

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: January 13, 2016

TITLE: 6001 Gemini Drive – PD(GDP-SIP) for  
“Grandview Commons Town Center.” 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Ald. Dist. (39063)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: January 13, 2016

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Sheri Carter, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart, Lois Braun-Oddo and John Harrington.

\*This item was taken out of order at the request of Alder Hall.\*

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of January 13, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of an Amended PD(GDP-SIP) for “Grandview Commons Town Center” located at 6001 Gemini Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Munson, representing Grayrock at Grandview, LLC; Michael Christopher, and Joseph Lee, representing DSI Real Estate. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was Chris Laurent.

This project predated the new Zoning Code and was a groundbreaking project. In 2014 they expanded the project with the addition of 70 acres to the north, and have been working to implement a broad spectrum of different initiatives in this neighborhood for housing, park space and transportation. Realizing the town center has been the most difficult aspect. Working with City staff to refine the plan for the town center created a much more compact mixed-use walkable district framed around the streets. They have tried marketing what was approved for the “B Block” for many years, but have gotten no interest from potential renters/lessees. They have arrived at a crossroads and need to refine the previous approval in order to continue the built environment. The resulting pattern presented has buildings out to the street, four-sided architecture, sidewalk connections, landscaping throughout to create an environment that reinforces and reinvigorates the town center. The central spine is shown through the entire site, a plaza space has been created on the western side of the spine with shade and a gathering area, and a public space along North Star Drive. The retaining wall along North Star creates additional steps in that elevation that is softened with landscaping and creates a more open setting on this side. Additional height has been incorporated as well to add second story mezzanine space on North Star Drive.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Something more exciting could be substituted for the small ornamental trees.
- The planters almost feel tacked along that wall.
- B5 is still my biggest issue with this.

- One of the big challenges on this site is the grade. We looked at relocating B5 but it would have to come way up in relationship to Gemini Drive and creates a lot of issues of trying to get this area to come down to Gemini and have ADA routes. Turning that lifts everything up. The other thing you see in the report is that Traffic Engineering is insisting that this line up, that is a condition of approval, which doesn't leave us a lot of room to move that building up into that position without reducing that. It's a compromise.
- We looked at a lot of iterations of this. We looked at the geology of the site, but because of that and some other aspects of the site, it just didn't work.
- The corner of B5 is higher?
  - Yes. We reached out to the Compass Group and had them take a look to see if we could receive certification, and the answer was no. But there are some potential things we could integrate from that, and learn from that, so we have been looking at these to double check. We did end up back where we started at the end of the last presentation, but it's not without having gone through a lot of additional analysis to see what could be done.
- You could get rid of some of the parking spaces and put in some shade trees.
  - I don't disagree. But in talking to possible tenants, we hear that there is not enough parking and not enough circulation through the site. We're trying to create a hybrid new urbanist town center that is still within the context of the reality of the retailers, and they're driving a lot of those decisions. We agree, less parking would be great.
- You have some greenspaces where maybe you could reduce or relocate the bike parking and add trees.
- I'd like to see more trees on that southern edge.
- When you sit down with Traffic Engineering, I think their comment of not allowing any parking along Gemini Drive.
  - That actually exists. What's different is we were trying to encourage a crosswalk connection there, and that may be something that they don't support. But the parking itself is already built. One of the things we'll be doing next is going back to all the departments and making sure we understand all the comments. We fully intend to fight for and keep that parking.
- You have to have two driveways?
  - Yes, and it's really a function of how we get fire access on the backside.
- The staff report talks about the applicant revising plans to meet LEED goals or premium standard or the Architecture 2030 challenge or other...how can a city require that?
  - (Wendt) At this point in time in conversation, basically the PD requirement, there's language in the standards that discuss sustainability measures, it's looking to some sustainability measures "such as," rather than requiring that. As Brian has stated, they had a consultant go through the development, and getting gold or platinum literally is impossible for them. Even getting certification is virtually impossible, we've discussed this with the applicant and staff is going to have to soften and modify that comment. We'll be working with the applicant to figure out their "laundry list" of sustainable measures they're providing and how does that fit in to the ask of the Planned Development.
  - Of 110 points, 82 are not possible.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Harrington, seconded by Goodhart, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion provided for the following:

- More serviceberries.

- Add more shade trees to the north/south pedestrian walkway crossing the center of the surface parking lot, eliminate stalls and/or rearrange bays of stalls to add more canopy trees at the junctures of the pedestrian walkway, which is dominated by parking stalls.
- Add more canopy trees along the southern edge of the parking lot.
- Rethink that middle corridor, whether pear is the right tree there; add more Serviceberry and shade trees.
- Think of ways to give that corridor some definition.
- The Plan Commission shall strongly consider the recommendation of the Urban Design Commission to keep the parking in the right-of-way along Gemini Drive.
- Look at plantings that don't provide much impact.

No rankings were provided for this project.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 6001 Gemini Drive**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	6	5	5+	-	-	6	6	-

General Comments:

- Balance the internal walkway. #E1 site lighting plan.