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Plan Commission moves forward with rezoning

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By Jennie Miller
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FERNDALE — The next step in the process of making a rezoning proposal come to life is set for Dec. 8, when the Ferndale Plan Commission will continue discussions, and perhaps make a recommendation to the City Council.

Following a three-hour public hearing Nov. 21, in which 43 residents voiced comments and another 150 sat in attendance, the proposal is lacking any official support from the community.

Changes to the proposal are expected, but in what areas and to what extent, it is yet to be made clear by the commissioners.

"I'm sure there will be changes, but that has to be mulled over by the entire commission," said Marsha Scheer, member of the commission and director of Community Development Services. "I'm not sure the commission is all of one mind on this issue."

Scott Galloway, a member of the Ferndale City Council as well as the Plan Commission, had his own theories on what, if anything, will be modified.

"I think there's a consensus on eliminating the parking, or at least drastically scaling it back," he speculated, adding that the R-3 districts might also be addressed. Our goal is not to wipe out single family housing, but to encourage the development of multi-family housing. But we also don't want a situation where someone cannot expand their home and stay in the area or rebuild after a fire."

Galloway also hinted that the mixed-use development plans on Marshall will not be eliminated, but tweaked. He also said that auto dealerships should be included in the C-2 districts, if they are not already.

All in all, the Plan Commission was not put off by the complaints voiced at the public hearing.

"We were very pleased with the turnout and the feedback," Scheer said. "The point is to solicit the concerns and comments of the public, and that was exactly what we were hoping for. We were very glad that people showed up."

Galloway assures that those comments will be taken into consideration when the Plan Commission meets to make a recommendation, and that any decisions will be made with the best interest of the City of Ferndale in mind.

"A year from now, no one will remember this — no one's property will be taken and no one's property will be dramatically devalued," Galloway said. "In five to 10 years, people will realize that we helped move the city ahead."

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