

Plan Commission Minutes
January 11, 2021
Approved January 25, 2021

Minutes
City of Monona
Plan Commission
Monday January 11, 2021

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (7:00 pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Kristie Goforth, Mr. Chris Homburg, Ms. Coreen Fallat, Mr. Robert Stein, Ms. Susan Fox and Mr. Josh Peterson

Absent: Mr. Brian Holmquist

Also Present: Doug Plowman, City Planner and Elisa Guerrero, City Planning Intern

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Ms. Fallat, seconded by Alder Goforth, to approve the minutes of November 23, 2020 carried with one correction.

Appearances

The following people registered comments related to the Devon Self-Storage Zoning Permit (Case No. 2-015-2020):

- David Nectow – Owner Pure Hockey – Registered Against
- Thomas Mathias – Cottonwood Financial (2401 W. Broadway) – Registered Against
- James Yunek – 6106 Queens Way – Registered Against
- Kelly Slack – 5128 Winnequah Road – Registered Against
- Greg Topoleski – 6206 Bridge Road – Registered Against
- Peggy Ladwig – 407 Woody Lane – Registered Against
- Valerie Burns – 5704 Cove Circle - Registered Against
- Judy McNeal – 26 Waunona Wood Court (Madison) - Registered Against
- Andrea Smetana – 607 Nichols Road - Registered Against
- Danielle Weum – 901 Schultz Place - Registered Against
- Christelle Guedot – No address listed - Registered Against
- Jane Raymond – 4001 Monona Dr. - Registered Against
- Beth Esser – 6009 Ridgewood Ave. - Registered Against
- Chris Bondurant – 6209 Midwood Ave - Registered Against
- Angie Fiscus – 5514 Winnequah Road - Registered Against
- John Kinzing – 4711 Midmoor Road - Registered Against
- Darleen Laufenberg – 403 Frost Woods Road - Registered Against
- Jennifer Pfluger – 6218 Bridge Road - Registered Against
- Kevin Alexander – 4807 Wallace Ave. - Registered Against
- Marsha Herman – 3837 Monona Drive - Registered Against
- Ann Boland – 609 Nichols Road - Registered Against
- Russell Fichter – 101 Ferchland Place - Registered Against
- Roy Boyd – 443 Falcon Circle - Registered Against
- Erin Quinn – 5507 Winnequah Trail - Registered Against
- Heidi Duss – 4906 Schofield St. - Registered Against
- James Hoelzel – No address - Registered Against
- Brie Chapa – 5707 Pheasant Hill Rd. - Registered Against
- Nicholas Taylor – 5405 Flamingo Road - Registered Against

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- Jennifer Stofflet – 6010 Ridgewood Ave. - Registered Against
- Steve Doran - Galway Companies - Registered Against
- Scott Pauli – 6010 Ridgewood Ave. Registered Against
- Denise Strom – Real Estate Portfolio Manager for McDonald's LLC - Registered Against
- Ken Roseth – WPS – Neutral
- Jennifer Canchola – 6413 Westgate Road - Registered Against
- Patrick DePula – 6101 Ridgewood Ave - Registered Against
- Former Mayor Robb Kahl - Registered Against
- Brett Riemen – Lakestone Properties (Owner of South Towne Office Park) - Registered Against

Mr. David Israel, owner of South Towne Mall, appeared and expressed opposition to the Devon Self-Storage proposal. He said that self-storage is not a good use for a retail space and that he and the other tenants of the mall would prefer a retail use in the space. He mentioned that Floor and Décor had expressed interest in using part of the space. He also said that if Hobby Lobby does not renew when their lease is up in 2-3 years, it will be much harder for him to attract a new retail tenant to his space if the Devon Self-storage proposal is approved.

Ms. Sandy Golden, Senior VP at CBRE and leasing representative for Mr. Israel, agreed that self-storage was not a good use for the proposed space. The relatively low traffic of storage uses is not conducive to customer traffic for the rest of the stores in the mall.

Mr. Peter Glaser, a retail broker at CBRE, expressed opposition to the Devon self-storage proposal, stating that it would not generate enough customer traffic to benefit other tenants in the mall. He said that the site has many advantages for a retail business in his professional opinion.

Ms. Kalyn Engwall, a representative of Floor and Décor, said that their business is one of two big box retailers growing right now, and that they have interest in opening a location in this retail space.

Brett Riemen, owner of the South Towne Office Park, expressed his opposition to the self-storage proposal. He said that office park tenants want walkability around their office space, in the same way residential tenants do, and that a self-storage use would not add to that. He said that it could be harder for him to lease office space if the self-storage use went in so close to his office park.

Unfinished Business

A. Public Hearing on Request by Devon Self-Storage, LLC for Approval of a Zoning Permit for a New Use at 2101 W. Broadway. (Case No. 2-015-2020)

Mr. Dan O'Callaghan, attorney representing Devon Self-Storage, summarized the self-storage proposal, describing it as a high-quality project that would be a good addition to the area. He acknowledged the comments from community members and said they would like to address community concerns.

Ms. Jeanine Landsinger, owner of the 2101 W. Broadway property, explained that she purchased the property in 2015 and had hoped that Shopko would be a longer-term tenant than it ended up being. Ms. Landsinger explained that the property went on the market in early 2019 and they have made every effort to find a good retail tenant for the space. Given how large the space is, it has been extremely difficult to find a possible tenant or buyer, and they have received no viable retail offers. She explained that Floor and Décor sent a letter of interest, but were only interested in part of the space and asked for many renovations which would have been financially impossible for her. She shared that Devon Self-Storage contacted her in mid-2020 with their proposal and while it's not an ideal retail use, they are proposing many beneficial site

improvements, including the outlot developments. Ms. Jenny Lisak shared an overview of the leasing efforts that have occurred for the space, and how limited the interest was for the site. Mr. Greg Mackay, of Devon Self-Storage, gave a summary of the proposal, including the layout and security features of the storage facility, as well as the landscaping, lighting and parking improvements they plan to make to the site. With the proposed improvements, the real estate taxes for the property would grow. He further explained the two outlot developments they propose, in order to create some new retail space for the mall. Mr. Mackay said that he understood that retail would be the preferred use, but noted the general decline of retail, even before the pandemic.

Mr. Kevin Yeska, the project's site engineer with JSD Professional Services, added that his company approached the project with the intent of beautifying the site, including improvements to the landscaping and parking lot.

B. Consideration of Action on Request by Devon Self-Storage, LLC for Approval of a Zoning Permit for a New Use at 2101 W. Broadway. (Case No. 2-015-2020)

Planner Plowman stated that this proposal required a zoning permit because it is a new use and because the site has been vacant for more than 6 months. He suggested points of discussion for the Commission, including the compatibility of the new use with Comprehensive Plan land use maps (given that storage is listed as a light-industrial use, not commercial), the cross-access agreements and parking requirements, traffic circulation on the site, and the proposed parking/landscaping/lighting improvements. He also shared comments from the various City department heads, included in the staff report.

Mr. Homburg said that the overriding issue that the Commission needed to decide on is whether to allow a storage use in the Community Design District (CDD). He said that the CDD is not meant for storage uses, rather the light-industrial district is, and therefore the Commission would need to decide if it is an appropriate use before discussing the details of the proposal. He explained that because most of the public comments had been submitted right before the start of the meeting, the Commission members hadn't had sufficient time to consider all of the new information presented. He added that the Commission should consider the compatibility before proceeding with any other review. In order to review in a systematic way, he suggested the Commission needed more time to consider than just at this meeting.

Mr. Stein said that he appreciated the project presentation, and stated that the proposal includes many short-term benefits, including all of the improvements to the property. He added that the City's future land use map shows the site as a commercial retail use, not as light industrial, and said he wasn't sure that changing land use maps is the best course of action. Mr. Stein also said that, while the outlot developments would be a nice addition, they are not technically part of this application.

Mr. Peterson agreed that the central issue is the appropriateness of the use. He pointed to the decline of retail, and said that the information about lack of interest in the site from big box retailers was helpful context. He also stated that if the self-storage proposal is turned down, the space might sit empty, which is also not beneficial. It was added that as the parcel is zoned today, this proposal does not comply.

Ms. Fox agreed that more time to process the information given and the public comment would be helpful. She echoed the concerns about changes to land use maps, and pointed out that this use would not be as compatible with the nearby residential developments in the City as a retail use was. The use is not what was envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan or the parking agreement that described the entire lot as a shopping center. She agreed that there were benefits to the proposal and that there is a need for storage within the City.

Alder Goforth said she was glad for all of the public engagement around this proposal. She clarified for those attending the meeting that the City does not have the power to choose which tenant, retail or otherwise, gets chosen for the site, necessarily, rather they can evaluate the proposals that are presented. It is hard to see all of South Towne mall as a large redevelopment site, because there are so many different individual storeowners and other stakeholders. Alder Goforth said that the site has many attractive qualities, and would have even more with the large investment Devon Self-Storage is proposing. She said that one of the characteristics of the CDD is to serve the employment needs of the community, but that the self-storage would have very few employees, which was cause for concern. She asked Mr. Mackay about Devon's other locations and their market research. Mr. Mackay answered that they have no other locations in the Madison area, and that they have done extensive market research that found significant demand for the use. She also asked about their security plans and Mr. Mackay explained their camera and private firm monitoring system, adding that they see Monona as a safe location.

Ms. Fallat thanked everyone for their comments and presentation, echoing the opinions of other Commissioners about appropriateness of use. She pointed to the Comprehensive Plan, which uses the idea of compatibility to guide future development, and said that the comments from neighbors had concerns about storage being a compatible use.

Alder Moore agreed that the Commission needs more time to digest and consider the many new comments and new information, suggesting that the proposal be tabled and considered again at the next meeting, so that Commissioners could consult the Comprehensive Plan and City Codes.

A motion by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to table the Zoning Permit for a Self-Storage facility at 2101 W. Broadway passed unanimously.

New Business

A. Public Hearing on Request by Brittni Andow for Approval of a Zoning Permit for a New Use at 6007B Monona Drive. (Case No. 2-001-2021)

Ms. Andow, owner of Empire Nutrition, explained that her nutrition club is similar to a coffee shop, where people come and go quickly, but will serve meal-replacements shakes and teas instead of coffee. She will also provide 1-on-1 nutrition coaching. She shared that her goal is to bring awareness of health and wellness to the Monona community.

B. Consideration of Action on Request by Brittni Andow for Approval of a Zoning Permit for a New Use at 6007B Monona Drive. (Case No. 2-001-2021)

Planner Plowman explained that this zoning permit was required because the site had been vacant for more than 6 months. He explained the typical parking constraints in strip mall locations like this, but explained that there would not likely be conflict between this use and the other businesses because they have different peak times.

The Commission members thanked Ms. Andow for her interest in Monona and said that this would be a good and unique use for the space and the City. Ms. Fallat asked if Ms. Andow would be serving anything other than shakes and teas, and Ms. Andow answered that no, she would not be serving any food items.

Ms. Fox pointed out that other restaurants in the strip mall have lunch rushes, and asked if this would create a parking conflict. Ms. Andow said she would not expect more than 10 customers, maximum, at one time and that they would not be parked for long, so it shouldn't create a conflict. Appointments for the wellness club are scheduled one or two at a time and after hours, so they also should not create parking conflicts.

A motion by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Mr. Stein, to approve a Zoning Permit for a Nutrition Club at 6007B Monona Drive, according to Chapter 480 of the Zoning Code of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances with the following conditions of approval:

1. All required permits from state and local agencies shall be obtained. The applicant shall contact the City of Monona Building Inspection Department to confirm requirements.
2. A separate sign permit shall be obtained from the Plan Commission for any additional signage on the building.

The motion passed unanimously.

C. Prehearing Conference on Request by Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS), Represented by DLR Group, for Consideration of a Zoning Permit for New Construction at 1765 W. Broadway. (Case No. 2-002-2021)

Mr. Stein recused himself from the discussion.

Ken Roseth, from WPS, gave an overview of the new building project, which will combine their current inbound and outbound mail processes and include a data center to support mailing operations.

Matt Johnson, the project architect, gave a further detail about the project, describing the building itself, in addition to parking and stormwater aspects of the design. He explained that the building is being designed with flexibility in mind, so that it can be adapted to future uses and needs of WPS, especially as work processes change over time. He explained that the loading dock would be at the back of the building to streamline delivery truck traffic and to minimize interactions between trucks and pedestrians on the rest of the campus.

Alder Moore asked about sustainability features for the building, and Mr. Roseth replied that the roof will have a solar array and that they will pursue Energy Star certification.

Mr. Peterson asked, given the discussion about the appropriateness of a self-storage use earlier in the meeting, if this building would be primarily a storage facility. Mr. Johnson explained that the building is for materials handling, rather than long-term storage. Mr. Homburg said that he also thought of the storage implication, but didn't think it actually applied to this building because material is moving in and out of the building, and because there is office space in the building as well.

Mr. Homburg suggested WPS incorporate more brick into their design, to match other buildings on their campus. Bret Newcomb, the project contractor, described the materials being used on the building exterior, explaining that they are designed to fit with the rest of the campus. Mr. Homburg commented that he did not see any issues with parking and expected them to be able to screen the loading dock from the Beltline adequately with their landscaping.

The other Commission members said that they thought the project looked good and Alder Goforth suggested commissioning a mural for one wall of the building.

D. Prehearing Conference on Request by Monona Grove School District, Represented by Point of Beginning, Inc. for Consideration of a Zoning Permit for a New Artificial Turf Field and Replacement Running Track at 4400 Monona Drive. (Case No. 2-003-2021)

Mr. Homburg and Ms. Fox recused themselves from the discussion.

Mr. Andrew Geffert, the project engineer, provided an overview of the project, described the artificial turf field proposed and explained that the track would be widened to accommodate soccer. He briefly mentioned the stormwater plans included in the application. It was clarified that the project extent was just the track and field, with no changes proposed to the lighting, bleachers or parking area.

Alder Goforth asked if water runoff from the field would affect the downhill neighbors to the north, and Ms. Fallat asked how the impervious nature of the field affected stormwater runoff. Mr. Geffert explained less water would be running off the field than runs off now, so the downhill neighbors should not be adversely affected. He then explained that the artificial turf is not impervious in reality, but that they are required to run models as if it is. He then explained the drainage system below the field.

The commission members said that the project looked good and had no other comments.

Reports of Staff and Commission Members

- A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.
 1. Economic Development Update
Planner Plowman told the Commission that he and City Administrator Gadow planned to give a presentation on economic development within Monona at the next meeting, to answer questions from previous meetings about the development process in the City.
 2. Potential Upcoming Plan Commission Items
Planner Plowman said that agenda items from this meeting would be up for consideration at future meetings, and that a new retail zoning permit would likely be on the agenda for the January 25 meeting.
 3. Upcoming Meetings: January 25, 2021 and February 8, 2021 (Tentative).
- B. Plan Commission Requests for Information from City Staff.
Ms. Fallat requested that the 2010 Economic Development Plan be included in the Economic Development presentation for the next meeting.

Adjournment

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to adjourn carried. (9:06pm)

Respectfully submitted by:
Elisa Guerrero, City Planning Intern