.

The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

A. Public Hearing for Compass Properties on Request for Determination of Conformance with the Approved General Development Plan (GDP) for the site located at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue), for a Mixed-Use Development. (Case No. 2-016-2021)

Mr. Matthew Murtos and Mr. Tyler Noel of Compass Properties presented the application. Compass Properties has acquired The Neutral Project's ownership stake in the

development. The new development team has made changes to the previously approved General Development Plan (GDP), as the previous design was no longer financially feasible. The new design eliminates the townhomes, combines the two buildings along Monona Drive, and revises the materials used for the façade and structure. Access points, massing, height, setbacks, unit count, and tenant amenities are mostly unchanged and comply with the previously approved GDP. The solar energy and Zipcar sustainability initiatives, BMO anchor location, and co-working space have also been retained.

Mr. Matt Frydach of Kubala Washatko Architects shared the revised plans. The main tenant space at the corner of Dean Ave and Monona Drive remains and will be occupied by BMO. The residential lobby will be along Monona Drive near Springhaven Avenue, with the café/coworking space along Springhaven Avenue. Along Gordon Avenue, the drive lane and parking has been reconfigured with a larger landscaping buffer to replace the townhomes. The buffer will function as a park space. The community garden and dog run remain behind the building. The building height has been maintained, but stepbacks now only exist along Gordon Avenue. With the longer and larger building, variation in materials, recessed balconies, masonry corners, a canopy element over the entrance, and public art will all be used to break up the massing. Ground floor units along Monona Drive will have terraces and fences for privacy and security.

Planning Director Plowman shared public comments that he received. Mr. Patrick Fessenbecker (Nichols Rd.) supports the project and encouraged more retail space, additional bike facilities, and e-bike charging stations as part of the development. Ms. Kristie Goforth (Gordon Ave.) opposed the project, citing unaffordability, lack of parking, traffic impacts, and procedural issues with how the development was addressed for public notices.

There were no other appearances and the public hearing was declared closed.

B. Consideration of Action on Request for Determination of Conformance with the Approved General Development Plan (GDP) for the site located at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue), for a Mixed-Use Development. (Case No. 2-016-2021)

Planning Director Plowman shared the staff report. He reiterated that the purpose of the agenda item was to consider if the proposed changes to the development are in conformance with the approved General Development Plan (GDP). The GDP was approved in late 2022 and a TIF development agreement was also approved by the City Council late last year.

The development team has restructured, and the Neutral Project is no longer involved with the project. The development has retained many elements from the GDP but changes were made to make the project economically feasible.

The new design removes the 10 townhome units but adds 16 apartments, a net increase from 93 to 99 total units. The unit mix has more studios and 2 bedroom units, but fewer 1 bedroom units. Per City Ordinance, the density and intensity of the site cannot increase by more than 10% from the GDP to the Precise Implementation Plan (PIP). The new design represents 6.5% increase in unit count and 1.6% increase in gross square footage. City Ordinance also states that the floor area for non-residential use may not increase by more

than 10% from the GDP to the PIP. In the revised design, retail space has reduced by 40% from approximately 11,000 to 6,600 sq. ft.

BMO will still anchor the prominent corner space and a café/coworking space remains in the northeast corner. Green space in the approved GDP was 30,000 sq. ft. (31%) at-grade with an additional 9,500 sq.ft. on a green roof. Revised materials show 26,500 sq. ft. of green space at-grade (27.4%), which is a greater reduction than allowed by City Ordinance. Planning Director Plowman noted that the green space calculation does not include pervious pavers, which the previous calculation did.

Building setbacks and the site layout largely mimics the approved GDP. Building massing is closest to Monona Drive and forms a U-shape, with the two buildings being combined into one. An entry was added along Monona Drive to show differentiation of uses, and various materials help to break up the building. The building is stepped back on the 4th floor. Site circulation is largely similar, with the north and south access points only relocated a small amount. The new design represents a net increase in one parking stall, but the change in the residential and commercial floor areas necessitates an exception from City parking standards.

Mr. Homburg felt that the new design did not comply with the approved GDP, particularly given the loss of commercial space. He stressed the need for more commercial space given the site's importance as a commercial node. He suggested a walkway through the building to improve the pedestrian scale. Mr. Homburg felt that more stepbacks were needed and that the façade needed more brick or masonry, especially along Monona Drive and Dean Avenue. He stated that he liked the brick columns, balconies, and changes to the parking. Mr. Homburg felt that permeable pavers should not count towards green space.

Ms. Fallat was disappointed in the loss of retail space, townhomes, and green space. She asked if the changes would affect the TIF agreement. Planning Director Plowman said that since the TIF request had not changed, it likely would not affect the agreement. The CDA is aware of the general changes. Ms. Fallat asked the applicant if they had considered adding any non-market-rate housing. Mr. Murtos responded that this was a market-rate project. Ms. Fallat stressed the need for more green space and bike infrastructure. She liked the site circulation.

Ms. Fox was disappointed by the loss of townhomes and brick façade. She suggested EV charging for cars and bikes and encouraged more green space. She liked the fencing and landscaping along Monona Drive and asked the applicant to clarify the purpose of the café/coworking space. The applicant said that it is intended to have full retail café service with a coworking space open to the public.

Mr. Noel stated that he was concerned about a potential breezeway, as it wouldn't lead anywhere and would add more exterior surfaces to the building. Ms. Fox did not feel a breezeway was a crucial need. She suggested the addition of a club room.

Alder DePula said that he liked the business incubator space in the previous design, and encouraged a similar flex space in the new design. He pointed out that the project's density had increased, but not its affordability. He said that the building needed a larger setback on the top floor, and encouraged more green space and E-bike charging. He was okay with losing parking for more green space.

Chair Moore requested more commercial space and felt that a breezeway would add convenience for residents. She liked the buffer along Gordon Avenue and the site circulation, but felt that the building was too monochromatic and needed greater contrast in materials and color.

Mr. Homburg suggested the Commission include vague conditions of approval for more masonry, more commercial space, and more building articulation. This would allow for the development team to move forward with the GDP, but be creative and flexible in making the necessary changes before approval of a PIP. Mr. Noel stated that the suggested changes, particularly the masonry and breezeway, would make the project less feasible as a mixed-use housing development. He said that the development team would prefer a mixed-use housing development, but that they could also propose a strip mall or standalone BMO branch if the project becomes unfeasible. He stressed that the BMO branch was the development team's priority.

Mr. Aaron Kostichka of McGann Construction said that the development team had considered many of the suggested changes while drafting the design. He said that a breezeway would help with circulation, but would have to be strategically placed to work with the commercial spaces. He said that tenants could cut through the building to get from the front to the rear. He pointed out that the proposed materials are similar to other high-end market rate projects and said that they are limited by increasing construction costs and interest rates.

Mr. Frydach said that a breezeway would add costs to the buildings electrical and mechanical systems, and expressed concerns about the viability of the Commission's requested changes. Mr. Noel and Mr. Murtos said that the smaller changes were certainly feasible, and expressed support for EV car and bike charging, green roof elements, and larger balconies.

Ms. Fox asked if more commercial space would necessitate more parking stalls. Mr. Homburg said that it would depend on the specifics, which is why he feels that vague conditions of approval are appropriate.

Ms. Fallat did not feel that more masonry elements were needed. She asked the applicant about the possibility of an incubator space. The applicant said that the coworking space would have private office spaces that could act as an incubator space. They suggested the office spaces could be rented and have private entrances, which could possibly allow for conversion to commercial use.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Alder DePula, to strike suggested Findings of Fact #1-2, revise Finding of Fact #3 to state that the revised plans would

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conform with the approved GDP if the Conditions of Approval are met, revise Condition of Approval #3 to include “without the loss of parking,” and add conditions of approval requiring enhanced articulation of the building, additional commercial space, additional masonry, and for the PIP to come back to the Plan Commission for recommendation to City Council.

A motion was made by Alder DePula, seconded by Ms. Fallat, to strike the Condition of Approval requiring additional masonry.

The motion carried 4-1 (Mr. Homburg voted nay)

Ms. Fox expressed concern over the need to say that more green space was required without the loss of parking. Mr. Homburg said that parking and green space can be adjusted during PIP review at a later date.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Alder DePula, to approve the Revised General Development Plan (GDP) for Compass Properties for a 99-unit mixed-use development with ground floor commercial space, as proposed and according to Chapter 480-37 of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances with the following finding of fact and conditions of approval:

Finding of Fact:

1. The Plan Commission determined that the plans substantially conform with the General Development Plan (approved 12/5/2022) and Chapter 480-38 of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances and may pursue Precise Implementation Plan review if the following Conditions of Approval are met.

Conditions of Approval:

1. No construction under this General Development Plan may be permitted except in conformity with precise development plans approved under Article VI of the Zoning Code.
2. Approval of the General Development Plan is contingent upon approval of the revised CSM.
3. Site open greenspace shall be changed to meet City standards of 30% without the loss of parking prior to the Precise Implementation Plan review and consideration.
4. Enhanced articulation of the building shall be included as part of the Precise Implementation Plan submittal.
5. Additional commercial space shall be included with the Precise Implementation Plan.
6. A Precise Implementation Plan must return to the Plan Commission for recommendation to City Council.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. Public Hearing for Compass Properties on Consideration of a General Development Plan (GDP) and Precise Implementation Plan (PIP) (if necessary) for the site located at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue), for a Mixed-Use Development. (Case No. 2-016-2021)

The development team had no updates on a Precise Implementation Plan.

There were no other appearances and the public hearing was declared closed.

D. Prehearing Conference for Compass Properties on Request for Consideration of a General Development Plan (GDP) and Precise Implementation Plan (PIP) (if necessary) for the site located at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue), for a Mixed-Use Development. (Case No. 2-016- 2021)

Planning Director Plowman stated that this prehearing was an opportunity for the Commission to provide more detail to the applicant on setbacks, masonry elements, parking, flex uses, landscaping, and other Precise Implementation Plan (PIP) elements.

Alder DePula and Ms. Fox reminded the applicant to utilize native plantings.

Ms. Fallat asked about the intent of the garden space. The applicant said that the garden plots were intended for residents, which would complicate the addition of a breezeway as it would generate foot traffic. He also said that the open space along Gordon Avenue was intended to act as park space for residents and homes along Gordon Avenue.

The Commission discussed whether rooftop green space would count towards minimum requirements. While there is precedent from other developments, there was no consensus and it would depend on the project's specific rooftop green space proposals. The applicant proposed that the solar panels over the parking could be moved to the roof, and the parking covered with greenery instead. Mr. Homburg said that it may or may not count as green space. Chair Moore preferred rooftop solar over a green roof.

Mr. Homburg liked the proposed setbacks and urged the applicant to go beyond minimum landscaping and open space requirements. He said that bigger tree islands were preferred.

Alder Moore felt that the rear of the building was too monochromatic and needed more variation and interest. It should not look like the backside of a building. She liked the balconies and encouraged the applicant to make them larger, especially for 2-3 bedroom units. She also liked the fencing around the ground floor units.

Reports of Staff and Commission Members

A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.

1. Economic Development Update

Planning Director Plowman shared that the CDA will discuss a possible TID #10 which would cover the Bloom project area at the June 27th meeting. Development agreements are also being drafted for the Northpointe development and private drive.

2. Potential Upcoming Plan Commission Items

Planning Director Plowman shared that Pellitteri has acquired the former Go Riteway site on Industrial Drive. A hearing for a zoning permit is expected at the July 10th meeting.

3. Updates/Discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts

None.

4. Updates/Discussion on Sustainability Efforts

None.

5. Upcoming Meetings: July 10, 2023 and July 24, 2023

B. Plan Commission Requests for Information from City Staff

Ms. Fallat asked if the Housing Study had been shared with City Council and other Committees and felt that further conversation about housing diversity was needed. Planning Director Plowman said that he is looking to present it to Council at a July meeting when all Alders are present. Chair Moore said that there has been some preliminary conversation about housing diversity, and stated that Alder DePula has been involved with the Dane County Regional Housing Study. Planning Director Plowman said that developers have familiarized themselves with the document and it has been part of discussions.

Chair Moore asked for updates on the Monona Gardens and Slinde developments. Planning Director Plowman said that Monona Gardens is getting close to having final engineering documents, but that there are no updates on the Slinde project.

Ms. Fox asked for an update on Phase II of the Chipotle development. Planning Director Plowman said that there are still landscaping and erosion control issues with Phase I, so Phase II is held up.

Planning Director Plowman said that the Madison Pediatric Dental and Orthodontics project has received a raze permit and put up construction fencing.

Adjournment

A motion by Ms. Fallat, seconded by Alder DePula, to adjourn carried. (8:30pm)

Respectfully submitted by:
Thor Jeppson, Assistant Planner