



**Department of Planning and Development**

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**PLAN COMMISSION**

City Hall of University City

6801 Delmar Blvd, University City, MO 63130

6:30pm; Thursday, January 23, 2020

The Plan Commission held a special meeting at City Hall located at 6801 Delmar Boulevard, University City, Missouri on Thursday, January 23, 2020. The meeting commenced at 6:32pm and concluded at 9:10pm.

**1. Roll Call**

**Commission Members Present:**

Mark Harvey  
Ellen Hartz  
Cirri Moran  
Michael Miller  
Margaret Holly  
Judith Gainer  
Council Liaison Paulette Carr

**Abesent:**

**Staff Present:**

Adam Brown, Planner  
Cliff Cross, Director of Planning and Development  
John Mulligan, City Attorney  
Gregory Rose, City Manager

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Hartz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **3. Hearings: 2005 Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Parkview Gardens**

Mr. Cross explained that the Parkview Gardens plan was added as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan of 2005. The City is conducting a public hearing with the Plan Commission to adhere to Missouri State statutes regarding amendments to Comprehensive Plans. Ms. Moran opened the public hearing. There was no public comment, and the hearing was closed.

### **4. Old Business**

#### **a. Resolution Adopting an Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Cross presented the resolution that would officially remove the Parkview Gardens plan as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan of 2005, the resolution would be forwarded to Mayor and Council for formal approval to remove their prior resolution adopting the Parkview Gardens plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan update of 2005.

Mr. Harvey asked if it would be in order to move a resolution to City Council to conduct a fiscal impact study on the plan. Mr. Cross explained there was not a fiscal impact study originally. The timing of the new Comp Plan would work well as the City can reevaluate the plan as part of the new Comprehensive Plan process. Ms. Moran stated that as it stands it would already be appended to the Comp Plan update. Mr. Cross explained that it should be referenced within the Comp Plan update and used as a tool. He said the plan could be re-evaluated with a fiscal impact study as part of the upcoming Comprehensive Planning process. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan is a policy-guiding document which guides the creation and implementation of other plans.

Mr. Miller introduced the motion as presented. Ms. Holly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **b. Map Amendment & Preliminary Development Plan Approval, PC-19-09**

Mr. Cross explained this was a request for a re-zoning and approval of preliminary concept plan. He described the proposed project including a hotel, apartments, and retail/restaurant use. The commission was encouraged by the proposal but concerned about the parking for the project. The project team and staff had worked together and would present a parking study.

Mr. Toby Heddinghaus, of Gray Design in Maplewood, presented on the proposed site plan and elevations for the project. He explained that to make this project viable, density would be needed. The design calls for two levels of parking below the building. The lowest level would be entered from Delcrest. The lower level garage would be all flat and would serve the apartments. Ms. Hartz asked if that is the only entrance for this level. Mr. Heddinghaus said the grade change would allow for these two levels without an internal ramping system.

On the next level up the entrance from Delmar would be a “right in, right out” entrance, and would satisfy hotel parking needs. The hotel lobby would be accessed from the Delmar entrance. The sidewalk would be active with lots of glass on main level, outdoor seating and plaza areas on Delmar and Delcrest. The main lobby of hotel would be on the second level. The first level would

have some meeting areas. The apartment office would be accessed from Delcrest on first level. Above the parking, the two main elements of the building, the hotel and the apartments, would be separate. The hotel would have its own amenities including an indoor pool and fitness center. The apartments would have a rooftop pool with views to Southeast. The amenities would be unique to each use within the building. There would be shared outdoor space in the middle of the building.

Mr. Heddinghaus showed a rendering of the view from Delmar, noting a signature design element on the corner of Delmar and Delcrest. The apartments would be branded "The Mackenzie". The hotel is expected to be an Element brand hotel (by Marriot). There would be dark and light brick, dark mullions (metal) on all of the windows, and awnings on the street. A section of the building would have wood-grain appearance panels and the same mix of materials would continue around the building's side so the hotel and apartments would be integrated in their design. There would be indoor spaces for apartment users use (for parties, etc.). Recycling and trash service would be picked from the private side-street on the west. Each building would have its own services accessed through garage. Ms. Gainer asked how many rooms would be in the hotel. Mr. Heddinghaus said there would be 133 hotel rooms and described the variety of type of rooms including transient rooms and suites with a full-size fridge and kitchen.

Ms. Moran asked about the mixed use on the first floor. Mr. Heddinghaus said it was noted as a restaurant but will be built as a blank retail space. A restaurant would be expected to have the highest demand. Mr. Cross shared the breakdown of numbers and types of room from the staff report, including the square footage of the floors. The multi-family was proposed to be 160 units. He read the totals of different kinds of units for this part of the project. The total square footage on the first level would be about 8650 square feet, and the restaurant/retail would be about 4500 square feet.

Ms. Moran asked what the target demographics were for the apartments. Vic Allston of Dragon Capital spoke about the target demographic. He said it would be between 25 to 40 years old but would be open to anyone. Generally, the rooms would be a little smaller than the Mansions (on the Plaza) or the Vanguard. The rents would be a little cheaper. He said they would be highly "amenitized" buildings. Ms. Moran asked about the size of the apartments. Mr. Alston said a one-bedroom would be around 650 square feet, a 2-bedroom would be around 1000 square feet, and a few 3BR might be in the 1200 square feet. Mr. Alston said they would be open layouts but would not have a dining room in the apartment. He felt that these tradeoffs were not material for this demographic. He said the apartment side of the plan is fairly fleshed out. The amenity locations may change, but the essential mix and sizes are what they would be as his company have experience building these.

Mr. Alston said the hotel would have more flexibility in terms of design. This part of the design would not be fleshed out before this process is further along. He said they would be working with Marriot brand, with the backup being Hilton Brand; Home2 Suites. He said the Marriot Element was a newer brand and that there were none in St. Louis at this time. There were a couple hundred Home2 Suites around the country. Either of these brands would be the same number of rooms and guests expected. Mr. Alston stated that the final hotel brand would dictate more of the design details.

Ms. Carr asked if the exterior would remain the same regardless of the brand chosen. Mr. Alston said the exterior may change depending on the brand chosen. However, one of the developer's goals was, he said, to maintain continuity between the exterior designs of the apartment portion and the hotel portion of the building. Mr. Heddinghaus stated that the design presented in his slides had typical features of an Element brand hotel. If Home2 was the chosen brand, he said the design would probably be more customized. He said the design would be maintained from a color and massing perspective regardless of the brand chosen. Mr. Alston said he did not want the apartments to have a luxurious feel, and the hotel to have an "Econo-lodge" feel. He wanted the look and feel of the site to be luxurious. He said with approval at this meeting, they would know more about which brand would be selected.

Ms. Carr stated that what she thought was pleasing was the glass elements on the lower level on Delmar. She asked if a different brand was chosen, would those elements go away. Mr. Heddinghaus replied that they would be kept regardless of the brand.

Mr. Miller asked for clarification about the property line on the west of the site where a triangle of property was shown to cross over the private road between the property and I-170. Mr. Alston said this private drive would remain, and that this is where they would like the trash services to have access. Mr. Miller asked if that road would be affected. Mr. Heddinghaus stated that the road would remain. Mr. Alston clarified that although they would own that portion of the road, it could not be altered because the owners have an easement for access to this road. Mr. Miller also asked who controlled the road at that portion of Delmar. Mr. Cross stated that the County owned the road up to the intersection at the highway, which was controlled by MoDOT. Mr. Miller stated concern about this interchange and how the traffic would be managed at this intersection.

Mr. Alston introduced Lee Cannon of CBB Transportation Engineers. Mr. Cannon explained that his firm had completed a parking study, and if the project moved forward, would complete a traffic study. He confirmed that St. Louis County owns Delmar up to the interchange with I-170, which MoDOT owns and maintains, while University City owns Delcrest. He said they held an initial meeting with the City, County, and with MoDOT. A traffic study would be submitted to all of these entities if the project moved forward.

Mr. Miller stated that he was concerned with entrance to the parking area from Delmar going west. Mr. Cannon explained that the parking was separated between the two levels. Ms. Hartz asked if the proposed buildings would have any impact on the private road going to Schnucks. She said that road would not be a choice of apartment users who wanted to get down to Ladue. Mr. Cannon said any questions that would arise at this meeting could be addressed through the traffic study. There was discussion about the use of the private road. Mr. Alston said the owners of the private road are open to discussion about use of the road, but that they do not want lots of extra traffic on that road. He said their preference was not to impact that road. Ms. Moran noted that the private road can have heavy traffic, especially when someone is exiting and making a left onto Delmar. Mr. Alston pointed out that the design showed a right-in, right-out turn, so no one could turn left into the development off Delmar. He said they had foreseen potential issues with using the private road. Mr. Harvey said that if he were a resident of the apartments, he would want to have access to the private road in order to shop at the Schnucks.

Mr. Cannon said that all these questions would hopefully be answered through the traffic study. They would look to mitigate any impacts working with both the County and MoDOT. Mr. Alston said they had considered ways to gain access to the Great Rivers Greenway trail. Ms. Holly said she uses that trail often, and that there are many elderly and disabled users of that trail. She asked that their needs be considered in terms of additional traffic in the area.

Mr. Mulligan asked who owned the private road. Mr. Alston answered that Desco (Schnucks) owned the road. He said there was a private easement for the road.

Mr. Cannon then presented the parking study his firm had completed. He described the overall specifications of the project including 338 parking stalls. His firm completed a parking sufficiency study looking at shared parking. He said the residential and hotel uses would peak late at night, while the restaurant use would peak during the day when some of the other users were gone. He noted that demand would be a parked car, and supply would be a parking stall. He said the City's zoning code requires parking on a supply basis, and the code would require 507 parking stalls for this development. The City also allows the consideration of the fluctuation of needs by use. Based on the City's calculations, the required number of parking spots would be 405. 338 would be only 16.5% short of these 405 required spots. He noted that the City had the authority without a variance to grant up to a 20% decrease in the required amount of parking if a traffic study demonstrated it would be feasible.

Mr. Cannon explained that his studies were based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) manual for parking standards. These standards were gathered based on real-world studies of demand per unit and on an hourly basis. Based on this method, the peak number of cars would be 337 parked cars on the weekend at 9am. He said they made two modifications by adding 5% as open stalls, then reduced the number by 5% to account for alternate modes of transport such as Uber/Lyft, rideshare, walking, or transit. Therefore, 337 was the recommended adequate supply for the development. This number would be able to handle the peak parking demand for the collective site. Mr. Cannon also noted that the developers had an interest in having enough parking, because the leasing of the space would depend on parking being available.

Ms. Moran asked if shared parking would allow crossover between the hotel and apartment uses. Mr. Cannon explained that the best way to managed shared parking would be to manipulate the operations of the parking, such as requiring employees to park in certain spots. Mr. Alston said the preference would be to limit the number of transient visitors to the lower level (apartment) parking.

Ms. Carr asked if there was less flexibility if the hotel and apartment were owned separately. Mr. Cannon said that the parking study is done assuming that shared parking numbers can be worked out operationally within the development. He also noted that the development may not need all the parking stalls available. The lease could be used to limit the number of spaces used by the apartment users as well. Ms. Carr asked about parking for visitors to the building, and where overflow visitors might be pushed to the street on particularly busy days. Mr. Alston gave an example of the first ten spots being visitor parking, with a secondary door for residents beyond these spots, with visiting hours being restricted. Mr. Cannon noted that the ITE data counts used counts from actual facilities, including visitors.

Mr. Cross noted that the number of required visitor units per code were incorporated into the ratios presented in this report and were adequate to meet the City's standards. Mr. Cannon said that the restaurant would peak at noon, but the peaks would not happen at the same time. Mr. Alston said they were creating one building with one total parking number, and they feel that these numbers on the separate levels are adequate based on their experience. Any changes could be operationally adjusted.

Ms. Holly noted that there are two large residential centers near the proposed development, and that on certain occasions such as polling days, the Crown Center polling crowd will use surrounding parking for overflow. Mr. Alston noted that this could only be managed operationally by the operations of the development. Mr. Cannon noted that the developer can only be responsible for their own parking and cannot be held responsible for events that are not planned properly around the development. The report from CBB indicated that the developer would be able to accommodate their own parking. Ms. Moran noted that the developers cannot be expected to solve an existing parking problem. Ms. Carr summarized that the parking numbers are met by the ITE standards. Mr. Cross noted that in 421.30, subsection 3, the Council would have the ability to approve shared parking based on industry norms. In Section 400.2700, a Conditional Use Permit would allow Council to reduce the parking requirements by up to 20%.

Mr. Cannon explained that by the ITE standards, a 16.5% reduction would be sufficient for the development to meet the City's codes and still meet the ITE standards for number of parking spaces. Ms. Carr further asked if the relationship in terms of parking would continue between the hotel and apartment if the ownership changed and they were owned separately.

Mr. Cannon replied that it was similar with a condominium agreement. Mr. Cross explained that the CUP process could require such an agreement. Mr. Mulligan noted that looking at the parking ratios separately between the hotel and the apartment uses, the separate parts would not have enough parking to meet code. Mr. Cannon explained that shared parking does not work by analyzing the uses separately. It could only be addressed operationally.

Mr. Alston explained that with a condo there would be common elements. In this case the shared parking structure would be a common element. The operating plan would govern these common elements and would ensure that they were maintained. Mr. Alston noted that many buildings in St. Louis have a similar arrangement. Mr. Mulligan noted that if there was overflow for the hotel parking lot, in some cases overflow may need to use the hotel parking lot. The CUP process could include specifications for accommodations through the operational agreement. Mr. Cannon said it would be too early to allocate any parking specifically to one or the other lot. Mr. Alston said if there were a condition that required the developers to operationally balance the parking in order to meet the stated required numbers, they would be comfortable with that.

Ms. Holly noted that the City's parking code, amended in February of 2019, was based on the standards of the Urban Land Institute. She noted that at several meetings since those were adopted, the Plan Commission had made exceptions to these standards. She asked if these standards are the appropriate standards given that there have been many exceptions to these standards. She asked if the ITE standards should be used. She noted that many applicants would not have the resources to do the kind of research that this applicant could afford to do. Ms. Hartz

noted that this would be a discussion for another meeting. Ms. Carr noted the allowance for 20% reduction in parking had always been there in the code. She said applicants need to prove the need for these allowances.

Mr. Cannon noted that the goal of the parking code is that a property could meet its own needs so that it would not injure another property. His study found that this property had sufficient parking and could be justified within the City's code as well.

Mr. Cross explained that there were two motions needed; an ordinance to re-zone the parcel to a Planned Development, and a resolution which approved the preliminary concept plan. Ms. Moran asked if there would be any conditions needed, and Mr. Cross said this would come later in the process. The purpose of these actions would be to allow the developers to proceed with site control and additional studies. Further review of design and other elements would happen later in the process. The developers would need final approval from Council.

Ms. Moran called for a motion to approve the zoning map amendment from General Commercial to Planned Development. Ms. Holly made the motion as stated, and Ms. Gainer seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Moran called for a motion to approve the preliminary site plan. Mr. Harvey moved for a resolution approving the preliminary site plan. Ms. Gainer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cross noted that a fiscal impact analysis would be required of the developer before final approval of the project. Mr. Cross stated that staff would move forward to prepare the resolution and re-zoning to be sent to Council. He stated that this would happen over two Council meetings. He said it would not be at the meeting on January 27, so they would work to get it on the following meeting's agenda.

## **5. New Business**

### **a. 8817 Washington Construction**

Mr. Cross gave background that the Infill Review Board was tasked with reviewing new single-family homes. Staff was required to give notice to property owners within 300 feet on the same street and property owners within 185 feet surrounding the property. If 60% of the property owners signed a petition, then the project would be required to go the Infill Review Board. There was no Infill Review Board active at this time. The Infill Review Board would normally bring these petitions to the Plan Commission. This step was being taken care of through this meeting. Mr. St. Veraine was here on behalf of the petitioners, and a representative from the engineering firm was also present. Mr. Cross noted that staff had reviewed the proposed construction from a land-disturbance, engineering, an architectural standpoint, which he would review after Mr. St. Veraine spoke. Mr. Cross noted that Chapter 120.1010 established the requirements for notifying the neighbors.

Michael St. Veraine, 541 Delchrist Court, spoke, along with his neighbor, Mr. Bedlock, from 545 Delcrest. He and his neighbors have had issues of water in their basement and water run-off from the areas uphill from them, where this project was proposed. Mr. Bedlock described the issues

with water running down from Washington into his yard, which creates serious overflow issues. Mr. St. Veraine asked for assurances that with the construction the neighbors would not see additional run-off or stormwater issues. He said the builders had made some changes to attempt to divert some of the water back to Washington. Mr. St. Veraine said they did not wish to block the development, but merely wanted assurances for the protection of their investments. There was currently no house on that lot. Mr. Cross stated that staff had worked with the engineers to install additional features to divert water to the front of the property. The City's engineering department were comfortable with the plans. Mr. Ryan Meeks, a representative from the engineering firm that designed the house stated that the amount of water currently released from the property downhill was .15 CFS (Cubic Feet per Second), while the amount they would send to Washington Avenue would be .25 CFS, so there would be a decrease in the amount of water coming down the hill. He described the way the French drain and downspouts were designed to manage the water on the property.

Mr. Bedlock asked if there would be recourse after the home was constructed if water was still flowing onto neighboring properties. Mr. Cross explained that Code Enforcement could enforce the code prohibiting properties from creating a nuisance to their neighbors through stormwater run-off and would force the property owner to mitigate those issues. Ms. Hartz noted that if the petitioners wanted to say that there was an increase in water flow on their property due to the new construction, they would need measurable evidence to prove there was an increase. Ms. Carr reiterated that the petitioner would need to demonstrate an increase in water flowing from the new construction as compared to the current situation. Mr. Bedlock asked if there were any recourse from existing homes that were already built if they were causing stormwater to drain onto neighboring properties. Mr. Cross said if a call came in, Code Enforcement could look at it to determine if there was a violation of the Property Maintenance Code. Mr. Bedlock asked if the City offered any recommendation as to how to manage stormwater. Mr. Cross said the City could not make engineering recommendations. Ms. Moran noted that MSD and other organizations may have programs to assist with managing excess water.

Mr. Cross noted that the Infill Review Board had no regulatory power, so staff would be required to issue a building permit as long as the plans met with the requirements of the City Code.

## **6. Other Business**

### **a. 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update**

Mr. Cross said there were two remaining consultants in the running for the Comprehensive Plan update. He said that one of the firms was more technical and traditional with experience in University/Town relations, while the other was more "out-of-the-box", while still very technical. Ms. Moran said that she liked the first group (Future IQ) for their process, and she felt they would be easier to work with. She said the second group (Planning NEXT) was very results oriented with benchmarks to compare results with. She said they reminded her of the process from the previous attempt at a Comprehensive Plan update, which was not a positive experience. She said she would like to go back to Future IQ and find out more about their benchmarking process. She was concerned that Planning NEXT would rely on the City for Public Engagement, and the result would be that the same people would be involved in the process. Ms. Moran said she was



uncomfortable with the attitude of Planning NEXT, saying they were dismissive of concerns about Washington University.

Ms. Hartz said she had a background in teaching, and Future IQ's idea about involving high school students was very exciting to her, and that getting kids involved would get their parents involved as well. She said that Planning NEXT seemed like they had already figured out what the City needed, which would not be a good approach. Ms. Gainer said that engagement of the community was critical for this process, and that the last process in 2015 did not accomplish this. She said Future IQ was able to connect with people in a more personal way. She said Planning NEXT was "ultra-professional", but less accessible. Mr. Cross stated that this was a good opportunity with two different bids to choose from. Mr. Miller said he was concerned Planning NEXT would not address our concerns about engaging Washington University. Ms. Hartz said Future IQ seemed to be more creative about finding ways to engage the community, and they might be able to help be creative in working with Washington University. Ms. Hartz asked Ms. Carr for her thoughts. Ms. Carr said that Planning NEXT seemed more conventional, and claimed their specialty was town/gown. She did not find anything they said could be disputed with regards to universities participating in a process. She was personally engaged when David from Future IQ spoke, and got excited thinking this firm might be different. She felt Future IQ was more visionary. Ms. Carr said that Planning NEXT may create a plan that only describes University City, which was the case with the last attempted update in 2015. Ms. Moran said during the last planning process, the consultant did make clear the need to do the vision first and write the plan based on that vision. She said the vision came out of the plan once it was already written, which was a mistake.

Mr. Rose said he did not know if he had enough information at this point to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council. He wondered how Future IQ would move from a concept to a plan, and how Planning NEXT would conduct robust community engagement. He suggested that staff could follow up with further reference checks on both companies. He said it was important to take the time that was needed to select the proper firm, even if the commission decided that neither firm was the right firm.

Mr. Cross said that staff could look further into what the expertise of the two firms was. Ms. Carr said that right after the presentation the secondary partner of Planning NEXT said to her that what University City needed was an institutional master plan, which she felt was right. Mr. Mulligan wanted to know if Future IQ did follow up with the plan, which Planning NEXT had said they would do. David from Future IQ told Mr. Mulligan that they would do this. Ms. Hartz suggested perhaps the City could hire Kevin, who was independent of Planning NEXT, to study the relationship with Washington University if that was his expertise. Ms. Moran stated that this could be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Rose said that in past communities he had worked in, the visioning process had been done separately from the planning process. Mr. Rose said he thought questions for reference checks should be tailored to each company. Mr. Harvey said a high priority was to have a diverse team in the community engagement process, and in his opinion, this should be African American led, and probably African American female led. He was also concerned about the 48-member advisory committee formed by City Staff which Planning NEXT proposed. He said this would be a lot to put on City Staff, and staff was busy. Mr. Mulligan also suggested that as part of the reference checks, staff examine past plans that the firms were proud of which

represented their work. Ms. Moran said a minority-led firm was hired for the last process and did not do a good job. Ms. Hartz reiterated that involving the high school could be important. Mr. Rose noted that the Plan Commission would work closely with the consultants and could guide this process. Mr. Miller asked where Mr. Rose thought the population of University City was heading. He felt that getting the School District and superintendent involved would be helpful. Ms. Gainer suggested engaging social studies teachers at the high school and making this process part of the curriculum. Ms. Moran noted that there was a need in University City to make connections between the City government and the School District.

#### **b. Election of Officers**

Ms. Gainer nominated Ms. Moran for Chairperson. Ms. Hartz seconded the motion. Mr. Miller nominated Ms. Holly for Chairperson. Ms. Moran said she would be happy to have a new Chair. Ms. Holly said she would do whatever was best for the City. Ms. Moran withdrew her own nomination as chair, and Ms. Gainer accepted her withdraw. Mr. Miller moved to elect Ms. Holly as chair, and Ms. Moran seconded the motion. Ms. Holly was elected unanimously.

Ms. Hartz moved to elect Ms. Moran as Vice-Chair. Ms. Gainer seconded the motion. Ms. Moran was elected unanimously.

Ms. Moran nominated Ms. Hartz as the Designated Alternate, and Ms. Gainer seconded the nomination. Ms. Hartz was elected unanimously.

### **7. Reports**

#### **a. Council Liaison Report**

There was no Council Liaison Report.

### **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM