

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
****SPECIAL** PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**
Off-site at The Village of Rochester Hills
Monday, October 11, 2017
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Haber, called the meeting to order at 11:00am at The Village of Rochester Hills.

ROLL CALL: Present: Larry Haber, Chairperson
Tom Jones, Vice Chairperson
Brian Winkler, Secretary
Russ Schinzing
Brian Parel
Absent: Bill McKeever (excused)
John Hindo (excused)
Also Present: Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Paula Lankford, Asst. to the Planning Director
Bruce Aikens, Robert B. Aikens & Associates
Mark Stacey, DDA Director
Randy Thomas, Insite Commercial
Kyle Nelson, Insite Commercial
David Peterhans, JPRA Architects
Sue Newman, JPRA Architects
Shelleen McHale, Mktg Dir. Village of Rochester Hills

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Schinzing, supported by Jones, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda of October 11, 2017, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

None.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

ITEM 1: PPU17-0001 – AIKENS MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT – PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT – PRELIMINARY REVIEW

Robert Aikens & Associates LLC of Birmingham MI is requesting the Preliminary Review of a Planned Unit Development of a mixed use commercial development located at the north east corner of Pontiac Trail and M-5.

Dave Campbell, Paula Lankford and the Planning Commissioners convened at The Village of Rochester Hills with Bruce Aikens and took an outdoor tour of the facility by vehicle due to the inclement weather. The tour offered insight as to what Mr. Aikens

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has planned for his development in Commerce Township. Mr. Aikens delivered a presentation during the tour, providing the history of the development, describing the layout of the stores, discussing the use of the spaces, architectural features, visibility, unique storefronts, walkability, circulation, parking and accessibility. He explained that although valet parking was initially made available, it was not utilized by patrons as the parking design seemed to work so well.

Mr. Aikens explained that usually commercial developments are anchored by large department stores, however the Commerce Township development will have more of an entertainment component that will create a significant downtown attraction for patrons. Unique stores, boutiques and restaurants will be incorporated, while avoiding most chains and franchises. There will also be a large market in Commerce Township, offering an upscale grocery shopping experience. Mr. Aikens also addressed the parks within the development, offering open green space, landscaping, benches and areas to gather. He noted that the occupancy rate at Village of Rochester Hills is 90%.

The group noticed how there was still significant activity throughout the Village Shoppes, despite the torrential downpour. Dave Campbell inquired about the neighbors in the surrounding residential developments, how they felt initially about the development, and how they feel now. Mr. Aikens explained that some neighbors were strongly against the development at first, but now, they love it and have found that it has increased their property values. They use the stores all the time and enjoy being within walking distance. They also found that the Village did not present any safety or traffic issues.

This concluded the outside tour of the facility, and the group met at Bravo to continue the meeting, where they were joined by Mark Stacey, Commerce Township DDA Director, Randy Thomas and Kyle Nelson of Insite Commercial, David Peterhans and Sue Newman of JPRA Architects, and Shelleen McHale, Business and Marketing Consultant for Robert B. Aikens & Associates, LLC.

Mr. Aikens delivered a presentation, reviewing the site plan of the Village of Rochester Hills, along with providing additional history on mall and shopping center developments. He continued, presenting and reviewing preliminary plans for the new commercial development in Commerce Township, which is proposed to be called Five & Main. He compared and contrasted the two developments. He reiterated the different mix of components that will be incorporated at Five & Main.

The Village is 370,000 square feet, with apparel being about 65% of the center, and a courtyard that is 6,100 square feet. Five & Main will be 350,000 square feet, with about 25% apparel. It will be a very different mix with one of the main anchors being an upscale theater and entertainment component. The theater and courtyard area will be about 16,000 square feet. The parking area will be about 22,000 square feet and green space will be maximized. Ms. Newman elaborated on the entertainment space to be used for activities such as outdoor fitness classes, small concerts, charity fundraisers, and other events within the development.

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Chairperson Haber stated that this will be more of a destination than a shopping center. Mr. Aikens agreed, and discussed the need for offering exclusive services. Mr. Peterhans stated that these centers have become civic spaces. They are a public event, and they're much more than just the retail experience; they become a destination that the community gets involved in. Mr. Aikens added that many of the products, services and attractions will tie into the trail system in Commerce Township. The creation of a town center or a downtown will offer a value to the community far above that of other retailers. Ms. McHale added that the Village has become the Rochester Hills downtown now. For example, the tree-lighting ceremony in November brings in over 5,000 residents. However, streets need to be closed down in Rochester, while Five & Main in Commerce Township will offer much more space for these types of events and gatherings. Mr. Peterhans added that, in the planning stages, this was called *The Village at Rochester Hills*, but it was eventually changed to *The Village of Rochester Hills* as the municipality bought into the concept.

Open discussions continued and Mr. Aikens reviewed parking plans for Five & Main, additional details on the upscale market, along with accessibility, which is excellent from M-5 and Martin Parkway. Chairperson Haber inquired about a traffic study. Mr. Aikens replied that the study has not been done yet, but it will be needed. Vice Chairperson Jones inquired about the potential for a residential component at Five & Main. Mr. Aikens explained that it may be included in the second phase, and residential would make the development complete by creating 24/7 activity. Discussion continued regarding roadways, connections, working with the RCOC, potential improvements that may be required, stop lights, and traffic circulation at Five & Main.

Mr. Aikens elaborated on the modern lifestyle center. Ms. McHale explained that shoppers, which are 80% women, are looking for a place that they can go where their footprint is less; meaning that if they have errands to run, they don't have to drive all over town. They can go to one location for everything they need, such as picking up gifts and going to a nail appointment before meeting for dinner. Mr. Aikens discussed the components further at Five & Main, which include about 45% restaurants and entertainment, 25% fashion, 10% fitness/wellness, and the remainder as soft goods and home components.

Chairperson Haber inquired about the project timeline. Mr. Aikens stated that they anticipate opening Five & Main in Fall 2019. This will depend upon the progress made with prospective tenants at the ICSC events. Mr. Aikens feels that the Commerce Township location is a great site, and tenants have shown significant interest. Chairperson Haber asked Mr. Aikens what the Planning Commission could do to help him with the project. Mr. Aikens replied, keep the residential developments moving forward in the area. Dave Campbell discussed desire of the Aikens group to have an approval before May 2018, prior to attending the ICSC event in Las Vegas. Mr. Aikens stated that this would be beneficial as the prospective tenants can then see the reality of the development. Having an approved site plan will have an impact, and there are other competitive centers being built.

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Draft architectural renderings for Five & Main were passed around for review. Potential building materials were addressed, with contemporary detailing, modern design, and warm textures and colors that are indigenous to the area. Dave Campbell asked the architects to speak about the view from Pontiac Trail or Martin Parkway, and what tactics might be used to disguise a loading dock or dumpster for example. Mr. Peterhans and Ms. Newman elaborated on the use of landscaping and creative screening to shield these areas. It is appropriate to provide proper screening and extensive landscaping for these public, community spaces. Mr. Aikens segued into what he calls the "Somerset Standard". His group is conscientious and prefers that everything be at that level and above; that clean and beautiful appearance that's well taken care of. Somerset has always done a great job, and it is something to look up to and try to emulate. Ms. Newman added that all sides of the buildings have exposure in this type of project and therefore, everything is important and will look nice. They refer to it as 360-Architectural.

Open discussions continued regarding Five & Main, addressing details of parking, circulation, access, the phases of the project, the out lots, and the layout. Traffic was discussed, and Mr. Aikens showed how it funnels in from M-5 and the lakes areas. His hope is to harness a lot of that traffic with patrons stopping at the commercial development to shop, dine and more as opposed to sitting in gridlock. Other developments were discussed that were failing, stagnant or unsuccessful, and these were compared and contrasted with this lifestyle concept. The difference in Commerce will be the neighborhood component, the amenities, the pathways, and the mix of components creating a destination for the community.

Mark Stacey stated that the Fountain Walk development in Novi wound up with a high teenager concentration, which created significant problems after 7:00pm. He asked how Bruce Aikens would handle that issue if it arose. Mr. Aikens replied that the development would have excellent security, and he elaborated on the location as it relates to safety. Shopping centers that are located directly on a freeway are much more problematic, but this should not experience those types of security issues. Mark Stacey also discussed the price points for tickets at the theater, and Mr. Aikens explained that the theater wants to avoid the big-box feeling. They want this to be an intimate, personal experience. Mark Stacey and Mr. Aikens continued discussing demographics, pricing, amenities, the entertainment elements, outdoor seating, and other details of the lifestyle center.

Vice Chairperson Jones asked if there would be any variances anticipated for the project, and these are generally discouraged. Mr. Aikens replied that he did not believe variances would be necessary. Ms. Newman added that part of the PUD process is to write things in that would eliminate the need for variances. Dave Campbell agreed, and elaborated on the PUD process, which results in a development that has its own set of rules and this works as a benefit to both the municipality and the developer.

Mr. Schinzing complimented the group on the storefronts at the Village of Rochester Hills. Every store is unique and appealing, and it's a great concept. Mr. Aikens agreed and added that every store has their own design. Dave Campbell asked, when the

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development opens, will it be one grand opening for all establishments? Mr. Aikens replied yes, the development will be 90% or more leased and everything will open on the same day.

Open discussions continued regarding the phenomenal site in Commerce Township and the geographic marketing area surrounding the community where a significant draw of patrons is expected. Details of liquor licensing for Five & Main were also addressed, along with special events, and a reiteration of the project timeline. Dave Campbell asked if there is an ideal time to open a place like this. Mr. Aikens replied that it's either spring, or September, and September is a good time. He anticipates site plan approval by April/May of 2018. Construction could begin early summer of 2018, with completion expected in 2019, and the grand opening in the Fall of 2019.

OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION:

None.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Jones, supported by Winkler, to adjourn the meeting at 12:43pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Brian Winkler, Secretary