

**TO: Planning Commission**

**FROM: David Campbell, Planning Director**

**DATE: April 27, 2016**

**RE: Conceptual Review – Clark Station Redevelopment  
(519 W. Commerce Road)**

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Section 35.04.A.1 of the Zoning Ordinance provides an option for a potential applicant to appear before the Planning Commission to hear their informal and non-binding comments on a conceptual site plan. On behalf of his client K&S Fuel Ventures (Marah and Farah Karana), Mike Powell (Powell Engineering) has requested that option for a proposed redevelopment of the commercial property at 519 W. Commerce Road (the existing Clark gas station). Mr. Powell has provided a conceptual site plan, and John Gumma of Etchen Gumma Ltd. has provided conceptual building elevations.

The Karanas would like to expand their existing use to include gas pumps, a retail building to be shared between the gas station's retail component and a drive-through coffee shop, and two in-line retail suites. To accomplish this expansion, the owners have acquired several properties on the west side of Broadway Street; the project as proposed would encompass a total of five parcels. The properties along Broadway would provide site access, space for required parking, and space for stormwater detention. The development would retain its two existing driveways along Commerce Road, in addition to the new access off Broadway. The existing gas canopy would remain (with a facelift), but the existing building would be demolished and replaced with a new, larger retail building.

The applicant and Mr. Powell have had several conversations with the Planning Department about this proposal, but the submittal of concept plans occurred on April 25. This gave the Planning Department a limited amount of time to provide a brief written review with cursory observations and comments. Given the scope of the proposal, the impact it could have on surrounding properties, and the murky status of Broadways Street, this is a project that might warrant more than one conceptual discussion with the Planning Commission prior to formal submittal.

### **Zoning and Future Land Use**

519 W. Commerce is 0.8 acres, and is currently split-zoned. The approx. 0.4-acre portion of the property fronting Commerce Road is zoned B-3 (General Business), consistent with the gas station use. The rear 0.4 acres is zoned R-1D, One Family Residential. The three properties the owners have acquired along Broadway (behind The Meat Shop) are also zoned R-1D. Gas stations are only permitted in the B-3 zoning district, and only then as a special land use. Drive-through businesses are also a special land use in B-3. Therefore, five properties (or one combined property) would have to be re-zoned to B-3. The Planning Commission would have

to consider the prudence of rezoning multiple properties from R-1D to B-3 to accommodate a gas station with a drive through use. The existing gas station property and two of the three residential properties on Broadway are classified as Neighborhood Commercial on the Township's Future Land Use Plan, a FLU classification that is not intended to encompass high-intensity auto-oriented uses.

The gas canopy and pumps will remain in their existing location, so that use would remain relatively unchanged. The proposed new retail building would be dual-branded with the gas station's retail store and the proposed coffee shop. The proposed drive-through would circulate around the rear / south of that proposed building. It is not known what the hours of operation for the coffee shop would be, but it is fair to assume a 24-hour operation given the proximity of Huron Valley Hospital. Regardless of the proposed hours, the cars ordering and queuing for their pickup would be within 80 feet of the existing home to the south. If a rezoning and special land use approval are to be considered at the proposed location, due consideration should be given to proper screening of the drive-through use and possibly operational restrictions (decibel restrictions on the ordering station's speaker, face-to-face ordering at the pickup window during late-night hours, etc).

Given the above, a conditional rezoning should be considered by both the applicant and the Township. This would allow the applicant and the Township to enter into a formal rezoning agreement on the uses permitted, on operational elements, and on design elements that may go "above and beyond" typical standards.

### **Access**

The applicant proposes a new site access via Broadway Street. Broadway south of Commerce Road is a private dead-end street, originally platted as a public road known as Willow Blvd within the Willow Springs subdivision plat of 1924. Much of that plat, and most of the former Willow Blvd, has since been vacated. Willow Blvd was never accepted by the RCOC, so what is left of it (Broadway south of Commerce Road) is by default a private road.

Whatever improvements are made to Broadway must be done with the authorization of the owners of the properties that continue to benefit from access to Broadway, and cannot impede Broadway access. This could mean that the concept plan's proposal to extend Broadway into a curbed, one-way drive is not feasible because it would preclude access to/from the properties to the south. The applicant and the Township need to do some work to determine which entities have legal access to Broadway. At a minimum, a condition of any approval for the Clark proposal should be an access and maintenance agreement between all entities that have rights to Broadway, and a design that does not preclude Broadway access to/from the south.

### **Design elements**

The Planning Commission should be prepared to discuss with the applicant the following topics:

- Design of the proposed building; architecture, building materials, etc.
- Re-design of the gas canopy

- Sidewalk along Commerce Road
- Screening of the drive-through use (noise, lights, odors)
- Cross-access connections with adjacent commercial properties (Annie's, Meat Shop)
- Consolidation of driveways / shared driveway with Annie's (turn three existing driveways into two)
- Landscaping, and particularly frontage landscaping
- Design elements along Commerce Road; knee wall, hedge row, freestanding sign

The Planning Department would like to see the site improved, but in a way that the improvements are consistent with the Township's vision for the Commerce Village area. Both staff and the property owners are interested to hear the Planning Commission's thoughts on the proposal so they can make informed decisions on this potential investment in their property.

I am happy to answer any questions or provide any insight at the May 2, 2016 meeting of the Planning Commission.