

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE KENTWOOD PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023, 7:00 P.M.
COMMISSION CHAMBERS

- A. Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.
- B. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Holtrop.
- C. Roll Call:
Members Present: Bill Benoit, Dan Holtrop, Sandra Jones, Alex Porter, Ray Poyner, Doug VanderMeer, Sarah Weir
Members Absent: Darius Quinn and Ed Kape (with notification)
Others Present: Community Development Director Terry Schweitzer, Economic Development Planner Lisa Golder, Senior Planner Joe Pung, Planning Assistant Monique Collier, the applicants and about 5 citizens.

Motion by Benoit, supported by Poyner, to excuse Kape and Quinn from the meeting.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

- D. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest expressed.

- E. Approval of the Minutes and Findings of Fact

Motion by Commissioner Poyner, supported by Commissioner Porter, to approve the Minutes of September 12, 2023, and the Findings of Fact for: Case#21-23 – Fox Ford Commercial Vehicle Service Facility – Special Land Use and Site Plan Review for Vehicle Repair Located at 3560 – 28th Street SE

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

- F. Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Holtrop, supported by Commissioner Benoit, to approve the agenda for the September 26, 2023, meeting.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

- G. Acknowledge visitors wishing to speak to non-agenda items.

There was no public comment.

H. Old Business

There was no Old Business

I. Public Hearing

Case#22-23 – Storage Five Kentwood LLC – Conditional Rezoning of 8.2 acres of land from C-2 Commercial to I-1 Industrial, located at 1800-1900 44th Street SE

Golder stated the request is a conditional rezoning of 8.2 acres of land from C-2 Commercial to I-1 Industrial. She stated the applicant has voluntarily offered restrictions on their own property. Those restrictions will limit the use to self-storage both within an enclosed, climate-controlled building, with storage doors within the facility, and potentially a new facility with exterior doors that would face inward and shielded from the public street. Also allowed would be financial institutions, office buildings of less than 50,000 square feet, office building/uses of 50,000 square feet or more (SLU), research or development facility, trade or industrial schools, freestanding restaurants, and accessory buildings subject to Sections 3.15 and 3.16 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Golder stated her concern is the 80,000 square foot parking lot area to the south and to the west, where it is clear that additional self-storage can be constructed. She stated it is adjacent to residential and we don't know what type of storage would be proposed. We don't know about any restrictions on the potential height of the building, what it will look like, and whether it will be fenced.

Golder stated the commissioners asked staff to gather information from the assessor regarding the taxation of a call center versus a self-storage facility. Golder stated the assessment for a storage is based on the revenue generated, and therefore the taxable value would be higher than a call center. The assessor provided a self-storage almanac that provides information on self-storage facilities by state and for the country. According to the almanac, Michigan averages 4.99 square feet per capita of storage and the U.S. averages 6.10 per capita. The City of Kentwood has 495,971 square feet of storage in 9 facilities and that equals 9.02 square feet per capita, putting Kentwood well over the average of self-storage per capita.

Golder stated that the staff recommendation is for denial as described in her memo, adding an additional basis that states the city already has 9 facilities of almost 500,000 square feet.

Chris Catania was present. He stated the national average has risen to about 9 square feet per capita. He looked at self-storage within 1, 2 or 3 miles of the proposed facility. He stated there is zero square footage per capita in the 1-mile radius, in the 2 mile there is 1.26 square feet per capita, and 3.8 of non-climate-controlled storage which equals 5.14 per capita. Within a 3-mile radius that goes up to 8 square feet per capita. Therefore, it is below the national average in their primary market.

Catania stated that he provided staff and the commissioners with answers to the topics that were raised at the work session. He also provided examples and pictures of the interior and exteriors of storage buildings. He stated he also submitted a link to a website of a self-storage facility in the area. Catania stated hazardous materials are not allowed to be stored within their facilities; this is in every lease. He stated he sent a link to Cube Smart's rules and regulations. He stated regarding the acreage in the back it is a land locked piece of property he doesn't know what the highest and best use is, he assumes it will be self-storage, however, he doesn't know. He stated if you can see self-storage doors from the street it is a bad look. He stated he wrote the condition such that if a storage facility was to be built back there it would be completely enclosed in a building or that the new building would be oriented such that there would be no doors shown from the street. You could not see the doors; it would look like a normal building as you drove by and would not look like a storage facility.

Jones opened the public hearing.

There was no public comment.

Motion by Benoit, supported by Holtrop, to close the public hearing.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

VanderMeer stated staff stated he didn't define what he is going to do with the 8.2 acres but he did define what he wants to do with the 8.2 acres. Catania stated in the conditional zone he specially said all self-storage doors to be located within a fully enclosed building and/or facing inwards to the property shielded from view from any public ROW, but there is no plan right now. As a developer he is going to look for the highest and best use. He stated if he were to build self-storage that is the condition that would keep it from having those doors facing outwards or looking like a U-Haul facility. Golder stated that the applicant's condition of rezoning allowed the parking lots to be used for more self-storage. Discussion ensued.

Benoit stated his only concern is that it is not consistent with the Master Plan then it gets sent to the City Commission and they are going to deny the request because they already didn't want to amend the Master Plan; otherwise, they would have amended the Master Plan. He stated he is going to have a hard time supporting due to it not being complaint with the Master Plan.

Holtrop stated if the 8.2 acres were used as storage, the applicant would still have to comply with the requirements for being adjacent to the residential area.

Porter's concerns were with the businesses that he is offering different kinds of uses and some of these uses are not special land uses. Catania stated that the uses included in the conditional rezoning are those that are allowed currently in the C-2 zoning district.

Poyner questioned if the commissioners were to approve the rezoning, can there be a basis added that says if there is self-storage to be developed in the 8.2 acres we require it to be climate controlled. Golder stated that all comes down to the conditions offered by the applicant for the rezoning. The applicant did not offer that all of the self-storage would be climate controlled. He is able to change the application but that is not what is in front of the commissioners now.

Jones stated her thought was regarding the City Commission and sending something forward that we already know they have some reservations and strong opinions about that parcel.

Motion by Benoit, supported by Poyner, to recommend to the City Commission the denial of the conditional rezoning of 8.2 acres of land from C-2 Commercial to I-1 Light Industrial Conditional Zoning as described in Case No. 22-23. Approval is denied based on basis points 1-5 adding condition 6 to read as follows "The City already has 9 self-storage facilities with a total of 495,971 square feet of lease space. Additional self-storage space is excessive in terms of the per capita amount of self-storage within the city when compared to the state of Michigan and the country".as described in Golder's memo dated September 18, 2023.

- Motion Carried (5-2) –
- Holtrop and VanderMeer opposed -

Case#23-23 -Body Shop Boss – Special Land Use and Site Plan Review for a Major Vehicle Repair located at 3851 Model Ct. SE

Pung stated the request is for special land use and site plan review for a vehicle repair operation located in an industrial district. He stated they are looking at utilizing approximately 17,000 square feet of an existing 50,000 square foot building which is accessed off Model Court. He stated they are only going to be doing cosmetic repairs which would be nonstructural, dents, scratches, etc. There will be no bodywork or engine repairs. He stated that for their own vehicles they will do brake repair. They indicated that there will be no other type of repair just scratch and dent and nonstructural bodywork at this location. He stated they will only be working on Amazon vehicles in the greater Grand Rapids area.

Pung stated with this request two variances will be required that have to do with the vehicle repair site design standards. He stated the zoning ordinance requires that for vehicle repair they have a minimum frontage of 100 feet. In this case, it is located on the end of a cul-de-sac and the street frontage is 44 feet; the lot width being measured the way the building is situated.

The other variance relates to having at least one side that abuts an arterial street. Model Court is not an arterial street. Although they are within 220 feet of Broadmoor Avenue and 6 lots total served by Model Court, the ordinance states they have to abut an arterial street. The applicant has submitted an application for variances to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Pung stated he is recommending conditional approval of the special land use but amending Condition 2 to read: "Use to be operated consistent with the project narratives received August 31, 2023 and September 20, 2023 and site plan review as described in his memo's dated September 20, 2023".

Jones opened the public hearing.

There was no public comment.

Motion by Holtrop, supported by Porter, to close the public hearing.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

Poyner questioned if the Zoning Board doesn't approve the variances and the Planning Commission approves the special land use and site plan review what happens? Pung stated one of the conditions will be the Zoning Board has to approve those variances, if they are not approved then that condition is not met.

The commissioners were ok with the request and offered no additional questions.

Motion by Holtrop, supported by Benoit, to grant conditional approval of the special land use vehicle repair operation as described in Case 23-23. The approval is conditioned on conditions 1 – 7, modifying condition 2 to read "The use to be operated consistent with the project narratives received August 31, 2023 and September 20, 2023" and basis point 1 –7 as described in Pung's memo dated September 20, 2023.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

Motion by Holtrop, supported by Benoit, to grant conditional approval of the site plan March 22, 2001, as described in Case 23-23. Approval is conditioned on conditions 1 – 6 and basis points 1 –6 as described in Pung's memo dated September 20, 2023.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

J. Work Session

Case#24-23 – Hotel Conversion – Special Land Use and Site Plan Review to convert an existing office building into a hotel, located at 2180-44th Street SE

Golder stated the request is for special land use and site plan review for a 24-room boutique hotel on 1.34 acres of land. The existing use is an office building. The zoning is for office, hotels are allowed with special land use and the Master Plan recommends commercial. Therefore, it is consistent with the Master Plan.

Golder stated initially there was a concern from the Fire Department regarding how far the fire lane is from the building. However, the Fire Department said that if it is a sprinkled building (which it will be), they are okay with the proposed location of the fire lane.

Golder stated there are currently 87 parking spaces on the site, which is excessive for a 24-room hotel. Therefore, they have converted some of the parking to green space. The applicant is proposing over 40 feet of greenspace between the hotel parking lot and the adjacent residential use to the south. The residential use (a duplex) is located 186 feet away from the proposed hotel.

Golder stated there are two existing driveways that will be reduced to one. The driveway will be relocated slightly to the south to align with the drive aisle in the hotel parking lot.

Golder stated that she believes the proposed hotel meets the general special land use standards. The hotel within the existing building is appropriate and compatible with the character of the area, it is served by public facilities, it will not require additional upgrades at public cost, and with 24 units it is not expected to generate any traffic or noise. She stated we would like more information about site lighting.

Golder stated with respect to the specific special standards of Section 15.03 O, she thinks that generally, the hotel meets all of those as well. However, Section 15.03 O 4 of the zoning ordinance requires a landscape buffer zone of 20 feet. The Planning Commission can also require a wall or fence of up to 6 feet.

Golder stated the zoning ordinance requires hotels to provide one parking space per unit plus one per employee. There are 24 units proposed and the applicant has 48 spaces. Additional landscaping could be provided instead of excess parking spaces.

Golder stated the only concern she has is how to prevent the hotel from becoming a long-term rental property.

Vince Rostov was present. He stated he did speak to staff about if he isn't the owner years down the road, he is willing to sign something stating that the units cannot be used for apartments.

VanderMeer stated his concern that the property would become another leased property and questioned if there is some kind of language that the applicant can put in to prevent that from being a monthly rental facility of 6 months or longer. Golder stated she will have to ask the City Attorney. VanderMeer questioned if he was thinking about having a dining area or a cocktail bar. Rostov stated there isn't that much room for dining. It could be an area for coffee and sandwiches.

Rostov stated he likes the proximity to the airport. The way they would do the landscaping they would hide the building from the neighborhood and from the office buildings that are next door. They will have good landscaping and grown trees.

Benoit questioned the floor plan. Rostov stated the bathrooms will be new and there will be a shower in every room. Rostov stated he would like to keep the kitchenettes in the rooms because the rooms are large. Discussion ensued.

Hooltop questioned if there will be any exterior changes. Rostov stated the only thing they will be doing is changing the windows and a new roof.

Porter questioned the anticipated occupancy rate. Rostov stated low end 65%, high end 80%.

Poyner questioned what the daily rate will be at the hotel. Rostov stated it depends on the day; he thinks an average of \$140-\$150 per day. Discussion ensued.

Jones questioned if there were currently tenants in the building. Rostov stated they are currently at 75% occupied that are month to month. He stated he has 2 tenants that will be moving out at the end of the year. Jones questioned why we would have stipulations on this hotel as opposed to a Residence Inn; will this hotel be the same sort of thing?

Jones asked what happens if he receives approval of the hotel and the occupancy isn't where it needs to be for his bottom line. Rostov stated the mortgage can be paid and if they have to go back to the using the building as office, he probably could, but he really doesn't want to. He stated right now the building isn't making any money.

K. New Business

Motion by Holtrop, supported by Poyner, to Set public hearing date of October 24, 2023, for: **Case#26-23** – Biggby Coffee – Special Land Use and Site Plan Review for a Drive Through Restaurant – Located at 2300 44th Street SE; **Case#27-23** – Kentwood Drive and Shine – Special Land Use and Site Plan Review for a Vehicle Wash Establishment – Located at 3311 Woodland Drive SE

L. Other Business

1. Commissioners' Comments

Holtrop stated there was a Master Plan Committee meeting requesting a change in the Master Plan from Industrial to Commercial. The concern is that we have limited industrial land and there is a shortage. Holtrop stated he said it has been Industrial for years but nobody has made use of the property.

Jones stated CVS at 52nd Street and Eastern is closing November 1st.

2. Staff's Comments

Schweitzer stated that on October 17, the Transit Master Plan will be discussed at the Committee of the Whole.

Staff offered no additional comments.

M. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Benoit, supported by Commissioner Poyner, to adjourn the meeting.

- Motion Carried (7-0) –
- Kape and Quinn absent -

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Kape, Secretary