PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 24, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim McCarthy at 5:32 p.m. Committee members present were John Kevern, Tom Mackin, and Tim McCarthy. Also present were City Administrator Bridgette Kabat, Law Director Mathew Beredo, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Brody Walters.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SPECIAL APPROVAL USE – COSTCO

Mr. McCarthy explained that the purpose of the meeting was to give the Committee some initial orientation regarding the Costco project, which had not to date been before Council in any respect. As a result, representatives from Costco were not present at the meeting at Mr. McCarthy's request. He said that the meeting was an opportunity for the Administration to provide information to the Committee about the project and to set a timeline for future meetings.

Mr. Walters stated that the Costco proposed site was annexed into the City in late 2004. The assignment of C3 (Highway Commercial) permanent zoning occurred in early 2005. When the Planning and Zoning Code was updated in 2007, C3 (Highway Commercial) became known as C4 (Highway Commercial).

Mr. Beredo said that the issue before City Council is consideration of the Special Approval Use for Retail Uses greater than 60,000 square feet as contained in Section 1235.04(nn). Mr. Beredo said that City Council does not have before it the review of the full site plan. He said the issue before City Council is whether the proposed use would create a burden beyond what is already permitted under C4 zoning. He acknowledged that a commercial use is going to have some burden in terms of impact on the community, but the question is whether this particular use is one that will have an undue impact on the community. Mr. Beredo reviewed permitted uses under C4 zoning, including entertainment and spectator sport facilities, grocery stores, restaurants and banks. Mr. Beredo also reviewed the six criteria to be considered for all special approval uses.

Mr. McCarthy asked whether the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Special Approval Use. Ms. Kabat said that they did recommend approval with approximately six conditions, and five of those have been resolved. The sixth is a signage issue that will have to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Ms. Kabat called attention to the criteria to be considered for all special approval uses and the Administration's response to each that was distributed to the Committee. She said that the Administration is trying to get information to the Committee prior to the public hearing in March.

Ms. Kabat noted that one concern that was raised was about the possibility of garbage blowing around the site. Ms. Kabat stated that more than half of the Costco Warehouse

Manager's salary is based on the cleanliness of the facility. She also called attention to some quick facts about Costco that were included in the Committee's packets. Ms. Kabat stated that Costco has more than 622 stores operating worldwide and they have never closed a store. Mr. Beredo stated that the relevance of that statement is that the reason for the Special Approval Use process for retail stores greater than 60,000 square feet is to provide a heightened level of scrutiny for such structures, which, due to their size, would be harder to repurpose. Mr. McCarthy added that when the Code was changed and the Special Approval Use process was included, it was at that time that Wal-Mart was going in on Route 20, and the City was concerned with closings and abandonment of very large retail buildings.

Mr. Walters discussed the Landscape Plan and Lighting Plan provided by Costco. He pointed out additional landscape buffering that has been added. On the Lighting Plan, it indicates that the lighting is self-contained on the property so it will not have an effect on neighboring properties. Ms. Kabat noted that Costco does not use public address systems.

Mr. McCarthy asked about the ingress and egress for the site. Mr. Walters said there will be a right-in and right-out on SR25; there will be a right-in on Eckel Junction to the west and a fully signalized intersection on Eckel Junction Road that will line up with the driveway to Black Diamond. Ms. Kabat explained the intersection improvements that will be made at SR25 and Eckel Junction Road. The Traffic and Corridor Study was adopted by Council in 2012, but since then the City asked our traffic consultant to update the traffic counts and design of this intersection anticipating that each of the vacant parcels in the vicinity would be built out to the highest and most intense use based on the zoning. The City was provided with a new design schematic and through the 2013 and 2014 budget process funds were set aside to make the improvements anticipating that not only would this property be developed, but also the Mercy site development. Costco reviewed the City's plan and wanted to add an additional left turn lane on Eckel Junction Road onto southbound 25. This additional lane is above and beyond the recommended improvements and will be paid for solely by Costco. They will also be participating, as Mercy did, with the intersection improvements. Mercy's share was approximately $300,000 and Costco's share will probably be around $500,000. ODOT has confirmed that they ran a traffic analysis and they found that this operation will have minimal impact on the interchange without additional improvements, except for striping of the westbound off ramp to have two lanes. Mr. Mackin asked if the Administration is comfortable with the traffic upgrades. Ms. Kabat said that according to our traffic engineer, when the intersection is built out, it will be at an acceptable level of service for an urban intersection.

The Committee discussed the upcoming calendar of events for the Special Approval Use process. The public hearing will be held on Thursday, March 13th at 6:00 p.m. The next Planning and Zoning Committee meeting was moved from Wednesday, March 19th to Thursday, March 20th at 5:30 p.m. and a special City Council meeting will be requested for Tuesday, March 25th for Council to vote on the Special Approval Use. The Planning Commission will be considering the Final Site Plan at its March 27th meeting.

Mr. Mackin asked that the Administration provide Council a list of requirements under Section 1235.04(nn) and indicate which of the requirements have been complied with. Ms. Kabat said that a checklist will be provided to City Council.

Larry Small, Callander Court, said that he and his neighbors are the closest residential properties to the proposed Costco. He said that the signalized intersection will be seventy yards from their driveway and their biggest concern is that traffic back-up would prevent them from getting out. Mr. Small said that he was informed that a left turn lane going into Costco would be added on Eckel Junction which should help. He said that there has been some discussion about signage and striping at their cul-de-sac to prevent people from thinking it is a through street, and he complimented Mr. Walters on working with them regarding their concerns. He said that they are not really opposed to Costco as it could be a lot worse. He added that they have concerns about the timing of construction of the store and the intersection improvements. Mr. McCarthy said those are valid questions. Ms. Kabat reviewed the timeline for intersection improvements and said that construction should begin in July and be substantially completed by December. She noted that the Mercy construction went smoothly and the City Engineer will work with Costco's project manager to try and keep the inconvenience to a minimum.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy C. McCarthy

Tim McCarthy, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Committee

Next meeting date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. which is a change from the regular date.