

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on September 17, 2013, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Tipple, Radtke, Bohlken, Oberbeck, Valitchka

Others Present: Lenz, Hebert, DeSantis, Sundell, Alwin, Wunberg, Engen

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Noting the presence of a quorum, at approximately 5:00 p.m. Mayor Tipple called the meeting to order.

Approve minutes of the August 20, 2013 meeting.

Bohlken motioned to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2013 meeting. Oberbeck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Approve a conditional use at 426 Washington Street to allow for a 36 foot high building sign, in a B4-3, Central Business District (St. Paul's United Church of Christ.)

Robert Sundell, 2502 Petunia Road, said that the multi-color brick wall will be painted a color similar to the rest of the building. At the time the wall is being painted, a sign will be put up to identify the church from the 400 Block and 3rd Street. A smaller sign was chosen as it will stay within the budget.

Dylan Alwin, 723 South 72nd Avenue, said the sign will be simple and will be non-lit. The sign will not be obtrusive at night. There are higher signs at other locations in the downtown area. The sign will look aesthetically pleasing on the building.

Mayor Tipple closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that the conditional use is for extra height – an extra 5 ½ feet. He said staff generally recommends against signs higher than 30' out of concerns for visual pollution, but there are exceptions. He said that one exception is if there is a hardship because of the land, as sign height is measured from curb level. Another exception would be if the sign is placed on an existing building and there is no new structure added. The second instance is the case here. The sign would be in addition to other signage on the property.

Mayor Tipple asked what color will be painted on the side of the building. Sundell answered that it would be a similar color to the brick at the front of the building. Mayor Tipple said that it would be an off-white. Sundell said that is correct.

Radtke asked why the signage is situated toward the back. Sundell answered that it has more visibility from the 400 Block and from a symmetrical stand point it has a better look than in the middle or front.

Valitchka asked why the sign is needed. Sundell answered that there are a lot of things going on at the church. The security building, next door, was purchased several years ago and they are always promoting and looking for new tenants for the building. A current tenant is Open Door, which provides clothing to people who have been released from jail. This was the homeless shelter, which is now moving to the west side. This was the American Indian Resource Center, which has also moved to the west side. There are a number of vacancies. This will help the marketing of the church and make it more visible to the public.

Valitchka asked if someone is standing on the 400 Block what other signs could be seen. Mayor Tipple said the Cobblery, but it is not that high. Lenz said that the Nationwide sign could be seen, but it is not at the highest part of that building. He said on the west side of the river, the Associated Bank sign on the building replaced an existing sign at 50'. Alwin handed out a picture of the Wipfli building signs that he

believed are 50' high. Lenz said he didn't know off the top of his head how tall they were or from where the curb level was measured. Hebert said the curb level was taken from the 1st Street side of the building – and the pictures of the signs from the river side are actually less than 30 feet above curb level.

Bohlken motioned to approve the conditional use at 426 Washington Street to allow for a 36 foot high building sign, in a B4-3, Central Business District. Radtke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on October 8, 2013.

Amend Precise Implementation Plan for 520 North 32nd Avenue to allow for an expansion of the parking lot.

Lenz said that the area is zoned UDD and the change would constitute an amendment to the plan. Just west of the 520 North 32nd Avenue parcel there is a strip of land that will be developed as a parking lot. The parking lot will be used for the building to the south. Staff's comments are that there is currently very little green space on the site – the area labeled landscape area is rocks with no vegetation. The bump outs and islands have grass, but there are no trees. He said our parking lot design standards for commercial districts require a certain amount of the parking lot to be dedicated to tree plantings. He said some islands, adjacent to the driveways, are being proposed and would be a preferable area where trees could be added. Staff also recommends that the stormwater management plan gets reviewed by the Engineering Department. Overall, staff didn't feel that this addition warrants a public hearing and staff recommends approval with the noted conditions.

Valitchka said the black arrow points to a driveway and asked if it was private or a public street. Lenz answered that it is private. Valitchka asked if there were any boulevard trees currently planted. Mayor Tipple answered that he didn't believe so. Valitchka said that islands and boulevards do not have trees and said staff suggested to add trees. Valitchka asked if there are other parcels involved with this UDD. Lenz answered that the current petition would be for 520 North 32nd Avenue. Valitchka said it would be advantageous to put in boulevard trees and asked about the standards with boulevards and sidewalks to find out if the boulevard was a standard spec boulevard where trees could be planted. Lenz said the islands are large enough for tree plantings. He said boulevard trees are a standard practice to buffer a parking lot from the street.

Mayor Tipple asked for the petitioner's reaction. Jim Wunberg, 5709 Winding Drive, said that his concern would be for the vision triangle coming out of the driveway and blocking traffic exiting the parking lot if trees were planted on the boulevard. Lenz again referenced the City's parking lot design standards, and said trees would not completely block visibility from driveways – this is a dead end, private driveway so there is virtually no traffic. Hebert said that an alternative would be to abandon some parking spaces. Wunberg asked if there would be the option of planting trees in the landscaped island. Mayor Tipple said the islands make sense, but this would be in addition to those. Mayor Tipple said he agreed with Lenz that since this is a dead end street, the number of cars isn't a big concern. Mayor Tipple said that if there were large bushes, it would be different – trees can be pruned. Wunberg asked if the existing island would need to be planted with vegetation as well. Mayor Tipple answered that would be preferable. Hebert said that according to the last page of the packet, the landscaping plan appears that it is proposed to add trees as a buffer on the neighboring properties. Wunberg said that is correct, but does not have the specifics on the tree species yet.

Oberbeck asked if more than one parcel is involved with the stormwater drainage. It seems to drain to the road and asked how this parking lot addition may affect the area. Wunberg said that it currently drains to the southwest to a ditch along the north side of the private drive, which drains to a culvert going under the driveway to the building to the west. There is a stormwater pond downstream from there that would accommodate this development. Lenz said that there is a regional stormwater facility to the southwest and that is the reason that staff would like Engineering to review the plan. Hebert said that he spoke with

Engineering, who thought it would work but wanted to verify it.

Wunberg said that the reports stated the address as 530 North 32nd Avenue; it should be 520 North 32nd Avenue.

Valitchka moved to amend the precise implementation plan for 520 North 32nd Avenue to allow for an expansion of the parking lot with the following conditions: (1) planting of trees be in compliance with the City's parking lot design standards, and 2. stormwater requirements shall be verified by the Engineering Department. Oberbeck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on October 8, 2013.

Vacating and discontinuing an unpaved alley abutting 223 and 225 East Thomas Street upon the Petition of Renee Clark, pursuant to Section 66.1003(3), Wis. Stats.

Mayor Tipple said that this item was approved at the last CISM meeting. Lenz said that the petition was signed by both affected property owners. Staff discussed this item with the Director of Public Works and the City Attorney – since both abutting property owners have signed the petition, this vacation can go through CISM and Plan Commission without a public hearing. Both of the owners are in agreement. Lenz said that staff does not have any issues with this vacation.

Bohlken moved to vacate and discontinue an unpaved alley abutting 223 and 225 East Thomas Street upon the Petition of Renee Clark. Valitchka seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Updates and future agenda items for consideration.

There weren't any updates or future agenda items for consideration.

Adjourn.

Radtke moved to adjourn. Valitchka seconded. Motion to adjourn carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, October 15, 2013.