



**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF VILLAGE OF FRANKFORT**  
**PLAN COMMISSION / ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
**MAY 10, 2018 – VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**  
**432 W. NEBRASKA STREET**

**Call to Order** Chair Don Schwarz called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Margaret Farina, Jessica Petrow, Gene Savaria, Alicia Hanlon, Maura Rigoni and Don Schwarz

Commissioners Absent: Lisa Hogan

Staff Present: Assistant Director of Development Services Zach Brown, and Utilities Administrative Assistant Marina Zambrano

Elected Officials Present: Trustee Mike Stevens, Trustee John Clavio, and Trustee Keith Ogle

Chairman Schwarz swore in all those wishing to give public testimony.

**A. Approval of the Minutes from May 10, 2018.**

**Motion (#1):** Approve the revised minutes from May 10, 2018 meeting as discussed.

Motion by: Rigoni

Seconded by: Savaria

Approved: (4 to 1)

Abstain: (1) Petrow

**B. Public Hearing Request: Therafin Corporation Variance (Ref. #102)**

Public Hearing Request: Variance of Article 7, Part 3.c, Section 7 of the Village of Frankfort Zoning Ordinance regarding screening of rooftop equipment to permit the installation of solar panels on the roof of the existing building located at 9450 W. Laraway Road.

Assistant Director of Development Services Zach Brown presented the staff report and provided an overview of the request noting applicant proposes to install low profile solar panels with a height above existing roof of  $\pm 4'$ . Jeremy Fischer from Therafin Corporation was present and further described the request.

- Commissioners questioned the decision to install solar panels on the building. Mr. Fisher noted the request to install solar panels is to seek lower energy costs and take advantage of the solar incentives available through the state;

- Member Hanlon questioned whether there had been other similar requests for solar panels in the Village. Staff confirmed that the subject proposal was the first of its kind;
- Commissioners discussed the photo study provided by the applicant noting that although the proposed panels are low profile they will be visible from Center Road. Staff noted that they discussed the installation of parapet walls with the applicant to increase screening but determined doing so would be cost prohibitive and result in an unusual architectural appearance;
- Commissioners questioned the timeline to get the solar panels installed. The contractor Dr. Walters was present and added that there is a deadline of June 2<sup>nd</sup> to take advantage of the state's solar incentives program;
- Trustee, Keith Ogle added that there is a nearby Ikea Distribution Center on Route 53 & Laraway Road with solar panels and invited everyone to visit the site to become familiar;
- Members expressed their shared support for the solar panel installation proposal noting that if the Village were to adopt an ordinance addressing solar panels on industrial buildings the proposed project should be used as an example of what to do;
- Member Farina requested staff to provide the solar panel zoning ordinance for surrounding towns;

Staff presented the following written findings of fact:

1. *That the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zone;*

Solar and other renewable energy sources are becoming more common elements in large scale industrial projects. Prohibiting the installation of solar panels on the subject building due to the inability to provide complete screening would impact the resale value of the property compared to other industrial buildings in Frankfort which could accommodate solar panels without need for variance approval.

2. *That the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances;*

Most industrial buildings in Frankfort are constructed with a flat roof with raised parapet walls. Were the subject building is constructed in this manner the proposed solar panels would be screened from view and a variance not required. The unique architectural character of the building limits the applicant's ability to comply with the Village's screening requirements.



3. *That the variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.*

The proposed solar panels are low profile in nature and the existing roof has a shallow pitch both of which will limit the view of the panels from the adjacent properties and public right-of-way and as such will not alter the character of the area.

**Motion (#2):** Recommend the Village Board approve a variance of Article 7, Part 3.c, section 7 of the Village of Frankfort Zoning Ordinance to permit the installation of solar panels on the roof of the building located at 9450 W. Laraway Road in accordance with the reviewed plans and public testimony.

Motion by: Farina  
Approved: (5 to 0)

Seconded by: Rigoni

**C. Workshop: Aldi, Inc. Major PUD Change**

Future Public Hearing Request: Major planned unit development change to accommodate the construction of a 3,286 square foot addition to the existing Aldi store located at 20230 S. LaGrange Road.

Assistant Director of Development Services Zach Brown presented the staff report and provided an overview of the request. Project engineers were present and further described the request noting they were looking to enhance their customer experience.

- Commissioners expressed their general support for the expansion and reinvestment in the property;
- Commissioners discussed the proposed removal of the raised planter along the eastern façade of the building noting that they would prefer to see a buffer remain between the building and the parking spaces;
- Commissioners discussed the loss of parking spaces noting that the revised plan provides parking for 61 vehicles in the parking field immediately east of the Aldi store for a ratio of 3.3 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Staff noted that additional parking opportunity is available in the parking field to the north;
- Aldi's engineers noted that all their stores generally provide 85 parking spaces and that their property contains 95 spaces if you count the stalls located to the east of the main north/south drive aisle;
- Commissioners requested the applicant work with staff to provide additional parking spaces;
- Members discussed the proposed landscape plan noting that the applicant could offset the loss of landscaping along the building by enhancing the other landscape areas throughout the site;

- Commissioners expressed concern with the parking stalls that directly abut the building noting that if a buffer were not provided the parking stalls should be enhanced to use a brick paver or other similar design;
- Commissioners did not support the idea of reducing the drive aisles to 22' in order to obtain the desired buffer between the building and parking stalls;
- The applicant suggested the Village consider reducing the eastern most parking stalls to 16' from 18' and allow 2' of overhang to be counted towards the required parking stall depth. Staff agreed to investigate this idea further;
- The applicant confirmed that the exposed foundation will be clad with stone to match the proposed stone knee wall;
- Commissioners suggested Aldi require its employees to park in the parking lot east of the main north/south drive aisle so as to retain as many parking spaces as possible near the building for customers;
- Member Hanlon questioned the building materials that will be used on the addition. The applicant noted that the same material will be utilized on the expansion to match the existing building. Staff noted that materials samples will be required prior to the public hearing;

#### **D. Public Comments**

None

#### **E. Village Update**

Trustee, Mike Stevens provided an update on recent Village Board discussions noting that the final plat for Smithville Re-subdivision was approved and the Board approved the variances for the homes proposed at 320 S 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 258 W. Nebraska Street, 1014 N. Butternut Circle and also approved the special use for Freddy's Frozen Custard, Superior towing, Equanimity Massage and Wellness, and Cube Training Center.

#### **F. Other Business**

Staff noted that the Plan Commission meeting for May 24, 20018 has been cancelled. Commissioners requested staff provide them copies of agendas for all committee meetings. Commissioner Farina suggested the Village consider creating a working group to discuss parking in the downtown area in preparation for the proposed project at 7 N. White Street.

**G. Attendance Update**

Members confirmed their availability for the next Plan Commission Meeting to be held on June 14, 2018.

**Motion (#3):** Adjournment (7:40 PM)

Motion by: Hanlon                      Seconded by: Petrow  
Unanimously approved by voice vote.

Approved June 14, 2018

As Presented DS ✓

As Amended \_\_\_\_\_

Donnell Schwarz /s/Donnell Schwarz, Chairman

[Signature] /s/ Secretary