

Meeting Minutes

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Monday, January 6, 2003 - 4:00 P.M. PRESENT: Acting Chairman Elbert Rackow; Karen Aldinger; Lois Feldman; Jeff Zabel; Bud Flood (Excused, Mayor Wescott and Fred Steffen)

ALSO PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. John Gardner; City Clerk Victoria Zdroik; Ald. Sevenich, Barr, Molski, Sowieja; Police Capt. Linda Daubert; Water Dept. Dir., Greg Disher; Pamela Blum; Fred Hopfensperger; J.D. Manville; Mike Fisher; Lynn Markham; Randy Stroik; Kate Garsombke, Journal; Gene Kemmeter, Po. Co. Gazette

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 4. Exception to Height Restriction Ordinance - Second Water Tower at Bliss/cypress Streets
1. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2002 PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

Bud Flood moved, seconded by Jeff Zabel, to recommend approval of the minutes of the December 2, 2002 meeting. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

2. CONDITIONAL USE - ELECTRONIC AMUSEMENT PARLOR - NORTH POINT SHOPPING CENTER (Former Hancock Fabric Store - 200 Division Street)

The request is to operate the amusement parlor in the space previously occupied by Hancock Fabrics in the North Point Shipping Center. The amusement parlor will include arcade games as well as snacks. The site is not near residential uses and the parking is adequate. The proposed use meets the conditional use standards. Staff recommends approval of the request until Dec. 31, 2004. John Gardner stated the Public Protection Committee will be considering this request at their meeting next Monday to comply with an ordinance regulating electronic amusement parlors.

Capt. Linda Daubert of the Police Dept. stated they spent some time with the business operator. We don't have a problem with them trying this location. Any loitering issues will result in police contact right away with the operator.

Lois Feldman stated she is on a committee through Portage County Health and Human Services that is studying alcohol and drug abuse, and expressed concern with the possibility of drugs on the property and how surveillance and control will be handled.

Pamela Blum, applicant, stated they will have video cameras around and will have a security person at all times. We won't allow loitering and the business will be totally supervised.

Ald. Sevenich noted there is a student rental property southwest of this parcel. Since we have two high schools nearby, what are the hours of operation?

Pamela Blum responded during the week they would go until 11:00 PM because we want them to go home and have enough time to study and not loiter. They would open about 10:30-11:00 in the morning because they want to attract the lunch crowd.

Jeff Zabel moved, seconded by Karen Aldinger, to recommend approval of the conditional use request for an electronic amusement parlor at 200 Division Street until December of 2004.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

3. CONDITIONAL USE - APARTMENT PROPOSAL - MARIA DR/SECOND ST. (900 Block of Maria Drive)

John Gardner stated this request was previously tabled to allow discussions between the applicant and neighboring business owners regarding purchasing the property. These owners did not come to an agreement and the applicant is again requesting a conditional use for his project. He provided slides showing the site and noted the request is to develop a single story building with a total of 8 units - six, 2-bedroom units and two, 3-bedroom units and meets the setback requirements. He reviewed the recommended changes with regard to additional windows, extending the gables to break up the long roof area, privacy fencing along the south lot line of the building, drainage and screening. He recommended making the center gable even larger than shown. The neighboring property owner to the south expressed concern with drainage, and that when and if the future street goes through, the council and the property owners acknowledge there will be a street extended through and it will be a future council decision as to how to apportion that special assessment. He recommended approval of the request with these changes.

Bud Flood noted normally we frown on parking in front of a building, but the property is zoned commercial and due to the size of the site, this appears to be the most logical place for the parking. He hopes there is not an enforcement problem with residents of the units having trouble finding places to park.

Ald. Sevenich questioned whether there was consideration about running the fence along the east side because it would be next to a proposed street. It would define the property more.

John Gardner responded the proposal is to put the 6'-7' solid privacy fence along the back side and we would not want a fence of that height on the east side along the proposed street. It would need to be set back further. He feels the property to the east will most likely be used by the occupants as part of the yard for the apartments until the proposed street goes through.

Ald. Sevenich questioned what the rentals would be considering this is a bar area.

J.D. Manville noted they are targeting grad students. The rent is such that they would not be attracting party animals. The units will be more upscale and extremely soundproof.

Elbert Rackow moved, seconded by Bud Flood, to recommend approval of the conditional use request for an apartment development at 925 Maria Drive with the following conditions/restrictions: 1) the east and west end of the buildings include windows to increase light into the units and break up the bland wall of the building ends, and the brick continue around the ends of the building, 2) the gables over the front of the building be changed by extending the gables over the sidewalk and enlarge one gable in the center of the building, to provide more relief to the front of the building, 3) a privacy fence be constructed between the apartments and the home to the south, 4) the proposed design meet all city requirements including directing all drainage to an approved storm sewer and parking lot screening, and 5) if construction does not begin by December of 2003, this approval will expire.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

4. EXCEPTION TO HEIGHT RESTRICTION ORDINANCE - SECOND WATER TOWER AT BLISS/CYPRESS STREETS

John Gardner stated the ordinance was put in place to preserve maneuvering space for the airport. This specific request would be 9' taller than the ordinance would allow in this area. The engineers tell us that water seeks its own level and, therefore, this tower has to be the same height as the existing tower no matter where it is constructed. Other possible sites in the city have the same restrictions, if not more restrictive, than this location. Because there are not any alternatives, staff recommends approval of the exception to the height restriction.

Bud Flood noted there was some discussion last time about relocating the tower on the property. He doesn't understand why they cannot consider moving it more to the northwest.
He would like staff to at least think about it.

Greg Disher responded no matter where we move it on the lot, the individual that complained will see it anyway. No matter where it is located, it will effect some neighbor.

James Miller, 401 Bliss Ave., stated he does not want to live under that tower. It will affect his property values. Was an environmental impact study done being that it is so close to the wetlands.

Greg Disher responded there was no environmental study done. He had the Army Corps of Engineers visit the site and they have no problem with the location as long as we stay out of the wetlands. Disher said the City Assessor said the water tower will not lower the property values.

Jeff Zabel moved, seconded by Lois Feldman, to grant the exception to the height restriction ordinance for the second water tower at Bliss/Cypress Streets.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

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