

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on April 15, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Tipple, Marquardt, Radtke, Valitchka, Oberbeck, Nutting (arrived at 6:25 p.m.)

Others Present: Lenz, Hebert, DeSantis, Woldt, Close, Peters, Hazuka, Uttech, Neal, Luecher, Hinner, Lorio, Gisselman, Salzman, Kreager, Ghidorzi, Guld, 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.

Mayor Tipple called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Approve the minutes of the February 18, 2014 meeting.

Oberbeck motioned to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2014 meeting. Radtke seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Approve a conditional use at 835 South 66th Avenue to allow for an online consignment auction location with an outdoor storage area, in a MI, Limited Industrial District (Close).

Brad Woldt said that Homemakers Building Supply has downsized and is looking to lease out half of their building.

Jody Close said that he has 4 locations and would like to expand to this new location. There will be online auctions, about 1 auction per month. It is not a live auction, but the items can viewed.

Wayne Peters said that he worked with Jody to find an alternative location. This is zoned industrial and there are other uses such as heavy equipment sales and outdoor displays. The area is an industrial area with no residential homes. The online auctions do not draw a big crowd. Someone can go in person to view the items, but bid from home. Winners are notified and arrangements are made. There is not a lot of traffic; there are probably 3-4 customers at a time. There are monthly cycles for equipment and household items. Peters said he is an advocate of this type of auction because it makes a lot of sense. The auctions bring favorable prices for the seller.

Mayor Tipple closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that this particular use is not listed in the zoning code, but similar uses are permitted, so this can be approved by conditional use. In the code, screening would be required because there is residential zoning within 500 feet. Staff would recommend a condition of screening for outdoor storage to the south side of the property. Lenz said that the Inspections Department has been in contact with Close for the paving on the outdoor storage area. Staff recommends approval with the condition that screening is installed.

Close asked what the screening would be. Lenz answered that it would be a fence or landscaping with 50% opacity. Close said that would defeat the purpose since the items would be for public display. Lenz said that the south side, the side near the park, would need to be screened. The side facing the street would still be visible. Lenz said the property borders a residential zoning district and even though it's not used for residential homes, screening is required by code.

Close asked if it was acceptable to install a chain-link fence with slats in. Hebert answered yes. Mayor Tipple said that on the map, R1 zoning indicates where the screening would need to be. Peters said that part of the area is blacktop already. Close said that people won't be able to see the merchandise.

Valitchka asked if they were aware of the fencing requirements before applying. Peters said he is not clear on where the fence has to be. Close asked if there would be a height limit for the screening. Hebert answered that the minimum to maximum height would be 6-8' for a fence. Valitchka asked what the current surface is that items would be stored on outside. Close answered that it is grass and sod. Valitchka asked if there is an area of pavement from the parking lot to the west. Close answered to the north. Mayor Tipple asked if it will need to be paved. Lenz thought the grass area should be paved if it is going to be used for storage, but there is currently a paved area that was believed to be the original storage area. Close said the equipment will tear up the pavement. Valitchka asked if it were a concrete slab, would it get torn. Close answered no. Valitchka said it will be awfully expensive to pave the entire storage area and the fencing will be fairly well removed from Sunnyvale.

Valitchka motioned approve the conditional use at 835 South 66th Avenue to allow for an online consignment auction location with an outdoor storage area, in a M1, Limited Industrial District with the conditions that screening from the south would not be required and the outdoor storage area could remain turf at this time. Radtke seconded.

Marquardt asked what types of equipment would be brought in that would tear up asphalt, but not tear up grass. Close answered farm and construction equipment. Marquardt said the equipment will tear up the topsoil also. Close responded that is easier to maintain. Close said that all his other sites are gravel and sod. Mayor Tipple asked if gravel would be more palatable than the grass. Valitchka said that he was introducing a sense of reasonableness. It was intended not to require a large paved surface at this time. Mayor Tipple said that it could be checked in 6 months or 1 year. Lenz said that it could be monitored, but the city tries to enforce parking on paved surfaces in other areas of the city. Lenz said that he is not sure if engineering has looked into this in enough detail to know what will happen with rainwater and drainage.

Oberbeck said that he is concerned with storm water and how things will be tracked onto the adjacent roadway. The construction sites call for pads to keep the dirt and gravel of the roads. This needs to be addressed. Where is the equipment loaded and unloaded? At the minimum, it should be on a gravel surface. The storm water needs to be looked at also.

Hebert asked about how much of the storage area will be regularly used. Close answered that anything that is rubber doesn't hurt the pavement, but the bigger stuff would. The bigger items would go on the grass. Hebert asked how much of the grass area will be used for storage. Close answered ¼ this year. Hebert asked if equipment is moved in and out with each auction. Close said yes, it is rotated. Hebert asked if the gate is open during the day for viewing. Close answered yes and there is a walkway available for after hours. The yard will be closed after dark. Hebert said that he would recommend keeping the screening on the south side and to allow the unpaved area as an overflow area for equipment. Valitchka said he would like to amend the motion to require screening on the south side and allow the grass as an overflow storage area. Radtke accepted the change to the motion.

Oberbeck said the fencing does not seem to be real effective and it is set back away from the area. Oberbeck said he is not sure of the intent and the softball diamonds are not going away. Lenz said the recommendation is coming straight from the ordinance. Conditions can be applied to protect the public interest but they may not apply in all cases. Oberbeck asked if vehicles parked on the grass would have motors. Close answered yes. Oberbeck said that contaminants could leak into the grass area and there could be environmental issues. The city requires a paved or all-weather surface for motor vehicle parking. Close said the business slows down in the winter. There will be very little of the grass area used in the winter. Oberbeck said he would like to see the use of an all-weather surface and cannot support this without a surface other than the grass. The motioned failed 1-4.

Valitchka asked Close if he was unaware of the fencing and surface requirements. Close was said he was

not aware of the surface requirements but was aware of the fencing requirement.

Radtke motioned to approve the conditional use at 835 South 66th Avenue to allow for an online consignment auction location with an outdoor storage area, in a M1, Limited Industrial District with the conditions that screening would not be needed, and the parking of vehicles will need to have a minimum of a gravel area. Oberbeck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on May 13, 2014.

PUBLIC HEARING: Approve a conditional use at 811 North 3rd Avenue to allow for a community center, in a B2, Community Service District (Hazuka).

Michelle Hazuka, 319 North 3rd Avenue, said the program has been run for 18 years and this will be their 4th move. They have grown to capacity at the current space and are looking to relocate. They have had a hard time finding a place that would fit their needs. Uttech told them about a 7,000 square feet space is available and they are currently going through building negotiations. The move would be made in mid-late summer.

Cary Uttech, said that he owns the Christian Book Store property and is looking for someone to lease the space. The area will fit the proposed use. There are 3,500 square feet on the main level and 3,500 square feet in the basement.

Barbara Neal said that she is a member of the clubhouse and it is more than a business. It is a valuable member of the community. This is a benefit to the community, not a detriment.

Arnold Luechau, 724 North 3rd Avenue, said he owns a business a block away and wants to know what this is all about and what will happen. Hazuka said that the program is affiliated the North Central Healthcare providing outpatient services for mental health issues. There are typically 20-30 people a day who are assisted from 8:00-5:00 and they are not open on the weekends. It is a nationally accredited program.

Mayor Tipple closed the public hearing.

Mayor Tipple read an email from Joe Ruelle.

Lenz said that he received a couple questions from neighbors about the program, but there wasn't any formal opposition. The community center matches the definition in the zoning code and this location would be in a similar area as their current facility. It will be located on the same street, just a move to better suit the business. There will be plenty of off-street parking. Staff is not aware of other issues from the current location, other than the recent email. Staff recommends approval.

Valitchka asked Uttech about plans in the negotiations to address the painting. Uttech said that the email was regarding the current place of business. The new business location is landscaped with a metal building and is in good shape. Valitchka asked if there are plans for new signage. Hazuka said that the signs were donated and new signage is being looked into.

Mayor Tipple asked if staff would approve the signage. Lenz answered that a permit would be needed, but it is a commercial district and staff could approve it.

Radtke motioned to approve the conditional use at 811 North 3rd Avenue to allow for a community center, in a B2, Community Service District. Valitchka seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. The item will go to Common Council on May 13, 2014.

PUBLIC HEARING: Rezone 2105 North 2nd Street from M1, Limited Industrial District and 2102 North 2nd Street from M2, General Industrial District to B2, Community Service District (Hinner).

Elizabeth Hinner, 2105 North 2nd Street, said that she would like to change the zoning to B2 with a conditional use for an outdoor dining area. The location is kitty-corner to Athletic Park. A residential area is to the east, which is to the side and back of the property. Hinner showed a rendering of the exterior of the building. The property was the Children's Theatre and prior to that it was Marathon Press. The property will be maintained and updated. A rendering showing 6 tables for an outdoor dining area was presented.

Gary Gisselman, Alderperson for District 5, said that he is a neighbor of the project and looks forward to the project. This will be a nice sprucing up of the neighborhood and will help revitalize this part of Wausau, especially the Wausau Avenue area. Gisselman said he looks forward to the new neighbors and will be a great addition.

Mayor Tipple closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that there will be 2 items on the agenda for this project. The first item will be to rezone this property and a property owned by CDA, from manufacturing to commercial. He said commercial zoning would be more complementary to the area, than the current industrial zoning.

Oberbeck motioned to rezone 2105 North 2nd Street from M1, Limited Industrial District and 2102 North 2nd Street from M2, General Industrial District to B2, Community Service District. Marquardt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 4-0. Valitchka abstained from voting on this item. This item will go to Common Council on May 13, 2014.

PUBLIC HEARING: Approve a conditional use at 2105 North 2nd Street to allow for outdoor dining, in a B2, Community Service District (Hinner).

Hinner said that the request for the conditional use would be for the outdoor dining area. A fence will be installed for screening near the alley. The chain linked fence will be replaced.

Mayor Tipple closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that the conditional use is technically for the outdoor dining area which is being converted from an existing loading dock. The restaurant itself is a permitted use in the present and proposed zoning districts. The chain link fence running along the east side is not necessarily required for screening. There is a retaining wall that blocks the loading dock from the alley to the east. He said the business hours will be until the dinner customers are finished, which will not be until bar time. Staff sees no issues with the outdoor dining area as proposed.

Radtke motioned to approve the conditional use at 2105 North 2nd Street to allow for outdoor dining, in a B2, Community Service District. Oberbeck seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0. Valitchka abstained from voting on this item. This motion will go to Common Council on May 13, 2014.

Amend Unified Development District at 901 North 6th Street to allow for a counseling agency.

Lenz said that a new use is being proposed for the vacant building, previously the Wright Place.

Noreen Salzman and Sandra Kreager introduced themselves. Salzman said that Carolyn Meier is going to be retiring from the business operations and is just going to be doing therapy. Salzman said the current facility is very tiny and they hope to accommodate more therapists. It is hoped they will add a massage

therapist.

Lenz said that this would be an amendment to the existing UDD zoning. Plan Commission can require a public hearing, if there is a substantial change. Timing was an issue for the petitioners. They came to staff just after the deadline passed for a public hearing. The petitioners went door-to-door in the neighborhood explaining the proposed business. Staff feels this is more effective than a public hearing. Staff does not feel that a public hearing is necessary. The proposed hours would be daytime and the number of people would be quite smaller than was previously approved for a restaurant. Staff recommends approval of the amendment as presented.

Mayor Tipple asked the petitioner about the reaction from the neighborhood. Salzman said that on April 8 and April 12, letters were hand delivered and they heard very supportive and very positive comments. The letter was handed out to the commission members.

Radtke asked how far they brought the letters. Salzman answered that they went within a radius of 2 blocks. Salzman said that they had 35 copies and only 1 was left at the end.

Valitchka motioned to amend the unified development district and 901 North 6th Street to allow for a counseling agency. Radtke seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on April 22, 2014.

Amend the Precise Implementation Plan for 1800 Westwood Center Boulevard to allow for new signage.

Chris Ghidorzi said that West Business Services is in the old Wausau Insurance building. The building was built in 1982 as a hotel conference center. It served the needs of Wausau Insurance very well. As the partnership was put together, the building was repurposed. WPS had a significant presence with 800 jobs coming into the facility. Over time, they have downsized due to contracts expiring. West Business Services has expanded and have approximately 400 employees and love the Wausau workforce. Ghidorzi said that they are looking for approval for the West Business Services signage. The partnership supports the request and has been working on the sign since September 2013.

Lenz said that the staff report outlines some concerns and thoughts regarding the sign. This was put together on an observational perspective of the sign and looking at the surrounding area. There are concerns of the precedence of the sign. Rasmussen College has a pylon sign that faces the freeway, so it is not unheard of, but this would be the first multi-tenant office building with an individual tenant sign. Lenz questioned whether additional signs would be requested or if the number of signs would be limited.

Mayor Tipple asked if there is a way to affix the sign to the face of the building. The sign sticks out and seems to be out of character and seems to detract from the business. Ghidorzi said that there are 3 tenants, WPS, Liberty Mutual, and West Business Services. WPS and Liberty Mutual do not want to be on the sign. West Business Services has committed to pay for the sign themselves and doesn't think the other signage serves their needs.

Valitchka asked if Ghidorzi was familiar with the staff report. Ghidorzi answered yes. Valitchka asked what the intent of the sign was. Ghidorzi answered that West Business Services is a major employer and has a tremendous support for our workforce and would like to be a prominent fixture in our community. Valitchka asked if they need the signage for people to come to the building. Ghidorzi said the sign would be smaller than Rasmussen which is at the maximum size and has a full color reader board. Valitchka asked if the WPS sign would be removed and if this sign could go where theirs is. Ghidorzi said the sign would stay. Valitchka asked about the vertical heights limits. Lenz answered that there is a maximum of 30' tall, but can go higher with a conditional use.

Oberbeck said the sign looks like a billboard and said he is having a hard time with this type of sign. Oberbeck asked Ghidorzi if a ground sign could be looked at that would have more of an aesthetic appeal. A lot of sign grants are reviewed with Main Street and proportions are always looked at and said this sign seems to be out of character. Ghidorzi said what is being shown is their logo. A monument sign would get obstructed because of the shrubbery. A billboard is a good thing and is used to attract people and to get more employees. There is vacant space in the community and additional employees would be a positive thing for the Wausau area. Oberbeck asked if there are any other places on the site so the sign would not be competing with the building. Ghidorzi said that due to the topography of the site, it is a challenge. The sign placement wouldn't disturb the parking and it would be easy to get power to.

Valitchka asked if the square and the word west is the logo. Ghidorzi answered yes, it is part of the sign package and is a corporate standard. Valitchka said the sign is out of character. The sign detracts from the architecture of the building. Valitchka asked if a monument sign would accomplish the same goal for West Business Services or if freeway traffic is wanted. Ghidorzi said that at time there will be a lease expiration and said that they are working with them. Ghidorzi said they have tried to downsize the sign. Dave Guld said that they have worked directly with the company. The signage for Rasmussen College is larger and has a message center. This sign will not have a reader board.

Mayor Tipple asked if the sign would be lit. Guld answered yes.

Valitchka said that there could be some compromises. The city is trying to set standards and asked if the grasses could be mowed or the vertical height be reviewed. Valitchka said that Rasmussen is lower topographically. This was confirmed. Ghidorzi said everything could be an alternative and asked what is being directed to take back to the tenant. Valitchka said the commission would not be directing, but voting. Valitchka asked if a nicely positioned sign that is smaller and less vertical that could be more tasteful with the architecture would be out of the question. Guld said this is would not be out of the question, but is not sure of the maintenance costs. The Subway sign is 30' and is a big rectangle sign with the Subway logo. Valitchka asked if there is room for the type of approach for a monumental sign landscaped into the property.

Nutting arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Ghidorzi said the size could be cut down, but it may look awkward if it is cut down too much. A monument sign could be done. Valitchka said the existing grass could be mowed.

Oberbeck said that Wausau has revamped some of the Industrial Park signs and it is quite attractive. This would start to set some standards for the area. The city and state is trying to get away from pylon and billboard signs. It is important to see a complementary building with complementary architecture.

Marquardt asked how far away the sign would be from the building. Ghidorzi answered the site plan was not brought. Marquardt said the sign could be distorted which may be throwing the commission off.

Valitchka asked if the application would remain open if the commission held off to vote. This was affirmed. Valitchka motioned to table amending the Precise Plan for 1800 Westwood Center Boulevard to allow for new signage and ask for a site plan and to consult with West Business Services for alternative monument signs with landscaping. Radtke seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Mayor Tipple asked if there is a date that this needed to be done. Ghidorzi answered it could go to the next meeting.

Approve petition for annexation – NWA Holdings LLC, 2221 Northwestern Avenue (082-2808-064-

0995, 082-2808-071-0988, and 082-2808-071-0987, Town of Weston)

Lenz said that this is not in the city and we do not have addresses which is why they were referred to by the pin numbers. This land is part of the proposed residential development discussed at a previous meeting. Staff hadn't received the signed petition for annexation last time and the developer is interested in moving forward. This would bring the land into the city. There has been a lot of discussion about the development. The UDD zoning will need to be established for this property and a Precise Implementation Plan will need to be approved. CISM unanimously approved the annexation at their last meeting.

Marquardt motioned to approve the petition for annexation – NWA Holdings LLC, 2221 Northwestern Avenue. Valitchka seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 6-0. This item will go to Common Council on May 13, 2014.

Accept dedication of the north portion of right-of-way on Talon Lane.

Marquardt said that last year some of this was accepted, but not all was annexed. All of the property has now been annexed to the city. CISM approved this unanimously.

Radtke motioned to accept the dedication of the north portion of right-of-way on Talon Lane. Oberbeck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 6-0. This item will go to Common Council on April 22, 2014.

Discuss update to city of Wausau Comprehensive Plan

Lenz said that the current plan was adopted in 2006 and will need to be amended. In order to amend it within 10 years of the adoption date, staff will need to start the process soon and put together some rough ideas to move it forward. It is recommended that the Plan Commission act as an advisory committee. The Plan Commission will oversee the amendments and drive the process. A little bit of time could be set aside every month to discuss the plan. Lenz said he spoke with the director of regional planning, who are working with the county's comprehensive plan. He said it would be beneficial to work with regional planning to save money and be a partner. Valitchka said he is in favor of staff working with regional planning, and advised staff to continue developing a strategy for the plan.

Discuss checklist requirement of Unified Development Districts.

Mayor Tipple asked that this item be moved to the next meeting, as there is another meeting scheduled shortly and to give members some time before the next meeting. Valitchka said that this checklist was very helpful. Mayor Tipple said it would be a good time to make any necessary changes to the checklist.

Adjourn.

Radtke moved to adjourn. Nutting seconded. Motion to adjourn carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, May 20, 2014.