

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF NORTHVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION
October 15, 2019**

DATE: October 15, 2019
TIME: 6:30 PM
PLACE: Northville Township Hall
44405 Six Mile Road

APPROVED: October 29, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: 6:34 PM

ROLL CALL:

Present: Erik Lark, George McCarthy, Fred Shadko, Jayne Watson (arrived 6:36 pm),
Tim Zawodny

Excused: Lisa Anderson, Timothy Guerriero

Staff: Jennifer Frey, Township Planner

Project

The Village at Northville Lofts

Request: Building Architecture & Materials

Representative: Howard Fingeroot

Action: Discussion only.

The purpose of tonight's meeting was to discuss changes in the design of the Village at Northville Lofts proposed as part of PUD amendments for this development, including architecture, materials and colors.

Members of the development team present this evening included:

- Charles Swanson, Humphreys & Partners Architects, 121 West Wacker, Suite 2000, Chicago IL
- Michael Smith, Humphreys & Partners Architects, 5339 Alpha Road, Dallas TX
- John Ackerman, Atwell, 2 Towne Square, Southfield MI
- Keith Owen, 333 Touraine Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI
- Howard Fingeroot, Diversified Property Group, 1668 South Telegraph, Suite 200, Bloomfield Hills.

The applicants explained that the proposal was for a high-end 4-story multi-family, 283-unit apartment building, with structured parking. The development would offer industry-leading amenities. They were seeking a contemporary design that would respect the context of the surrounding development.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, the applicants showed the original approved elevation, elevations as presented at the Board of Trustees/Planning Commission special

joint study session on September 19, 2019, and revised elevations of the north, west, and south facades that responded to the September 19 conversation.

Changes made since the September meeting included:

- Use of darker brick material, as included on the updated material selection board.
- A modestly increased percentage for masonry on each elevation resulted in an approximate 70% ratio; the ratio did not include window glazing. They would be using a full-depth masonry product.
- Modifications to the roof line.

In response to questions from the Commission, the applicants gave the following information:

- The fiber cement panel would be field-painted.
- The columns would have structural posts at the center, would be furred out with lumber with smooth fiber cement panel on top of that, and with corner trim on all 4 corners.
- The panels on the upper floors would be the James Hardie reveal system. Soffits would also be a fiber cement board.
- The cementitious product was extremely low maintenance and had a 50-year warranty.
- The view from the 2nd level of the garage would be of the fiber cement lap siding. The garage was a pre-cast structure. The space between the garage structure and the rear of the apartment was open, providing ventilation for the garage.
- No apartments would be looking into the parking deck. On any level of the garage, residents would exit their cars and walk directly into the corridor of the apartment building at that level.
- The building would have 4 elevators.
- The compactor would be fully screened with a decorative gate. The screening would be the same material as the veneer on the building.
- The stone product would be a 51-Echelon Artisan product, and would provide variation in size, color, and texture.
- Air conditioner and heating systems would be in a closet in each unit, with a/c compressors on the roof. No condensers or mechanical equipment would be visible from the exterior of the building.
- The garage entry would be by gate arms.
- Balcony railings would be powder coated steel or aluminum.
- They were not including red brick as shown elsewhere in this PUD development. Contemporary-leaning architecture did not want to appear too busy. The proposed elevations did show differences in texture, colors, and materials.
- The east elevation would be softened by the distance and grade differential from Beck Road, and the landscaping between the road and the building.
- The units would have 9 foot ceilings, except for a few units closer to the clubhouse, which would have 11-12 foot ceilings.
- Windows would be 4 over 1 single-hung dark vinyl.

In general, the Commission liked the changes made, although Commissioner Shadko thought the leasing center corner was unattractive. The approximately 70% masonry per elevation seemed appropriate for this design.

Chair Zawodny expressed concern regarding the color patterns. Specifically, he thought the darker, richer colors gave a more "high-end" appearance; the lighter, creamier-colored panels seemed out of place.

Commission concerns included:

- Fiber cement panels could warp over time. Cement panel was susceptible to chipping, wear and tear, etc., in exposed locations, including columns at the leasing center entrance. The importance of skilled installation was critical.
- Variation in the stone product – color, texture, size (including height) – was important.
- The Commission was not enthusiastic about the angled balconies, and suggested that those be modified.
- Considerable conversation was held regarding the concern that there was no rendering of the east side elevation. There was strong feeling that the east facade would present a long, uninterrupted "back of building" view to the Beck Road traffic. Every elevation had something interesting going on except for the east elevation. Repeated balcony lines that projected out only 3-4 feet would not provide significant architectural interest. Possible solutions were discussed including the addition of towers similar to those on the west elevation. In any event, the applicants should bring a rendering of the east side elevation to the October 29 meeting, along with modifications that addressed this concern.

The Commission summarized their findings and concerns as follows:

- A rendering of the east elevation showing architectural interest needed to be provided at the October meeting.
- The percentage of masonry at approximately 70% per elevation appeared to be acceptable as shown.
- Chair Zawodny remained concerned that the design needed to show a richer coloration; the creamier panel colors did not give that appearance and did not go with the rest of the color palette, and some of the brick colors appeared washed out. Other commissioners liked the colors as shown; Commissioner Lark cautioned against an overall dark appearance.

The applicants were asked to take comments regarding color into consideration, and bring back possible modifications on October 29. The masonry should also clearly show variation as discussed.

In response to a question from the applicants, Township Planner Frey said she thought there was an opportunity for reduced space between the sidewalk and the building on the east side, in order to provide room for some architectural variation.

Township Supervisor Nix explained that the Board of Trustees had approved setbacks and a reduction in surface parking (to be banked) for this requested PUD amendment. The

BOT had delegated responsibility to the Planning Commission to finalize colors, materials, and the percentage of masonry; the Board would accept the Commission's recommendations on these matters and incorporate the recommendations into the PUD amendment. Site plan review and approval would be by the Planning Commission, as normal.

Township Planner Frey asked that the new submission be in by October 24, for packet distribution prior to the October 29 meeting.

Public Comments: None

Adjournment:

MOTION by McCarthy, support by Lark, to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Voice vote: Ayes: All
 Nays: None

Motion carried unanimously.