

Minutes  
City of Monona  
Plan Commission  
Monday November 14, 2022

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (7:00pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Brian Holmquist, Mr. Robert Stein, Ms. Susan Fox, Mr. Chris Conrad, Mr. Chris Homburg, and Ms. Coreen Fallat

Excused: Mr. Brandon Gries

Also Present: Doug Plowman, Planning Director

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Alder Holmquist, to approve the minutes of October 24, 2022 carried with two corrections.

**Appearances**

Ms. Kristie Goforth (Springhaven Avenue and Gordon Avenue) spoke against the proposed Bloom development. She expressed concerns about traffic conflict points at the Monona Drive and Springhaven Avenue intersection, high traffic volumes, and inexperienced drivers due to the proximity to the High School. She also stated that Springhaven Avenue should be closed to through traffic. She questioned why the traffic study was performed when school was out of session and said it should be reconsidered. Ms. Goforth also expressed opposition to the development due to it including only market-rate housing units. She stated that the development would change the dynamic of the neighborhood.

**Unfinished Business**

- A. Public Hearing for a Rezoning Request and Map Amendment from Retail Business District (Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Sec. 480-28) to Community Design District (Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Sec. 480-30) at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue) as Requested by the Neutral Project and Compass Properties. (Case No. 2-021-2022)**

Mr. Nate Helbach of the Neutral Project introduced the application for a rezoning and map amendment from Retail Business (RB) to Community Design District (CDD).

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

- B. Consideration of Action for Approval and Recommendation to the City Council for Approval of a Rezoning Request and Map Amendment from Retail Business District (Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Sec. 480-28) to Community Design District (Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Sec. 480-30) at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue) as Requested by the Neutral Project and Compass Properties. (Case No. 2-021-2022)**

Planning Director Plowman shared the staff report. He stated that the current Retail Business (RB) zoning district only allows for ancillary residential uses, which is not appropriate for the proposed mixed commercial and residential uses. The applicant is seeking a rezoning to Community Design District (CDD) in order to pursue the Planned Community Development (PCD) process and to support the proposed mixed-use development. The Comprehensive

Plan shows these parcels as commercial use in both the current and future land use maps. Feedback from the Commission at the August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 prehearing was supportive and staff recommends that the Commission recommend approval of the rezoning and map amendment to City Council.

Mr. Homburg stated that Community Design District (CDD) was the appropriate zoning for this corner regardless of the proposed development. The other Commission members expressed support for the rezoning and had no further comments.

A motion was made by Ms. Fallat, seconded by Mr. Conrad, to recommend to the City Council Approval of a Rezoning Request and Map Amendment from Retail Business (Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Sec. 480-28) to Community Design District (Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Sec. 480-30) at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue).

The motion carried unanimously.

**C. Public Hearing on Request by the Neutral Project and Compass Properties for Consideration of a Certified Survey Map (CSM) for the site located at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue), for a Mixed-Use Development. (Case No. 2-022-2022)**

Mr. Nate Helbach of the Neutral Project and representatives from JT Engineering introduced the application for consideration of a Certified Survey Map (CSM). He shared that the development team has received Public Works Committee approval for the CSM and the use of parking along Springhaven Avenue.

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

**D. Consideration of Action on Request by the Neutral Project and Compass Properties for Consideration of a Certified Survey Map (CSM) for the site located at approximately 4601-4711 Monona Drive (between Springhaven and Dean Avenue), for a Mixed-Use Development. (Case No. 2-022-2022)**

Planning Director Plowman highlighted key points from the staff report. He shared that the proposal is to combine the existing lots into two new lots, and was unanimously approved by the Public Works Committee at the October 5th, 2022 meeting. The applicant is requesting the use of City right of way along Springhaven Avenue for parking, and the request was conditionally approved at the November Public Works Committee meeting.

A 24 ft. shared access easement, a 6 ft. access easement for a new public sidewalk along Springhaven Avenue, and an 8,700 sq. ft. stormwater easement to benefit both parcels are proposed. The applicant is also proposing to release some private utility easements and a City access and utility easement before recording of the CSM. Staff recommended approval.

Mr. Homburg stated that the CSM was specific to the development of this project, and asked if the applicant would record the CSM without approval of the development. The applicant clarified that they would not. Mr. Homburg suggested the addition of a condition of approval that the CSM is subject to approval of the Bloom project. Planning Director Plowman asked if

approval should be subject to the approval of the General Development Plan (GDP) or Precise Implementation Plan (PIP). The applicant asked if it could be subject to approval of the GDP so that the CSM could be recorded prior to PIP approval.

Mr. Stein and Ms. Fox asked for clarification on which utility easements would be vacated. The applicant and Alder Holmquist clarified that Public Works agreed that the easements in the northeast and southeast corners of the property would remain.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Mr. Stein, to recommend that the Monona City Council approve a 2-Lot Certified Survey Map (CSM) to re-subdivide all of Block 9 of the Springhaven Plat at 4601-4711 Monona Drive, as proposed, according to Section 473-4(b) of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances and Section 236.34 of the Wisconsin Statutes with the following conditions:

Conditions of Approval:

1. City Council review and approval is required prior to the recording of the CSM.
2. Final staff approval of the CSM is required, including the edits in the review letter dated November 10 from Vierbicher, the City's engineering consultant as well as any additional edits needed to the updated CSM.
3. Copies of the proposed easements for the new lots should be sent to the City Attorney for review and approval prior to recording of the CSM.
4. City approval is required for the release of the access and city utility easement as described in Doc. 4902002 prior to the recording of the CSM.
5. The CSM is conditioned on the approval of the Bloom project General Development Plan.

The motion carried unanimously.

**E. Public Hearing for the Neutral Project and Compass Properties on Request for Approval of a 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. Nate Helbach of the Neutral Project presented the application and highlighted key sustainability aspects of the development. The development team is pursuing the SITES sustainability certification. They are studying the possibility of sustainable building materials, rooftop solar panels, and EV charging stations.

Mr. Douglas Harsevoort with Sala Hars highlighted the results of the shadow study and how the massing will minimize shade on the green spaces. He also presented key details about the development's setbacks, massing, site design, and unit mix. The applicant shared details about the site circulation, parking, and stormwater management.

Janet Silbernagel with Silvernail Geodesign presented key elements in landscaping plan.

The central plaza will have a raingarden for collecting stormwater, which will flow in to a dry stream bed. Native flowering trees, floating black locust decking, and concrete plaza pavers are planned. A sunken green carpet and space for outdoor tables will be included in the plaza. In the northwest corner, an edible garden is proposed. An espalier fruit tree will provide screening and transition the street to the kitchen garden. A confer wind break is planned on the north side. The garden will include open space with seating benches and tie in the wood decking from the plaza. The existing sugar maples will be kept if possible. In the south parking lot, existing trees will be saved if possible and additional trees will be planted.

Bioretention basins and bioswales planted with a native wet prairie mix will collect stormwater along the north and east perimeters. Each townhome will also have a trough to collect rainwater from the roof, which will flow to a basin or permeable pavers. Ms. Silbernagel pointed out that the proposal is currently short of the required landscaping points, but some existing trees and the rain garden and climbing perennials are not counted.

Mr. Helbach shared the parking demand study based on the final site plan. He highlighted that there are no times of day during which parking demand is expected to exceed supply. He shared the four parking reduction strategies the team plans to implement – EV car share, community Zipcar, future flexible parking, and e-bike and scooter share. The future flexible parking option would require loss of the garden space and is not the preferred option.

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

**F. Consideration of Action for the Neutral Project and Compass Properties on Request for Approval of a 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 and key discussion points. He highlighted that the proposal is for two four-story mixed-use buildings with 83 market-rate apartment units and 16,000 sq. ft. of ground floor commercial space, one 3-story townhome building with 10 units, and 172 below-ground and at-grade parking spaces. The units range from studio to 3-bedroom, and the townhomes could be owner- or renter-occupied. A BMO Harris bank with a drive through will anchor the commercial space. Current zoning is Retail Business (RB) but a rezoning to Community Design District (CDD) has been recommended by the Commission to City Council. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan lists these lots as Commercial in the current and future land use maps. Negotiations are ongoing with the Community Development Authority (CDA) for a TIF request. The applicants have had four previous prehearings, most recently in August 2022.

Planning Director Plowman shared changes to the GDP since the previous prehearing. An additional drive through lane has been included and the total commercial space has been increased. The proposed restaurant and business incubator spaces are included in the southern building. The northern building has a café, a resident-only co-working space, and a resident-only fitness space. The proposal is 31% open space at grade with 10% additional in a green roof.

The minimum setback is 5 ft. on the western boundary and 14 ft. elsewhere. A sidewalk is proposed around the entirety of the site and a portion will be in public right of way. Planning Director Plowman suggested easements or dedications be discussed. He shared that the plan includes 172 total parking stalls in the base design, and 185 in the alternative design. The applicant is seeking an exception to the 180 stalls required and is looking at parking demand reduction strategies. A traffic impact analysis (TIA) was performed and showed no need for infrastructure improvements. Staff recommended the Commission recommend approval of the GDP to City Council.

The Commission gave praise to the applicants for their response to Commission feedback. The Commission agreed that an exception to the 180 required parking stalls was warranted given the parking reduction strategies, and preferred that the applicant proceed without the alternate parking design which can be revisited if future parking needs warrant it. Mr. Homburg and Alder Holmquist said that the site circulation should improve traffic on Gordon Avenue and Springhaven Avenues. Mr. Homburg felt it was okay the traffic study was not conducted during the school year. Ms. Fox asked about indoor bike storage and the applicant stated that wall-mounted racks will be provided for each underground parking stall.

Mr. Stein praised the use of space, the SITES certification, and the landscaping but expressed concerns about maintenance. Mr. Conrad asked if there was a dedicated pet relief area and had concerns with pets and pests around the edible garden. The applicant stated that they could use DNA tracking to enforce pet waste removal and that the roof over the Zipcar parking space was likely to be removed and could possibly be used as a pet area. Ms. Fallat asked who would maintain the garden and the applicant stated that tenants could maintain their own portion of the garden but it will be cared for by the property manager. Alder Holmquist said that green roofs don't count towards landscaping points.

Ms. Fallat asked why the extra drive through lane was added. The applicant stated it was requested by BMO Harris for an ATM and other options would remove parking. Mr. Conrad suggested the ATM be placed in front of the teller.

Mr. Homburg cautioned that there may not be enough room for earth retention between the existing masonry wall and the structure. The applicant asked if the walls could be rebuilt with white brick. Mr. Homburg said it could be rebuilt with the existing stone. He also said that the applicant should ensure the buildings have clearance for a ladder truck along the access drive and the drive through lanes should fit larger vehicles.

Alder Moore asked if the townhomes would be rented or sold and the applicant clarified that they must be rented per an agreement made with the architect. She noted that the Commission is committed to housing affordability, as demonstrated by other recent approvals, but that in this project the applicant was up front about prioritizing sustainability over affordability, which is also a goal of the City. Mr. Homburg suggested the applicant vary the façade for the townhomes to provide differentiation.

The Commission expressed concern over the setback on Gordon Avenue. After investigation, the applicant clarified that the townhomes have a setback of 12 ft. to the building proper, but the second floor overhanging balconies are setback 7 ft. The Commission agreed this was acceptable.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Ms. Fallat, to recommend that the Monona City Council approve a General Development Plan (GDP) for the Neutral

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Approval November 28, 2022

Project for an 83-unit mixed use development with ground floor commercial space and 10-unit townhome building, as proposed and according to Chapter 480-37 of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances with the following findings of fact and conditions of approval:

Findings of Fact:

1. The proposed plans are submitted for review under Section VI of the Zoning Code for Planned Community Developments, which expects that the planned community development tool will be used to encourage more imaginative site planning, to assist in achieving more rational and economic development with relationship to public services, to permit optimum development of land.
2. The Plan Commission has determined that sufficient information has been submitted to determine acceptability of the proposed General Development Plan in terms of its character, its use pattern, its intensity of use, its economic, environmental, and service impact, and such other factors as would be pertinent to such basic decision prior to the preparation of detailed engineering, architectural and landscape architectural plans in accordance with standards listed in Section VI.
3. An exception to parking requirements has been granted due to the mixed-use nature of the site, the inclusion of a Zipcar parking stall and the future parking option.

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. City Council approval the General Development Plan is required per Article VI of the Zoning Code.
3. Approval of the General Development Plan is contingent upon approval of the proposed rezoning and CSM by the City Council.
4. Should parking become an issue on site, additional Plan Commission review may be required, including the potential addition of the 20-stall parking lot on the northwest portion of the site.
5. The General Development Plan proposes 20 street parking stalls along Springhaven Avenue and the construction of sidewalk in the City ROW. Any required easements or agreements for these areas shall be provided and further reviewed with the Precise Implementation Plan.
6. An access easement shall be recorded as part of this General Development Plan.

7. The Gordon Avenue setback shall be 12' to the building proper, with the porches allowed to encroach on the setback.
8. This does not include approval for the potential Zipcar shelter/pavilion.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **New Business**

#### **A. Public Hearing on Request by Imperial Builders & Contractors, L.L.C. for Approval of a New Landscape Ground Sign at 1220 Femrite Drive. (Case No. S-018-2022)**

Mr. Derek Card of Imperial Builders presented the application. He shared that the existing sign needs updating to reflect current ownership. A new sign is proposed to highlight Imperial Builders, the building owner, and up to six other tenants. The required 15 ft. setback minimum would place the sign in a narrow strip of landscaping between two parking stalls. He is seeking an exception to place the sign 12.5 ft. from the curb in order to avoid potential damage from vehicles and to maximize the size of the sign.

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

#### **B. Consideration of Action on Request by Imperial Builders & Contractors, L.L.C. for Approval of a New Landscape Ground Sign at 1220 Femrite Drive. (Case No. S-018-2022)**

Planning Director Plowman shared the staff report. He added that the proposed 60 sq. ft. sign meets Community Design District (CDD) zoning standards and would allow for more tenants to be featured when compared to the current sign. The sign would be placed parallel to Femrite Drive and would be far enough from the driveways to prevent obstruction of views for traffic. Staff recommended approval of the sign permit with conditions of approval.

The Commission agreed that the rationale for bringing the sign forward was reasonable. Ms. Fox had concerns about the text of the sign being too close to the ground. Mr. Stein advised the applicant to highlight the corners with landscaping if text is close to the ground. Mr. Conrad had concerns about the readability of the address and advised the applicant to use a warm temperature lighting system. Mr. Homburg stated that the placement of the sign may obstruct visibility of the sidewalk but not traffic. He suggested the applicant consider leaving some room at the bottom of the sign for landscaping and to use a film to dim the brightness.

A motion was made by Mr. Stein, seconded by Ms. Fox, to approve a new landscape ground sign at 1220 Femrite Drive, as proposed and according to Chapter 480 Article XII of the Zoning Code of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances, with the following findings of fact and conditions of approval:

#### Findings of Fact:

1. An exception to the sign setback from the curb face is granted in order to avoid potential damage to the sign from vehicles in the parking lot.
2. The proposed sign location does not pose a vision triangle challenge and the location is deemed appropriate.

Conditions of Approval:

1. As the sign is to be illuminated, an electrical permit shall be obtained from the City's Building Inspector.
2. If glare from the lighting is deemed to be excessive by the Plan Commission, then the Plan Commission may require adjustments to the lighting.
3. The design of the modifiable tenant panels shall be consistent in font and color as panels are updated or changed.
4. If the placement of the sign is deemed to cause visibility issues by the Plan Commission, then the Plan Commission may require adjustments to the size or placement of the sign.
5. A landscaping plan is to be submitted to City Planning staff for approval and landscaping shall be planted with the sign installation by May 1, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

**C. Public Hearing for the Neutral Project and Compass Properties on Request for Consideration of a Precise Implementation Plan (PIP) 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. Nate Helbach of the Neutral Project introduced the application. There were no other comments and the public hearing was declared closed.

**D. Prehearing Conference for the Neutral Project and Compass Properties on Request for Consideration of a Precise Implementation Plan (PIP) 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 and highlighted key discussion points not covered in the GDP. He pointed out that the BMO Harris bank is shown with a blue painted metal façade across two floors. He suggested the Commission discuss bicycle parking, the possible inclusion of BCycle stations, parking signage along Springhaven Avenue, and maintenance agreements for sidewalks located in public right of way.

Planning Director Plowman stated that 2,500 landscaping points are needed, and the site currently has 850 but an exception may be warranted given the creative design. He pointed out that the lighting plan shows few lights under the drive through lanes which may be another chosen topic of discussion.

The Commission strongly disapproved of the blue jewel box façade for the corner of BMO Harris as proposed. They agreed that it was not appropriate for the blue to extend to the second floor as BMO Harris will only be on the first floor, it detracted from the building design, covered up the green roof, and was too close to the apartments. They stated that the blue façade would function as a sign and would not meet Sign Code requirements. The one



story gray brick bump out was agreeable to the Commission. The applicant stated they would consider extending the masonry façade and seeking a sign permit for the blue façade and branding at a later time.

Ms. Fox and Mr. Stein felt that the creative and extensive landscaping warranted an exception to the required 2,500 points. Mr. Stein stated that the Monona Drive bio-infiltration basins will be difficult to establish and maintain given their large size. He pointed out the limited soil cover in the plaza due to the underground parking, and told the applicant to consider impacts from salt and foot traffic. The applicant stated that the limited soil cover prevents large canopy trees there and necessitates additional stormwater modeling. Mr. Stein suggested the inclusion of pedestrian scale lighting and suggested the sidewalk along the southwest parking area be extended fully. Alder Holmquist stated that landscaping would be needed along Gordon Avenue here to reduce headlight glare.

Mr. Conrad pointed out that lighting color temperatures should match. He and Ms. Fallat requested additional benches and possibly a pergola in the open space.

### **Reports of Staff and Commission Members**

#### **A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.**

##### **1. Economic Development Update**

Planning Director Plowman said that a development agreement for the Monona Garden project was approved by City Council and work is expected to begin in Spring 2023.

##### **2. Potential Upcoming Plan Commission Items**

Planning Director Plowman shared that four prehearing conferences are expected for a potential pylon sign at Floor & Décor, the former Rutabaga Paddlesports site, the multifamily project on St Teresa Terrace and Monona Drive, and a residential CSM on Tonyawatha Trail. A zoning permit for a new business use is also expected.

Alder Moore requested that materials for the Neutral Project development be appropriately sized, utilize the entire page, and include page numbers at their next hearing. Mr. Homburg requested scalable drawings.

Alder Moore asked the Commission if they should meet earlier for upcoming meetings given the expected volume of agenda items. The Commission agreed to meet at 6:00pm.

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

None

##### **4. Updates/Discussion on Sustainability Efforts**

None

##### **5. Upcoming Meetings: November 28, 2022, December 12, 2022**

#### **B. Plan Commission Requests for Information from City Staff.**

Mr. Homburg asked for an update on the approved zoning permit at 915 Femrite Drive. Planning Director Plowman stated that he will follow up with the applicant.

Mr. Homburg asked if there was a way to hear items out of order. Ms. Fox replied that an agenda item could be included to consider the order of the rest of the agenda items.

### **Adjournment**

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Ms. Fallat, to adjourn carried. (10:27pm)

Respectfully submitted by:

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Thor Jeppson, Assistant Planner