

ORCHARD PARK CITIZEN  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 20, 2006

6:00 p.m.

City of Walker – City Commission Chambers

Present: Doug Haisma, Bruce & Elaine Meyers, Keith Munro, John Goudwaarz, Bernie Smith, and Don Baker. Also Present: City Commissioners Holt and Deschaine, Planning Commission, Frank Wash, Planning Director, S. Conners, City Engineer, P. Dlouhy, Planning Asst. Tom Carter, of Trademark, James Houk, and Gary Smith, of Bird Houk, Zach and Steve Bossenbroek, Jeff Heald, of Metro Transportation Group, Inc, B. Kozak, Moore & Bruggink.

Tom Carter gave an overview of the project and site plan and related that they have been working on it for the past 4 years, with City staff, the Planning Commission, workshops and focus groups. There has been much opportunity to talk to many people.

Carter related that the proposed mixed use development consists of retail, office, residential, hotel, potential assisted living, in a fully integrated development with a total build out cost of \$280 million dollars. Carter stated that they have worked on traffic engineering issues, environmental issues, drainage, utilities, and a great deal of work with the City has been done. He is trying to bring forward a great project for the community and the Grand Rapids metro area. He stated that this will be a premier development for the City. He referenced other mixed use developments they have done such as Easton Town Center in Ohio, and the Woodlands in Texas.

Carter indicated that he has worked with the City staff to rewrite the project's own development standards. He is looking for input and support to be able to bring this project to Walker.

Jim Houk gave an overview of the plan and related that the main internal traffic route will be Northridge Dr. He reviewed the land uses including the mixed use retail center, housing along 4 Mile, senior assisted living, office buildings, residential townhouse flats, 2-3-story buildings. Houk related that Baumhoff would connect to Northridge. He reviewed the areas of free standing restaurants, retail, title/insurance companies, and the major retail user areas and hotel type uses.

Bernie Smith asked what type of housing is anticipated? Houk related that it is townhome style flats, 2-3 story buildings with a court yard, attracting young professionals and empty nesters.

Commissioner Holt asked what is the order of development? Which phase is residential? Tom Carter stated that residential is market driven, but is planned to be built the same time that the town center is built. Holt asked how likely is it that the tourist oriented retailer wants to be closer to the freeway, and how does that change the parking? Tom Carter stated that this retailer wants highway visibility and all he can relate is that they will be located in that quadrant. They won't be serious about the site plan issues until the zoning is in place. Holt asked if visibility would be an issue? Mr. Carter stated that it would be negotiated. He is hoping with that kind of tenant, they will attract hotels. There will be some compromise. Jim Houk asked, wouldn't the plan come back to the Planning Commission? Planner Wash stated yes, this plan will most likely come back to the Planning Commission several times. Carter stated that changes will be in the 10 percent range, but hard to predict until we get to the next level of approval.

Comm. Deschaine stated he is concerned about quality of life issues for those who live around it. Tom Carter stated that when the life style center in Houston went in, there was expansion in Houston. The housing market goes up and down. However, adjacent land values increased.

Comm. Holt stated that the Bristol Road infrastructure will have to be greatly enhanced.

Jeff Heald, Traffic Engineer, stated that he met with our City Engineer, Planning Director, Kent County Road Commission, and MDOT to get the information on what the traffic study had to cover such as a.m. and p.m. peak hours and on Saturdays.

Eileen Meyer stated that she lives on 3 Mile Road and there is such bad traffic now with the I-96 detour, and she feels this will continue on.

Planning Commissioner Greeno asked, how did Alpine and 3 Mile not get researched? Scott Connors stated that we had to draw the line somewhere. Member Greeno felt it should be checked out.

Jeff Heald explained that they did a capacity analysis of what's there now, and future build out once we have the projected traffic. There have been consistent counts taken now. There were a couple of level E & F's, which the developer will have to take care of as well as anything worse than a level of service C. Anything with a level D will not be acceptable.

Comm. Deschaine is concerned that levels of service determined A, B, or C now could be D, E, or F after developed. Jeff stated absolutely. Planner Wash stated that specifically with this development, they were to design this project with level of service at or better than C. Scott Connors stated that we have no policy for level of service standards.

Jeff Heald stated that people are experiencing Level F's right now on 3 Mile Road. There is a recommendation for additional turn lanes at 3 Mile, Walker and at the eastbound I-96 ramp with the improvement of Northridge with a boulevard or roundabout options. He wants to work with the City of Walker and Kent County for improvements to 4 Mile. The 4 Mile and Bristol alignment should be taken care of as soon as possible.

David Bahle, owner of 2 parcels on corner of Walker and 4 Mile, asked if that intersection would be straightened out as a square intersection? Jeff Heald stated that they don't have control of that intersection as it is Kent County Road Commission and the City of Walker's jurisdiction. Scott Connors stated that it should have a minimum realignment if the signal goes there, the traffic should be facing each other. Moving it 500' to the east will be difficult for all parties, Kent County and the City of Walker. Commissioner Greeno asked if it was the idea to have 90 degree corners? Scott stated yes, at the northeast and southeast corners, 200' of perpendicular roadway in each section for public safety.

Frank Wash stated that there will be a 4 Mile Corridor meeting next Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall. He told Mr. Bahle to attend this meeting as there will be representatives from Kent County Road Commission, MDOT, and GVMC available for questions. Wash related that the Bristol/4 Mile intersection is currently deficient.

Jeff Heald stated that the Alpine/4 Mile intersection, not a lot can be done other than additional left hand turn lanes and cycle changes. They will have to work with MDOT for consistency. The majority of intersections need a level C or better.

Jeff Heald stated that Pete LaMourie has reviewed their study and has 10 issues; 6 of which have been dealt with in preparation of tonight's meeting. The other 4 can be worked out with cycle lengths. Jeff stated that Pete liked the study, and it was available on the Walker website.

Don Baker referenced the 4 Mile Road corridor in the study, as they added left turn lanes into 3 driveways with a 3 lane cross section. Frank Wash stated that what really will happen will come out of the GVMC projections for a farther out build out to make sure the plan can accommodate future projected traffic.

Bill Kozak stated the intersection of Northridge and Walker Ave. was analyzed and there are 3 or 4 potential options, including a standard signal, as most traffic is coming from the freeway. Free right turn lane, not stopping at the signal, right turn on Walker onto Northridge utilizing these free flow lanes. They also looked at roundabouts.

Frank Wash stated that Pete LaMourie has been hired by the City to analyze the developer's traffic study. Pete will give us his analysis at the 7:00 p.m. meeting.

David Bahle asked if we are building the road system for a type of tenant? Jeff Heald stated based on the zoning, there are certain types of uses that go into the zoning. James Houk added that the traffic study is based on the most traffic intense development.

John Goudwaarz stated that he is concerned about the economics presented to the City, recreation opportunities for the residents, ground water depletion. Frank Wash stated that the department heads will be available at the 7 p.m. meeting with their presentations.

Goudwaarz stated that with respect to the economics, he wanted the project to be a success for the City and the residents. Goudzwaard feels there is a discrepancy between the developer's projections and the City Income Tax and Assessor's reports.

Goudwaarz stated that his family owns the building adjacent to Woodland Mall and he is concerned about the 14% vacancy rate for office. He doesn't think we will get the draw for office development.

Goudwaarz stated that with the downward projections in the residential housing market, residential will not be a viable part of the development. Goudwaarz stated that with the high school 1.2 miles away, that there is need for a community center. He felt that the bike trails are not enough with the Michigan winters.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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Administrative Approval