

**EXTRACT OF THE APRIL 20, 2009
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

Business Items - Presentations/Discussions

a. Discuss Request by Wellington Management for Collaboration in the Preliminary Design of a Proposed Office Property at 2167 Lexington (PF09-003)

Community Development Director Patrick Trudgeon introduced representatives from Wellington Management, for presentation of their revised designs for redevelopment of the parcel at 2167 Lexington Avenue, addressing previous concerns expressed by the City Council and public.

**Sonja Simonsen, Director of Finance for Wellington Management and
Gonsalo Villares, Pope Architects**

Ms. Simonsen reviewed changes made to the plan based on previous comments and concerns, including creation of a curved wall on the southeast corner of the building addressing visibility triangle concerns and increasing the aesthetic value of the building; additional landscaping and green space opportunities created by that design; and relocating the building and parking lot seven feet to the north. Ms. Simonsen advised that this allowed retention of the original parking lot landscaping, but placed it in the public right-of-way that Wellington intended to maintain and manage. Ms. Simonsen reviewed the increased landscaping on the western edge of the property (additional trees and shrubs) providing additional privacy to the adjoining residential property on the west; relocation of proposed snow storage to allow that additional landscaping; and increased setbacks on County Road B for tree and shrub plantings. Ms. Simonsen advised that Wellington had attempted to incorporate as much feedback from previous comments and concerns as was feasible; and advised that she and Mr. Villares were open to further questions and comments related to those revisions.

Councilmember Pust thanked Wellington representatives for their responsiveness; and expressed appreciation for the new design, rounded building, landscaping, and increased visibility.

Discussion among Councilmembers and Wellington representatives included type of shrub proposed to ensure visibility; location of and number of bicycle parking provided (five spaces located on the northwest side of the building further away from the curb cut for safety considerations); whether any reduction in the parking lot was possible to reduce impervious surfaces further based on zoning requirements and proposed uses of the building and avoiding any on-street parking on Sandhurst to address neighborhood concerns; and landscape screening of the parking lot.

Councilmember Ihlan expressed appreciation for this much-improved design. She expressed concern that the City's standards for parking seemed to negatively influence the environmental and aesthetics of today's realities.

Councilmember Johnson echoed favorable comments of Councilmembers Pust and Ihlan related to aesthetic and setback improvements; however, questioned the location of the curb cut and sight lines on the north side of the building onto Lexington. Councilmember Johnson noted that this was a prime location for pedestrian and bicycle traffic given its proximity to schools; and expressed concerns with the visibility for cars exiting the parking lot and encroaching onto the sidewalk in anticipation of their left or right turns.

Ms. Simonsen noted that currently there were 740 vehicles daily encroaching on the same pedestrian/bicycle transit route, and that the new use would reduce that to approximately 340 vehicles per day, and hopefully improve traffic impacts with the proposed development. Ms. Simonsen advised that the developer was attempting to make the best use of the exiting curb cut and reduce traffic counts.

Further discussion included whether the building could be reduced further near the curb cut even though some square footage would be lost.

City Planner Thomas Paschke clarified that a visibility triangle was not part of that curb cut; and noted that the access functions now and that cars would be encroaching on the sidewalk even with the current use with no building, and would do so no matter the use for the proposed building.

Councilmember Roe, while recognizing the concerns for vehicles encroaching on to the sidewalk, opined that in his experience, traffic seldom stopped before the sidewalk; and expressed concern that such a condition may create an unnecessary hardship for the applicant to address a problem without obvious resolution. Councilmember Roe sought additional information from the applicant related to existing and proposed storm water management on the site.

Ms. Simonsen and Mr. Paschke responded that initial feedback from the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) and the City was that their storm water management plan met current requirements, pretreatment and rate control practices. Ms. Simonsen advised that they had bid out pavers seeking to provide additional pervious surface for the parking lot; however, she anticipated that the cost would be economically prohibitive.

Additional discussion included proposed use and size of the west side service door as a fire exit; the applications exploration of adding additional doors anticipating future uses and the larger window installations for easier change-out to doors if future uses should warrant that; marketability of the building based on the office building having a common entrance through a main door rather than a retail bay; fire rating and construction material considerations and requirements; and potential creation of additional islands to increase water drainage of the parking lot, since there were an additional five parking spaces above City Code requirements; and exterior materials proposed.

Mayor Klausing and Councilmembers thanked Wellington for their responsiveness to previously-expressed concerns and comments.