

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION HELD TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022 AT 10:00 A.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, MACKINAC ISLAND, MICHIGAN

Chairman Straus called the Public Hearing of the Mackinac Island Planning Commission to order at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Michael Straus, Lee Finkel, Mary Dufina, Trish Martin, Anneke Myers, Jim Pettit, Ben Mosley
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Zoning Administrator, Dennis Dombroski, Attorney, Erin Evashevski

Evashevski stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is for the public to comment on the partial conditional rezoning of the Grand Hotel parcel known as Lot 2 Blk 10 of Plat 5. The request is to conditionally rezone a portion of an ROS parcel to a conditional Hotel Boardinghouse zoning pursuant to section 23.03.

David Jurcak explained they wanted to rezone because cottages or villas are a new industry fixture all over the US. Since covid, and because of Airbnb, people are wanting a bigger space. This idea was an idea the Musser's had previously and it does fill a need the Grand Hotel has now and it creates a relevance for the hotel as Grand Hotel continues to move forward. It also reaches out to another group of individuals that have come to the island to seek out short term rentals as well as keeping the Grand Hotel relevant on a national scape as they continue to market to new people.

Dan Musser stated that yes, they too had looked at this idea almost 20 years ago. While it is a small portion of the facility, it is a pinnacle one for the future. There is no question that the legacy guests and future guests are looking for this type of experience. He believes it fits the spirit and intent of the area and certainly it meets the Master Plan's future use.

Tamara Burns and Gene Hopkins shared their computer screen showing the submittal for the rezoning. Burns went through the factors for review. Hopkins pointed out that the requested area to be rezoned is less than 50% of the parcel. Burns stated that HB would allow for 117 bedrooms, and they are only requesting 6 cottages with a total of 14 bedrooms. Straus read aloud letters from the public.

Erbel – against	Radecki - against
Bransonisio – against	Puttkammer - against
Lenfesty – against	May - against
Murray, Steve – against	Puttkammer & Meta - against
Bell – against	Lewand - against
Murray, Tim – against	Croghan, Melisa - against
Hoxsie – for	Barnwell, Sam - for
Dobrowolski – for	McIntire, Mary K. - for
Young – against.	

PUBLIC COMMENT

Liz Ware asked if the REU's are available for the project. Straus stated he understood that they have the REU's in reserve from the pool housing. Allen Burt stated they have an REU credit for 2.4; just over half of what is needed. Burt wanted to clarify that there is no agreement for exchange of REU's for accessing the sewer line in that area. It is a public sewer line that has multiple properties along the bluff, that join in and go down through the tea garden, before the Grand's connection. That line is a priority for repairs. DPW has applied for monies for repairs. There is no agreement with Grand. DPW did ask, just to clarify the situation for access, that an easement be established because they are unaware of any existing easements. Dufina clarified Burt's statement. Burt described where the line runs and stated that Jurcak had mentioned repairing the line if they were digging there. But there was no promise if the Grand repaired the line, they would be granted REU's.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Myers asked about the conditions listed, and looking for the city's best interest. Myers stated that most of the conditions listed on page 3 of the submittal were not conditions, but requirements of the HB zoning. The only conditions listed are limiting the bedrooms to 14, and that the use is hotel guests only, no employee housing. Both Myers and Straus noted that uses such as restaurants and stores are not eliminated in the conditions. If the applicant intends to eliminate those uses it would need to be better defined in the conditions. Evashevski stated that the definition of hotel cottage is not defined in our ordinance and agrees that the language in the conditions, for use, is

ambiguous. Nicholas Lakas stated their intention is for hotel guests only; no restaurants. According to Lakas' description it is a single-family home. Dombroski stated that the use needs to be defined as hotel use because the building codes are different than residential. Lakas stated he intends to adhere to all hotel use building codes. Evashevski stated the conditions need to be as clear as possible. The Planning Commission cannot offer language. Burns stated she wanted to be clear that the only use intended is hotel room. Martin asked why this project is in the best interest of the city. Jurcak stated that as the Grand evolves with additional amenities, it attracts more visitors. In addition, the cottages meet the demand for short term rentals like Airbnb. Martin stated that often there are benefits to the city, beyond just bringing more visitors. Hopkins stated that a deed restriction will be placed on the property to limit in perpetuity, to the 6 units. Any future potential consideration would be tied to the property, not the zoning. This insures the limited use on the property. The ROS property is private property owned by the Grand, and the Grand has tried to put in things like mini golf and a bmx track, to try to create other opportunities for guests to come to the island and residents to use the area as a "public park". The Grand's intent is to open it up to allow people to use the area up to the pool and tea garden. The Grand sees the area as a continued open arms approach to embrace the community and welcome them into the property. Straus asked how many non-guests use the ROS property. Hopkins stated it just opened so he does not know. Myers noted that section F allows for an amendment to the zoning, in the future. Hopkins believes the deed helps insure the long-term sustainability of the area. Myers stated it would be the same process that is being done now. Finkel asked about the accessibility to the property. Recently comments have been made that people were unhappy that they could not go to the pool. Finkel stated this is an analogous situation in that you have an interest in maintaining the privacy of the people staying in the cottages but it is still open to the public. Finkel asked Jurcak to elaborate on that. Jurcak stated the pool is an amenity for guests. The amount of traffic after the pool renovation far exceeded the number of guests allowed in the pool area. The pool is not part of the ROS area. The access has been restricted to guests. Jurcak stated that the public is allowed in the secret garden at no charge and has been well used in the past year. Dufina asked Evashevski for clarification on the lot, as it appeared to be two lots. Evashevski stated that it is one parcel with three zoning classifications. Evashevski does not know the history of how it became zoned like this, but it is one parcel. Dufina asked if the rezoning would have an effect on the conservation easement. Straus stated that traditionally a letter from the State Park would be submitted stating they are OK with the proposed project. Jurcak stated they are in discussions with Steve Brisson. Dufina asked Evashevski if, at a later date, the Grand would like to apply for HB zoning in the remainder of the ROS lot, are they allowed to do that. Evashevski stated that yes, they could and there is nothing in the stated conditions stating that they would not do that. Evashevski asked Hopkins about the deed restriction not being in the conditions. Hopkins stated that if the request is granted, the statement of conditions would be recorded with the deed restriction, which is an automatic procedure that would need to happen to validate the request of conditional rezoning. Straus asked if there was any comment from the school. Jurcak stated he is addressing the school board today and that they have taken a position of neutrality. If the Planning Commission needs a comment from the school he can get it. Myers stated it was her understanding that the school board has not even discussed the rezoning. Straus stated the school does not have to, but feels their feedback is important. Mosley asked if the exterior view of the property will change or remain the same. Burns stated it will remain the same. Myers stated the height of the cottages is 3.5 stories. The pool house, which is 2 stories, is visible from the water so she would assume the cottages will also be visible from the water. Burns stated all the trees in the conservation easement will have to stay, with the exception of the invasive species. Dufina asked what "PA", on page 4, means. Burns stated it means planting area. Dufina asked about the patio to the north. Burns stated it may be a picnic area but these are very early plans. Pettit stated in the future land use map shows the parcel as HB. Dombroski corrected Pettit on the definition of use and zoning. The property is zoned as ROS but allows for hotel use, such as tennis courts, in the area. Myers confirmed what Dombroski explained and stated that hotel rooms are not allowed in ROS.

With no further comments there was a Motion by Martin, second by Mosley to adjourn the hearing. The hearing was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Michael Straus/KP

Michael Straus, Chairman

Katie Pereny

Katie Pereny, Secretary