



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, February 7, 2012 – 6:45 p.m.

PRESENT: Alds. Birschel, Causier, Donegan, Ewerdt, Hanson, Jay, McBride, Nikceovich, Organ, Roznowski, Walsh, Wilke, Wilson, Berdan -14

EXCUSED: Ald. Pantuso

ALSO Mr. Archambo, City Administrator; Ms. Enders, Economic Development
PRESENT: Director/Interim Community Development Director; Mr. Porter, Public Works Director

Ald. Walsh in the Chair

Update on Innovation Park Project. Mr. Archambo explained that this Innovation Park update will include information about infrastructure and the accelerator building. It is a complex project; the construction of the main roadway through the Park in 2012 must be completed to enable traffic detours to take place as Watertown Plank Road and Mayfair Road are improved in 2013, and Swan Boulevard and the adjacent freeway are improved in 2014-15.

Ms. Enders explained that Phase 1 of the project began with the creation of the Tax Incremental Financing District in 2010. Phase 2 consists of the construction of the infrastructure through the property. The plans for the accelerator building on the parcel have already been before the city's Design Review Board. On February 6th, the Board of Public Works reviewed the preliminary infrastructure plans. The business Planned Development Amendment (accelerator building) will be heard by the Plan Commission on February 13th, and then will proceed to the Community Development Committee at the end of February.

Title documents will be submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in mid-February, as federal funding for this project is being used. Review may take three months. Infrastructure and accelerator building plans will be submitted to the EDA in early March and will have an estimated one-month review period.

Every time the project moves forward, an amendment to the Business Planned Development will be made. It is hoped that construction can begin in August.

Mr. Porter gave an overview of the infrastructure plans. The main road through the development (tentatively known as Technology Parkway) will be a two-lane, divided roadway, paved in asphalt, and with curb and gutter. A roundabout midway through will serve to calm traffic. A yet-to-be-named road branching off from this main thoroughfare will serve the Eschweiler buildings. Sensitive habitat in the northeast quadrant will be preserved. A sidewalk will be installed on the east side of the street along the entire length. Two five-foot wide bike lanes will be constructed on both sides of the road. LED street lights will be installed. North of the roundabout, the street will have parallel parking for easy access to open areas. There will be five median breaks and left-turn lanes.

A significant amount of cutting and filling will be necessary to create a grade of no more than 5% for the roadway. This street will become part of the Watertown Plank Road detour route in 2014.

Mr. Porter briefly outlined the proposed route for water mains running from Watertown Plank Road. The sanitary sewer from Watertown Plank Road will serve the Eschweiler buildings and the development occurring along 'Technology Parkway.'

John McCarthy of Graef, 125 S. 84th Street, Milwaukee, pointed out the location of the biofiltration basins on the parcel. Much of the site will drain here. There will be no surface water runoff. Drainage will be directed to either a drain to the north along Swan Boulevard, or cross under Hwy 45 to Underwood Creek.

Dave Gilbert, UWM Real Estate Foundation, explained that the Foundation is developing the Park for UWM. The Foundation is not a real estate developer; they are educators with the ability to leverage investments in the Research Park and Regional Medical Center. This area is underserved by science and engineering, those disciplines must be attracted to this location.

Lora Strigns of HGA Architects, 333 E. Erie Street, Milwaukee, stated that she has been working with the Real Estate Foundation since 2009. The original 88-acre parcel consists of about 50 acres for Innovation Park, about 8 ½ acres for residential use, a parcel for Department of Transportation (DOT) use on the far west side, and a habitat area on the north side of the site. Considerable effort has been made to preserve the habitat areas. Shared parking by buildings will be utilized where possible.

The DOT's interchange plans have been modified somewhat and this has resulted in the relocation of the Park's main entrance along Watertown Plank Road farther to the east than originally planned. Due to the grade differential in this part of the parcel, extensive use of a series of walls will be needed at this location. The series of three gabion retention walls will create a gateway to the Park and will be constructed such that planting materials can be grown on, and adjacent, to the walls. The walls will also offer opportunity for appropriate signage at the entrance.

Cliff Goodhart, Epstein Uhen Architects, 333 E. Chicago Street, Milwaukee, stated that his firm designed the accelerator building, the first to be constructed in the Park. It will be a two-story, 25,000 square foot facility. Efforts will be made to achieve LEEDS certification for the building.

In response to queries about the main roadway, Mr. McCarthy stated that the speed limit will be 25 mph. The roadway width is 58 feet, adequate for emergency vehicles, with the bike lanes and a parking lane. The right-of-way is 90 feet.

Ald. Wilke noted that the City is committed to habitat protection in this area, and asked for assurance that this will occur during and after development.

Mr. Gilbert stated that a restoration and maintenance plan has been developed for the habitat and they are committed to implementing it.

In response to questions about plan changes that may have occurred since original approval, Ms. Strigns stated that a building to be constructed closer to Hwy. 45 and west of the existing Milwaukee County Parks building will be about 100,000 square feet; it is not moving forward yet. Moving the entry road to the east does not affect the buffer zone that exists between the freeway and the building. The overall density has not changed, though it may have shifted a bit to the north.

Responding to a question about the gabion walls, Ms. Strigns stated that the Pabst Brewery redevelopment has such a wall. The Innovation Park wall will not have a utilitarian look that some gabion systems feature. The final wall height is also undetermined; it will be reduced if possible.

Mr. McCarthy added that with respect to the road, earlier planning called for two lanes in both directions and a larger roundabout. It has since been downsized. There are no current plans to use traffic signals at either end of 'Technology Parkway,' though there may be a stop light at Watertown Plank Road when the DOT does its reconstruction work. Dynamics will be different during and after the DOT project. Both ends of the roadway are T-intersections with dedicated right and left turn lanes. The contours of the road are designed to slow traffic, hopefully making it unattractive as a shortcut between Swan Boulevard and Watertown Plank Road.

Ald. Jay opined that the proposed gabion walls are somewhat unattractive and urged consideration be given to the use of Lannon stone, in keeping with the style of the city. She indicated her preference that the city have more input in the final design.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

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