

The City of Lake Forest
Plan Commission
Proceedings of the February 10, 2021 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Plan Commission was held on Wednesday February 10, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted remotely in compliance with Governor's Executive Order 2020-07, issued on March 16, 2020 that suspended certain Open Meetings Act provisions relating to in-person attendance by members of a public body due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Commission members present: Chairman Kehr and Commissioners John Dixon, Jamie Moorhead, Susan Athenson, Michael Freeman, Stephen Douglass and Monica Artmann-Ruggles

Commissioners absent: None

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff and review of meeting procedures.

Chairman Kehr introduced the members of the Commission and staff and reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Plan Commission meeting.

Consideration of the minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting was postponed.

3. Public Hearing and Action: Consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit authorizing a drive thru lane, professional offices on the first floor and variances from setback and parking requirements for a commercial development proposed on the southeast corner of Everett and Waukegan Roads. A single story retail building near the corner, a three story medical office building on the southern part of the site, shared parking and landscape amenities are proposed.

Property Owner/Applicant: 1015, LLC and 1045, LLC (Carmine Iosue, Luke and Nicole Mertens, Joshua Iosue, Megan Iosue and Joseph Iosue)

Representative: Jack Frigo, Frigo and Associates and others

Chairman Kehr introduced the agenda item and asked the Commission members to declare any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Frigo noted that at the last meeting, the Commission considered the petition and at the conclusion of the meeting, directed further study and refinement as

determined to be necessary of two items: the right in/right out access point on Waukegan Road and the configuration of the parking area directly to the north of that access. He noted that the Commission expressed concern that vehicles in the inbound lane of the northernmost access from Waukegan Road may be in conflict with vehicles exiting the site if the vehicles entering the site attempt to enter the parking area to the north of the access. He stated that the City's traffic engineer met with the traffic engineer for the project to reconsider the two items. He noted that a revised plan came out of those discussions. He explained that the access was refined and an extended, planted median was added to separate the inbound and outbound lanes and to prevent vehicles entering the site from crossing over the exiting traffic to enter the parking area. He stated that the small parking area to the north of the access was reconfigured to locate the access into the parking area on the east side, internal to the site, away from the access from Waukegan Road, with only an egress point at the west side of the parking area. He pointed out that the reconfiguration of the parking area resulted in two additional parking spaces. He expressed appreciation on behalf of the owners noting that the plan as now presented is better than the earlier plan. He introduced Mr. Aboona, the petitioner's traffic engineer from KOLA.

Mr. Aboona stated that the plan as now presented eliminates the internal conflicts on the site as identified by the Plan Commission at the last meeting. He noted that cars entering the site will have a clear path, without any cross traffic, to the internal intersection in the parking lot. He added that plenty of on site stacking area is provided in the revised plan. He reviewed the changes made to the parking lot to the north of the access noting that the potential conflict points were eliminated. He noted the length of the landscaped median which separates the ingress and egress lanes noting that it prevents vehicles from turning left into the parking lot immediately upon entering the site and requires vehicles exiting the small parking area to exit on to northbound Waukegan Road. He noted that the radii of the right in, right out lanes of the access were modified to fully conform to IDOT standards. He stated that in his opinion, the present design results in a significant improvement to the site. He stated that in his opinion, the right in/right out access point is critical to the site. He noted that in addition to alleviating congestion on the site, the access point will capture "pass by" customers traveling on Waukegan Road.

Ms. Czerniak reiterated that at the last meeting, the Commission continued the petition with specific direction to reconsider the need for the north access point on Waukegan Road and, if it is needed, to look at the configuration of the access point along with the small parking area just to the north from a safety perspective. She stated that after several revisions to the plan and communication between the City's traffic engineer and the petitioner's traffic engineer, the plan as now presented to the Commission was agreed upon as offering substantial improvement over the previous plan. She stated that the plan now presented has the full endorsement of the City's traffic engineer. She

emphasized that all of the traffic experts stated that the north access point on Waukegan Road is critical to this development to facilitate internal circulation and to avoid congestion. She pointed out that four of the existing access points on the site today will be eliminated with the proposed development. She noted that a recommendation on a Special Use Permit is requested from the Commission. She noted that the Special Use Permit, if approved, will include approval of a drive thru for a coffee shop and professional offices on the first floor of the office building, approval of variances from parking and setback requirements, and approval of the overall site plan.

In response to questions from Commissioner Freeman, Mr. Patera confirmed that originally there were 11 spaces in the small parking lot located to the north of the right in, right out access and there are 13 spaces in the current plan. He stated that the trash enclosure near the small parking area will have double gates which will be located to facilitate pickups from the dumpsters and will be landscaped.

In response to questions from Commissioner Freeman, Ms. Czerniak stated that emergency vehicles will use the most direct access available at any point in time.

In response to questions from Commissioner Artmann-Ruggles, Mr. Frigo stated that the parking spaces near Building A will be time limited and intended for customers of the coffee shop. He noted however that the spaces will be available to all customers and patients using the campus.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Kehr invited public comment. Hearing no public comment, she invited final questions from the Commission, seeing none, she invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Moorhead stated his support for the petition and noted his appreciation for the changes made to the site plan adding that the project appears to satisfy the criteria in the Code.

Commissioner Dixon concurred with Commissioner Moorhead and stated support for the improved plan as now presented. He stated appreciation that two additional parking spaces were added as a result of the reconfiguration.

Commissioner Artmann-Ruggles expressed support overall for the development but noted that in her opinion, the site is overbuilt and the massing of the medical office building is too large. She also noted concern about whether the proposed parking plan will adequately meet the needs of the development. She stated that she does not support the development as presented.

Commissioner Athenson stated her appreciation for the effort the developers have put into the project adding that is it more appropriate for the site than the

last project proposed for the site. She noted that she stated her concerns at the previous meeting; the amount of asphalt proposed on the site and the extensive amount of surface parking on the site. She stated that in her opinion, underground or stacked parking should be considered to allow for a more walkable and pedestrian friendly site. She noted concern about the safety of the drive thru citing the potential for conflicts with pedestrians. She stated that in her opinion, the medical office building is too tall adding that the rooftop mechanicals create a fourth story on the building.

Commissioner Douglass noted that last month he shared the concerns raised by Commissioner Freeman regarding the right in, right out access and the parking area just to the north. He stated that the revised plan addresses the concerns more fully than he expected. He stated support for the project as now proposed.

Commissioner Freeman stated support for the project and expressed his appreciation for the further study that was conducted and the revisions made to the plan. He stated support for the parking as proposed noting that there is a public parking lot nearby for employee parking. He asked that directional and safety signage on and nearby the site be carefully considered by the City as final plans are reviewed.

Chairman Kehr noted that she initially had concerns about the adequacy of parking on the site but the letters provided by the tenants in the existing building confirming that off-site parking for employees is adequate and acceptable convinced her that the proposed approach to parking is workable. She requested that a condition be added requiring advance notice to the City if the off-site parking agreements are to be terminated or changed.

Commissioner Dixon stated that at the last meeting, the petitioner noted that they have a parking agreement with St. Patrick's Church which allows employees in the existing building to park on the north side of Everett Road and that they are working to expand that agreement. He also noted that there are 574 spaces in the City lot, near the train station that can be used by employees working on the site through parking permits or daily fees. He noted that height and parking variances have been granted for other commercial developments in the Waukegan Road/Settler's Square Business District.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Kehr invited a motion.

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of a Special Use Permit based on the findings presented in the staff report and authorizing redevelopment of the southeast corner of the Waukegan and Everett Roads intersection with a small retail building and a three story medical office building and specifically authorizing:

1. Professional offices on the first floor of an office building in the B-1 District.
2. A drive thru facility for a coffee shop type business only.
3. A variance to allow a small portion of the southwest corner of the medical office building to encroach no more than four feet into the required 20 foot setback.
4. A variance from the required parking standard of four spaces per 1,000 square feet of building area to allow a parking ratio of 2.87 spaces per 1,000 square feet in combination with off-site parking agreements and the availability of a public permit parking lot for employees within walking distance to the site.
5. Approval of the overall site plan.

The recommendation is conditioned on the following:

1. The property owner either directly or through the tenants, shall be responsible for assuring that a plan for off-site parking is developed. Parking for employees, customers and patients is prohibited on residential streets.
2. Sightline studies shall be prepared for the ingress and egress points to and from the development and shall be subject to review and approval by the City Engineer. On an ongoing basis, vegetation in the areas of the ingress and egress points shall be managed to maintain adequate sightlines.
3. A lighting reduction plan shall be provided and will be subject to review and approval by staff to avoid light impacts during after business hours on the neighboring residential properties.
4. The property owner shall provide notice to the City 10-15 days prior to termination or change of the off-site parking agreements.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Freeman.

The motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 2 with Commissioner Athenson and Commissioner Artmann-Ruggles voting nay for the reasons as previously stated.

4. Additional public comment on non-agenda items

Rommy Lopat, 410 E. Woodland Road, offered observations on the Plan Commission process and referenced the McKinley Road development. She stated that in her opinion, the Plan Commission process does not lead to resolution of issues and suggested that the Commission fully discuss one aspect of a petition at a time. She noted that the third phase of the McKinley Road development has changed over the course of the review. She suggested that staff reports be reformatted to list applicable statutes and the calculations necessary to reach conclusions. She stated that the Plan Commission should draw conclusions and not rely on staff for recommendations. She questioned the details of the Purchase/Sale

Agreement for the City property that is being considered as the location for the third phase of the McKinley Road development. She questioned how the Plan Commission will revisit the petition as directed by the City Council and how the project relates to the Library discussions.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak suggested that because the testimony references an active petition, it is not appropriate for the Commission to discuss the matter at this time.

5. Additional information from staff.

The 2021 Plan Commission calendar was approved as presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development