TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
January 22, 2020

Chairperson Jay Wittman called the meeting of the Plan Commission to order at 6:02 pm. Other Plan Commission members present included Ryan Burnett, Tom Steele, and Jim Hampton. Also present were Director of Community Development, Jared Wehner and Building Inspector / Assistant Zoning Administrator, Paul Kufahl. Steve Plunkett and Tonia Westphal were excused.

MINUTES:

> **Commissioners chose to defer action on the December 11th, 2019 meeting minutes until the next meeting agenda.**

Prior to discussion of Old Business, Chairperson Wittman and Director of Community Development, Jared Wehner chose to reorganize the agenda to allow the New Business item to be discussed first.

NEW BUSINESS(S):

a. *Preapplication meeting for possible development of an indoor commercial entertainment use at 151577 Kingfisher Avenue (former Dirk's Group building).*

Director of Community Development, Jared Wehner indicated the applicant is interested in getting Plan Commission feedback on the suitability of an Italian Fine Dining restaurant in the old Dirks Group building along Hummingbird Rd. He noted the applicant has been working with Marathon County Development Corporation to finalize a business plan.

Marco Higuera, applicant, noted he has looked at a number of locations in Central Wisconsin, he highlighted his culinary background which has taken him from Hyde Park in New York to Beverly Hills and the Phoenix/Scottsdale areas; as well as, numerous corporate dining accounts for large US businesses. He indicated he has experience in opening three (3) or four (4) other restaurants in the US and he has already secured funding for his current project. He also noted there is a need for a fine dining restaurant in the Central Wisconsin region, and he drew the Commission's attention to his vision for the interior design and menu examples in the supplied packet.

Commissioners comments and questions; as well as, the applicant's responses are identified below.

- Does the applicant intend to purchase the property?
    - Higuera stated he does plan to purchase the property, noting it makes sense financially to purchase at this time, instead of waiting until after he has made the necessary improvements to the building.
- How does the properties zoning effect the approval process?

    - Wehner stated the property is currently zoned Suburban Office, which requires a Conditional Use for the Indoor Commercial Entertainment use.

- Parking in its current state may not be adequate enough for a restaurant use and directed the applicant to work with staff to create a parking plan to supply adequate parking stalls.
    - Higuera acknowledged the concern and noted the space is approximately 3600 square feet and he intends to create a more intimate space with roughly 50 patron seats. Additionally, Wehner noted he received a phone call from Dirk's Group in which they indicated they would be providing the buyer additional money to pave the previously approved gravel parking area.
- Work with staff to determine if the allowable signage would be adequate for your vision.
    - Higuera approved and directed the Commissioners to the supplied packet where a concept sign was presented.
- Describe the patio seating and will it include music or additional lighting needs.
    - Higuera noted he would like patio seating to take advantage of the pond on the property and continue his vision for the décor. He stated he is hoping for a more intimate dining experience and would not have live music. Higuera also indicated the patio is not a necessity and his vision could still be achieved without it.
- What are your hours of operation?
    - The applicant indicated the restaurant would be open until 10pm on Friday and Saturday, no later than 9pm on Monday through Thursday and closed on Sundays.
- How many patrons would you have on a full night?
    - Higuera anticipated a maximum of 200 guests on a busy Friday or Saturday. He highlighted the restaurant as low volume.

Commissioners directed the applicant to make sure the parking, signage, patio design and trash enclosure are adequately addressed prior to applying for the conditional use.

OLD BUSINESS(S):

a. Discussion on updates to the Town of Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan. Docket #2017-05.

i. Town Board feedback

Wehner noted the Town Board would like to simplify the language in the Plan related to the conflict between Granite Peak and environmental groups. They felt the statements were in reaction to recently released expansion plans and that the language can be softened.

Wehner also indicated Town Board would like the Plan include information from the recent park needs study highlighted in the Town's Park Plan. Wehner stated this information should be included.

He stated the Board would like to see reference to the Department of Natural Resource's Best Management Practices related to phosphorus reduction in the Upper Wisconsin River and begin working with other communities and local groups to help educate and implement those management practices. Wittman requested staff to bring water quality information to the Commission for review to better

understand the issues and impacts before they add it into the Comprehensive Plan. He agreed with Wehner that working with the Lake Associations as educators and facilitators would have the biggest impact.

The Town Board also referenced potential locations for small scale kayak launches near Liberty Park and North Lakeshore Drive. Commissioners thought the Liberty Park location was appropriate; however, they felt the North Lakeshore location may cause parking issues on the road and have an impact on the neighbors.

Wehner then stated the Board would like to connect Nine Mile County Forest to the Mountain Bay Trail, which would require significant Intergovernmental Cooperation to achieve. Wehner referenced preliminary plan discussions which would connect the Mountain Bay Trail to Rib Mountain via an unused rail corridor to Wausau and then a connecting trail to the River Park bridge in Rothschild. The trail would then connect to a network of existing and proposed new trails in Rib Mountain to make the Nine Mile Forest connection.

Commissioners felt the effort was a "pie in the sky" concept and the Town should keep its focus on Town amenity projects, noting a connection from Nine Mile to the State Park would be more realistic and they need to consider the location of future trails and the intended users. They noted users of the existing multi-use trails are different than those that would use a trail system within the State Park.

Finally, Wehner noted the Board would like to add statements that the Town is averse to "big box" multifamily and there is a need for senior housing options. Wehner indicated there is a need in the region for a variety of housing options, highlighting our low vacancy rates typically increase the cost of housing. The Plan Commission agreed there is a need for a variety of housing options and indicated there are suitable areas for almost all housing types, provided the proposals are of appropriate density and appearance for the location. They identified transitional areas between commercial uses and existing neighborhoods as potential locations for multi-family housing and noted they could envision low density senior housing with complimentary quiet commercial uses.

ii. Review Issues, Goals, Objectives and Actions of all chapters

Wehner directed Plan Commission to a staff note in the Housing section. He noted the statement "environment to foster a single-family community" contradicts the goal to strive to provide equal access to quality, affordable housing for all residents. He suggested modifying the single-family community statement to make it consistent with the Housing Goal. He also indicated the term single-family is becoming increasingly difficult to define and would suggest we avoid using it within the Plan.

iii. Future Land Use Map – CTH NN Corridor

Burnett opened discussion on the future land use map by asking the Commission what level of Commercial activity they are comfortable with along the Highway corridor. He felt the plan does not adequately setup the existing residential area referred to as the "donut hole" for future development and stated he would like to see the majority of the highway corridor identified as commercial.

Wehner suggested to not include the residential area south of the BMO Harris and DMV buildings as that residential area extends south and west from the highway.

Burnett indicated he would like to see developments similar to Bone & Joint and the new Azura memory care along Hummingbird where their building design fits more with the aesthetic of the wooded areas and mountain in the background. Wittman added he does not want to see a "big box" store similar to Kohl's, CostCo, etc along Hummingbird, but would prefer a soft low volume commercial or office use.

Wittman continued discussion about the "donut hole", stating we either need consider commercial development in this area or plan to expand residential to the east. Wehner also noted the area may be ripe for multi-family development. The Commission agreed it would likely be appealing for multi-family. Kufahl suggested creating a new land use designation that allows for a variety of uses instead of beginning confined to one future use. Commissioners felt it would be appropriate to allow for multiple uses in this likely transitional area.

Discussion then shifted to future land uses on County Road NN, in which the Commission identified two areas of discussion; one area being from Hummingbird Rd to Partridge Ave and the other being the current golf course. Wittman noted that Commercial creep is likely on NN due to its accessibility from the highway. Hampton stated that previous joint discussions with the Town Board discouraged commercial growth down both County Road N and NN. Wehner noted the two areas have different long-range use conflicts and should be treated differently. He stated the Hummingbird to Partridge area is a resident versus commercial conflict, while the golf course area would be a resident versus tourist conflict.

Commissioners discussed traffic counts, visibility, accessibility and likely business types that would locate on County Road NN; noting that a Walgreens type business, with higher volume and consistent traffic may be good fit for the corner of NN and Hummingbird, but the intensity would need to decrease to a more community friendly low volume business as it approaches Partridge Ave.

The Commission and Staff noted the Commercial Land Use should remain along NN and not encroach into the existing neighborhood to the south and the developable area to the north is constrained by the change in elevation and wetlands which are present.

CORRESPONDENCE / QUESTIONS / TOWN BOARD UPDATE:

a. *Discussion on Plan Commission's expectations for Director Wehner.*

Commissioners indicated they would like Staff to supply adequate information and general vision to allow them to make the best decision possible. For the Comprehensive Plan, they requested Wehner provide them with a red-lined document of suggested changes that they can discuss at future meetings. Commissioners noted that meetings are a collaborative solution which incorporates Staff's education and suggestions with the Commissioner's experience and understanding of the community.

b. Acknowledgement of year-end Building Permit Totals

Kufahl noted the total number of permits increased from 2018 to 2019, but the total construction value was significantly less due to a number of large commercial projects in 2018. He stated the town has had 29 new dwelling units created in each of the previous two years and anticipates another good construction season for 2020. Kufahl indicated available residential lots have decreased, which may limit the total number of new homes in 2020. Commissioners asked if there has been any interest from developers in creating new subdivisions. Kufahl noted there has been some interest from landowners on Clover Rd to develop an area to the west of the existing houses and north of Wisteria Lane. He also stated the Stone Horizon subdivision should begin infrastructure improvements this spring and they will be bringing a revised final plat to the Commission at an upcoming meeting to create three (3) additional lots. Kufahl indicated the commercial projects approved late in 2019 (Azura, Jiffy Lube, Dollar Tree, Culvers) should begin construction this spring. Wehner noted he felt Commercial development proposals may be limited this year, until the Camp Phillips Center issues are resolved. The big box stores that are interested in the Camp Phillips Center development may look elsewhere if they cannot work the necessary details with the DNR.

c. Monthly Report from Director Wehner

Wehner had nothing additional to report

d. Other

Staff informed the Commission of the State Park Master Plan meeting at the D.C. Everest Middle School Cafeteria on Wednesday, December 29, 2020 from 5 to 7 pm and invited them to attend if they would like. It was noted staff will post the meeting as a gathering of the Commissioners to notify the public should a quorum of Commissioners attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None received

ADJOURN:

Motion by Tom Steele, second by Ryan Burnett to adjourn the Plan Commission Meeting. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Kufahl, Building Inspector / Assistant Zoning Administrator

DRAFT