

June 4, 2019

City of Northville Planning Commission
215 West Main Street
Northville, MI 48167

Dear Commissioners:

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has had the opportunity to attend public meetings before the Planning Commission and Historic District Commission, to meet with both the HPH and Watermark Development Teams, and to discuss in detail the proposed project at the Committee level. Most recently, the EDC met with Chris Alexander of Watermark Development on May 16, 2019 to discuss the Development Team's submission to the Planning Commission for Preliminary PUD Site Plan consideration. The majority of the EDC's comments pertain to Phase 1 of the project that lies almost exclusively within the boundaries of the DDA and will have a significant impact on the existing historic downtown.

The EDC in their support for PUD eligibility noted that the following items still needed to be addressed as part of Site Planning process.

- Traffic and congestion
- Adequate parking
- Farmers' Market location
- Underground stormwater management.
- Development of more urban landscaping solutions
- Additional commercial space along Cady Street
- Refine architectural facades of Cady Street buildings
- Refine project layout and density
- Begin discussions on public participation from City and DDA for funding environmental remediation and infrastructure improvements.

The EDC notes that the plan submitted for Preliminary PUD Site Plan Approval is almost identical to the plan presented during the PUD Eligibility phase of the review process. Only one change of note has taken place in the latest site plan; the addition of 2,115 square feet of flex space has been added at the NE corner of the site. This flex space could be leased for commercial use by the Development Team, but could also revert back to residential use if they are not able to market the commercial space. An additional 3,000 – 4,000 square feet has also been identified in HPH submission documents as commercial, but still appears as residential in the submitted. The EDC supports adding additional commercial square footage to the project and would encourage additional space to be converted to commercial use along east Cady Street to support the new residential tenant base.

The latest plan also contains a decrease in parking spaces provided in the Parking Deck down from 473 spaces in the PUD Eligibility phase to 371 spaces in the Preliminary Site Plan phase, a loss of 102 spaces. The Development Team has commissioned a Parking Study produced by Fleis & Vandenbrink. The report makes a case for decreasing the amount of parking spaces required by the residential uses by using the Institute of Transportation Engineers manual on parking. The manual assists planners and engineers in determining the parking demand for various land uses. The Planning Commission will use the Fleis & Vanderbrink report as well as research conducted by Carlisle Wortman of surrounding Michigan communities to determine the appropriate number of parking spaces needed for a successful project.

The EDC has continued to express a strong desire to see an underground stormwater management solution for the apartments along Cady Street. This is an urban project, one block off of Northville's Main Street and should be treated with an urban solution. The consensus from the EDC is that a detention pond at the corner of Beale and Griswold is not an appropriate solution and should be redesigned as an underground facility.

In previous designs, the Development Team has provided several alternatives for the relocation of the Farmers' Market. In the latest Preliminary Site Plan application it appears that the western surface parking lot has been designated as the preferred site. The EDC encourages the Development Team to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce to address their needs in respect to size, layout and amenities of the Farmers' Market.

It is worth noting that the issues outlined above were noted as project concerns in the motion to grant the project PUD eligibility. It is the EDC's collective opinion that these numerous issues have not yet been resolved. However, the project, with modifications could address the issues outlined above and provide a mixed use project that would act as a transition from the residential uses to the south with the historic downtown to the north. The EDC looks forward to continuing to work with the Development Team to reach that goal.

Respectfully,

Aaron Cozart, Chair
DDA Economic Development Committee