

From: [Bill Poulos](#)
To: [Dianne Massa](#)
Subject: Input to Planning Commission
Date: Thursday, July 21, 2022 3:48:49 PM
Attachments: [Note to Planning Commission 31522.docx](#)

Hi Dianne-

Please forward the following communication to the Planning Commission along with the attachment.

Thanks,

Bill Poulos
Citizens For Northville

Dear Planning Commission members-

Now that you are well into the Downs Preliminary Site Plan Review process, at what point in the process can we expect responses to the 17 questions listed in our communication to the Commission on March 15, 2022? We feel it is extremely important for the community to have this information in order to engender confidence and support within the community for the evolving Plan as well as for sound decision making.

Thanks again for your hard work and diligence on insuring the HP Plan can be modified so that it is right for Northville. As you know, a misstep here could have an irreversible negative impact on the future of the city.

Bill Poulos
Citizens For Northville

Updated from 2/11/22 Letter

To: Northville Planning Commission 3/15/22

From: Bill Poulos, 968 Coldspring Dr, Northville 48167

Subject: The Downs Redevelopment Process

I feel that the developer's plan is very well done. But is the plan right for Northville? I have been contacted by many, many people who believe that the plan, in its current form, is not right for Northville. While the developer has made improvements to the original plan, the plan density was reduced only somewhat and together with Housing Types, foreign to Downtown Northville, remains the central issue in our view.

The Plan, in its present form, appears to be a high risk plan with unknown consequences for Northville. Once implemented, becomes irreversible. Hopefully, working with the developer in good faith, the plan can be enhanced to mitigate this risk.

The key question that must be answered is "Is the HP Plan in keeping with Northville's present Character and small-town Charm? We believe it must be answered based on a specific set of criteria that we are requesting the Planning Commission (and later the City Council) adopt and respond to, item by item, as outlined below. Otherwise, all we have are opinions.

There is a secondary question. Is a high density plan the only way to pay for the public benefits such as daylighting the river? Lower risk scenarios should be explored with the developer that would include daylighting the river.

These criteria must be answered and made public so that the citizens are fully informed as the process unfolds.

-Following are excerpts from the PUD (Planned Unit Development) Article 20 of the Zoning Ordinance with related Criteria numbers that tie into each of these sections:

20.01: Purpose and Intent: “.....to preserve significant natural, historical, and architectural features and open space.....” 2 3 6 7 10 13-17

20.05: “.....The proposed use or uses shall be of such location, size, density and character as to be in harmony with the zoning district in which it is situated, and shall not be detrimental to the adjoining zoning districts....” 1 2 3 4 5 8 9 12 13-17

“.... The proposed type and density of use shall not result in an unreasonable increase in the need for or burden upon public services, facilities, roads, and utilities....” 1 4 5 8 9 11 12 13-17

20.8 1. PUD: “Reasonable conditions may be required by the Planning Commission before the approval of a planned unit development, to the extent authorized by law, for the purpose of ensuring that existing public services and facilities affected by a proposed land use or activity will be capable of accommodating increased service and facility loads caused by the land use or activity, protecting the natural environment and conserving natural resources and energy, **ensuring compatibility with adjacent uses of land, and promoting the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner.**” 1 3 4 5 7 8 9 11 12 13-17

We request that the Planning Commission (and later the City Council) adopt and respond to the following criteria to assess as objectively as possible the answer to the question: “Is the Plan in keeping with Northville’s character and small-town charm?”

Criteria:

1. Is Residential Density in harmony with surrounding neighborhoods?:

5.8 homes per acre current surrounding neighborhoods— 48 acres x 0.70 (to account for roads/unbuildable areas/parks) = 34 buildable acres. 474 units/34 = 14 homes per acre. More than twice the current density of surrounding neighborhoods which are predominantly single family homes. On the other hand, are single family homes in demand in Northville? What is the inventory of unsold homes?

2. Are Residential Architecture and Housing Types in harmony with surrounding neighborhoods?:

Homes: yes on front façades. Are monolithic apartment and condo buildings; row, town and carriage houses appealing structures adjacent to Single Family Homes. Are these types of structures sustainable? South entrance to city unappealing and would be a canyon with current Plan.

Apartment and Condo Buildings?:

3. Have Walkability requirements been met? :
4. Will impact on traffic improve? :
5. Is Commercial Density in harmony with downtown?:
6. Is Commercial Architecture in harmony with downtown?:

7. Have Landscaping requirements been met?:
8. Will FAR restrictions be met?:
9. Is Parking adequate (where do non-Downs residents park that want to use the green space?)?:
10. Has Farmers Market area been specified?:
11. Has impact study been done for City Services/Aging Infrastructure/Utilities?:
12. Has assessment been done concerning impact on surrounding neighborhood Property Values: ?
13. Has the City conducted a Pro Forma Cost/Benefit Analysis?
14. Have required developer escrow accounts been determined: ?
15. Has the developer claimed \$2.1 million net tax increase for Northville been substantiated and will it offset incremental costs to the city?
16. Has the developer's ability to complete the Plan been assessed?:
17. Will the Plan attract visitors to Northville: ?

We believe that whatever the Planning Commission ultimately recommends to the City Council, it must include a very specific, sober analysis of the enhanced plan and its impact on Northville's small town Charm and Character. And this analysis must be widely communicated to the public, demonstrating how the plan is in the best interests of Northville, in order for the plan to have broad based support by the public. Such an analysis is critical to clear-eyed decision making and even more so, given the highly volatile geopolitical and financial world that may be in the process of rapidly unravelling in ways that none of us have seen in our lifetimes.

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Dear Planning Commission:

I am writing with deep concerns over a modification made to the proposed Downs Development. At a recent meeting focusing on the parking options, you eliminated the parking lot on Cady Street, just across from our building and at the head of the new park. While I understand the desire for more green space, the removal of this parking lot will have a dramatic impact on the life of the congregation and our community partners using our building. I suspect it will have implications for area businesses, too. As it is, it is challenging finding a parking space for the church while competing with the often-heavy traffic from Starbucks. It is my understanding that the change was made with the assumption that the proposed lot would only benefit the church. I think this is a false statement. Just within the last couple of weeks, I have witnessed numerous vehicles using the current dirt lot for parking. None of those cars and trucks were from our building use, as they were parked at times when we were not offering programming (see photos).

These observations are anecdotal, I understand, but what is empirical is that outside groups utilize our building regularly. While the proposed parking lot will benefit our 100+ preschool families during drop off and pick up, it will also benefit the largest Scout troop in the state (Troop 755); they are an outside group of 150+ youth that weekly uses the church and has for decades. The lot will benefit Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon, both groups of dozens who meet weekly in our building. The lot will benefit the Red Cross who uses our Christian Life Center for monthly blood drives. The lot will benefit the Rotary Club of Northville who meets in the fellowship hall twice monthly. The lot will benefit the community pickleball group that meets weekly. The lot will benefit various library committees that use our spaces for meetings, not to mention special events with the Art House, Living and Learning Enrichment Center, and various musical ensembles, all of whom use the building free or at a reduced rental cost. Some of the great gifts we have as a church, are our central location and our physical size. We can and are a community partner to more than just our congregation. To think the lot would only benefit one organization is a misinformed statement. Just this week, we were asked to host the Northville Beautification Commission awards lunch; this will welcome 120+ outside people to the building. We've also been asked to welcome 650 children for the Heritage Festival story time.

We own our building, but we use it as a hub for the community of Northville. In each of the artist renderings of the new Downs Development, we are there with our steeple, a central symbol from which the downtown stretches. We take our role as good neighbors seriously. With that in mind, I strongly urge you to reconsider the elimination of the proposed parking lot.

I should note, as well, how excited I am by the prospect of new neighbors through the growth of businesses and the expansion of housing. I am most enthused about the new parks and the

daylighting of the river. I have no doubt that others will be eager to access those spaces. The church will benefit from having a lush park right outside our doors. I just want to make sure that all this progress is not at the expense of its current utilization.

As the pastor of the church, and as someone planning on sticking around for a long time, I'm glad to be neighbors with you all.

Warm regards,

Pastor Jackie

The Rev. Jacqueline Spycher
Senior Pastor
First Presbyterian Church of Northville
200 E. Main St.
Northville, MI 48167

Photos taken on July 12, 2022; south facing from our building to the dirt lot and proposed location of the park lot.



First Presbyterian Church of Northville



August 2, 2022

Dear Planning Commission:

We, the sitting elders of the 2022 Session of First Presbyterian Church of Northville, are writing to you to express our consternation at a proposed change to the Downs development plans. We have learned that the small parking lot directly opposite our church building on East Cady Street is to be eliminated according to Planning Commission recommendations.

As we understand it, the decision was made because the parking lot abuts a green space park, a combination which is deemed to be unsightly. Surely, some pleasing ornamental barrier could be designed to separate and define the two spaces and thus accommodate both park and parking lot.

As our pastor, the Reverend Jacqueline Spycher, wrote to you in her letter dated July 19, 2022, our church hosts many events that require parking in the area which is already at a premium because of nearby businesses. The Downs plan would only add more commercial spaces with parking needs. The recent history of Northville, since the Mainstreet 78 project, proves public parking availability to be an ongoing major concern in the downtown area. To eliminate a proposed parking lot, however small, seems to be counter-productive and short-sighted.

We respectfully request that you restore the Cady Street parking lot to the Downs plan.

Sincerely yours,

First Presbyterian Church of Northville Session

The Rev. Linda Cochran, Parish Associate

Adam Danes, Clerk and Elder

Debby DeLaby, Elder

Brandon Giroux, Elder

Lynda Heaton, Elder

Nancy Kaatz, Elder

Jennie Macy, Elder

Dianne McCulloch, Elder

Tim Mizerowski, Elder and Corp. President

Wanda Moon, Elder

The Rev. Jacqueline Spycher, Senior Pastor

Cal Strom, Elder

Jim Ward, Elder

Dick Werther, Elder