



MINUTES

MEETING OF VILLAGE OF FRANKFORT PLAN COMMISSION / ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

October 13, 2022–VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

432 W. NEBRASKA STREET

- Call to Order:** Chair Rigoni called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM
- Commissioners Present:** Chair Maura Rigoni, Brian James, Will Markunas, Nichole Schaefer, Dan Knieriem, David Hogan
- Commissioners Absent:** Jessica Jakubowski
- Staff Present:** Director of Community and Economic Development Mike Schwarz, Senior Planner Chris Gruba, Planner Drew Duffin
- Elected Officials Present:** None

A. Approval of the Minutes from September 8, 2022

Mike Schwarz noted that the draft minutes required a few minor corrections, specifically on Pages 2 and 5. On the top of Page 2, the word “architect” should be changed to “applicant”. In the middle of Page 5, in Paragraph 6, the word “staff” should be changed to Chris Gruba, “Code Official” should be capitalized, and the phrase “which was assumed to be...in this case” can be deleted for clarification.

Chair Rigoni asked if there were any questions from members of the Plan Commission. There were none.

Motion (#1): Approval of the minutes, as amended, from September 22, 2022

Motion by: Knieriem

Seconded by: Schaeffer

Approved: (5-0, Commissioner Hogan abstained)

Chair Rigoni noted that there would be no swearing-in of the public in attendance because there were no public hearings scheduled for the meeting.

B. Workshop: 9500 W. Lincoln Highway – Tiny Tots Play Café

Drew Duffin presented the staff report.

The applicant, Matthew Coello, approached the podium. Chair Rigoni asked him to explain his business model. He noted that the business would be open from 10 am – 4 pm, every day. There would be a \$15 admission fee per child but that adults get in free. Parents or guardians would purchase coffee or snacks at a snack bar inside. All play inside would be included with the \$15 admission fee. He noted that there may be special events such as birthday parties, pictures with Santa or the Easter Bunny.

Chair Rigoni asked if a parent could come in at 10 am and stay until 4 pm. Mr. Coello responded that they could and that there are no time slots or fees per hour. He noted that the average stay of parents and children is 1-2 hours.

The applicant was asked about how much parking would be generated by the use. Mr. Coello noted that at most, 20 cars would be in the parking lot. He followed by saying that sometimes one parent can come in with 15 children. Typically, there are no more than 25 children using the space at any one time. He also noted that the business is busiest around noon.

Commissioner Markunas asked how the size of the proposed tenant space in Frankfort compares to the existing business in Naperville. He noted that the Naperville space is approximately 4,000 square feet, while the Frankfort space would be approximately 3,600 square feet.

Commissioner Knieriem asked if parents could come in and drop off children. The applicant responded that children must be accompanied by an adult. Commissioner Knieriem asked if the proposed business would be a franchise. The applicant responded that no, this would be their first business and that their wives would assist with the business.

The applicant noted that they sanitize the play equipment and bathrooms twice a day and that allowing children to play together helps their mental growth, especially after a period of being isolated during the coronavirus pandemic. He noted that sometimes grandparents or babysitters will bring children and supervise them.

Commissioner Knieriem asked when they would like to open their business. Mr. Coello responded that they hoped to be open by January 2023. Commissioner Knieriem asked what the maximum staff size would be. The applicant responded that there are typically 2-3 employees working at a time.

Commissioner Hogan asked about the proposed bathrooms. The applicant noted that they would be constructing 2 bathrooms and one changing/lactation room. The bathrooms would be single occupancy bathrooms.

Commissioner Hogan asked if the private events would be conducted during the normal hours of 10 am – 4 pm. The applicant responded in the affirmative. Commissioner Hogan noted that not being open after 4 pm would be good for the parking situation in this parking lot.

Commissioner Markunas asked whether patrons and employees could exit from the back as well as the front. The property owner, Greg Iser Jr., approached the podium and indicated that yes, people could exit from the back of the building as well.

Commissioner Markunas asked if there was a safe walking path from the back parking area to the front parking area. He asked the applicant if he had thought about installing a set of stairs from the back of his parking lot to the Mariano's parking lot, so that during busy times, additional customers could park in the Mariano's parking lot. Mr. Iser responded that they had installed some stairs between his property and the Walgreens property, because they had noticed pedestrians jumping down from the wall as they crossed from building to building. However, he noted that the Village requested that the stairs be removed and that pedestrians should use the sidewalk crossings instead.

Commissioner Markunas asked if there would be any alcohol sales. The applicant responded there would not be, either now or in the future.

Commissioner James asked if other businesses use their back doors as well. Mr. Iser noted that yes, they all do, including the nail salon and Sorriso's.

Chair Rigoni noted that the proposed operating times for Tiny Tots seemed to be offset from the peak parking demand in the evenings in this location. She asked the other commissioners if they agreed, and all nodded in agreement. She noted that conditions could be placed on the Special Use Permit request limiting the operating hours to avoid conflict with peak parking demand in the evenings. She noted that if the applicant wished to be open later than 4 pm for certain days for special events, that the applicant should specify those exact dates at the future public hearing.

Mr. Iser asked if they were able to secure a shared parking agreement [with Walgreens or Mariano's], if they could be open for business later than 4 pm. Chair Rigoni responded that they would consider it.

Commissioner Shaeffer asked how many times per year would they want to have special events. The applicant noted that Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas were the main days, but that if business is good, they'd also like to have events such as "movie night" once a month.

Commissioner Hogan asked about the flow of traffic into and out of the commercial plaza. He noted that it's a particularly dangerous exit from the plaza, allowing only a right-in, right-out. If extended hours are granted for evenings during rush hour, distracted parents with children in the vehicle could be a safety concern.

Mr. Iser noted that the tenant spaces are empty right now and that they want to occupy them, also generating sales tax revenue and jobs for the community.

Chair Rigoni noted that she appreciated that the applicant had given the building a face-lift, which is older and needed attention.

Drew Duffin asked the commissioners for clarity regarding the amount of parking required for the proposed use, which is unique. Mike Schwarz clarified by noting that the PC-ZBA recently reviewed the Special Use Permit request for Pic & Plā pickleball and assigned a specific number of parking spaces for the use, and that a similar action could be taken for Tiny Tots. Commissioner Knieriem stated that he believed that the use would generate up to 25 cars, not including employees; the other commissioners agreed.

Mike Schwarz noted that the public hearing for this Special Use Permit had already been noticed in the newspaper and will be held on October 27th.

C. Workshop: 10211 W. Lincoln Highway – Rhumbar

Mike Schwarz presented the staff report.

The applicant, Joji Tirumalareddy approached the podium. He noted that there would not be any enclosure of the existing patio, nor would the mezzanine level be expanded.

Commissioner Hogan noted that the applicant was requesting to be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and then turned to the issue of parking in this commercial plaza. He noted that restaurant as proposed would have a very large number of seats, perhaps being the largest restaurant in the Village.

Commissioner Knieriem noted that there is so little parking in the plaza currently that cars are being parked in the drive-through area and on the patio. He asked if the applicant were willing to transform the front patio area into some parking spaces. The applicant responded that he would not because the patio dining is very important for the business.

Commissioner Markunas asked when the restaurant would be open. The applicant responded 7 am – 11 pm. Mike Schwarz noted that the PC-ZBA could condition the hours of operation as part of the Special Use Permit request.

Chair Rigoni noted that the parking situation is significantly better after 5 or 6 pm. She noted that the restaurant immediately to the west recently came before the PC-ZBA for a Major PUD Change and the owner willingly offered to curtail their operating hours by opening later at 3 pm. She recommended something similar for Rhumbar.

Commissioner Schaeffer noted that the amount of parking generated by the restaurant is dependent on the number of seats proposed. She suggested further reducing the number of seats to help alleviate the parking deficiency. Alternatively, the applicant could approach Avanti Furniture to the west to explore the option of overflow/shared parking. She asked if the drive-through lane could be removed and converted into a few additional parking spaces.

Commissioner Knieriem asked the applicant if he was willing to only be open after 4 pm to help alleviate the parking demand in the plaza. The applicant responded that he would not. Commissioner Knieriem noted that parking is extremely limited in the plaza and that even if the restaurant were demolished, the parking lot would still be at-capacity. He felt that a new restaurant being open for the entire day, every day, would be hard to support.

Commissioner Hogan noted that if patrons come to the restaurant and find parking very difficult, that they might not come back. He recommended that the applicant speak with neighboring property owners to explore the option of shared parking. He noted that it would be hard to support the project as proposed without any shared parking agreement in place.

Chair Rigoni asked for more information when the restaurant was initially constructed. In particular, she asked for the seating capacity or floorplan of the restaurant as it was initially approved. She noted that the building was constructed as a restaurant, but that seating capacity and shared parking should be considered. She believed that even one more seat in the restaurant than was originally approved would be too much.

Commissioner Markunas noted that the parking situation is awful, but that this was not necessarily the fault of the applicant. He noted however, that the applicant should look for creative solutions to the parking problem, including things which could also help the business be successful. He noted that a lot of people would not go to the restaurant if parking were severely limited.

Commissioner James said that being open for breakfast on weekdays would be problematic but could potentially work for weekends when most of the other businesses were closed. He recommended adding more parking, perhaps in the area of the patio or the drive-through lane. He noted that even though such an action might add only 6-7 more parking spaces, it would be a good gesture.

Commissioner Knieriem noted that the existing greenhouse/glass enclosure area was in very poor condition and needed to be rebuilt. He noted that since it would likely need to be demolished anyway, this area could be used for an outdoor patio instead, and the existing patio area could be used for additional parking. In this scenario, the outdoor seating area would be set back further away from busy Route 30. The applicant noted that he was not open to this idea and had already hired a contractor to repair the glass enclosure area.

Chair Rigoni reiterated the need for creative solutions. She then asked for comments regarding the proposed drive-through.

Commissioner Hogan noted that the proposed drive-through would be problematic in a parking lot at maximum capacity. The applicant noted that he wanted to keep the drive-through window and operation, as the coronavirus pandemic had changed the nature of the restaurant business.

Commissioner James inquired about the proposed solar-powered wall-mounted lamps. He was concerned that if each light were powered by its own battery, that they would vary in brightness. The applicant explained that while they were individually powered, they were hard-wired to the building so that there would be uniform lighting. Commissioner James also noted the proposed rope lights which had the appearance of a casino. The applicant responded by saying that the light source within the rope light would not be visible because it would be recessed under the awnings and that only reflected light would be visible. Mike Schwarz noted that persons under the awning itself would be able to directly see the rope lights.

Commissioner Schaeffer asked if the rope lights would be placed under the lip of the awning. The applicant responded in the affirmative and added that he may also add can lights beneath the awning. Commissioner Schaeffer asked about the proposed brick on the tower element of the building and whether it would match the rest of the brick on the building. The applicant responded that the new brick would match the existing brick. Commissioner Schaeffer said that the color rendering of the building made the brick on the tower appear very different than the rest of the brick on the building and that she would prefer a contrasting brick instead of a somewhat matching brick. Chair Rigoni requested that a sample board be left at the site so that the commissioners could see the exact contrast in the field.

Commissioner Knieriem also voiced a preference for a brick on the tower that contrasted more with the existing brick. He also cautioned the use of rope lighting because it is not typically used on high-end properties. He recommended using LED or can lights instead of rope lights.

Commissioner Markunas stated his opposition to rope lighting, which would give the building an appearance of a tiki bar. He noted that once the applicant selects an architect prior to the next meeting, they should bring in a sample of the rope lights, if they are insistent upon using them.

Chair Rigoni expressed her opposition to new rope lights on the building.

Commissioner Markunas asked if the applicant was proposing an indoor stage and if so, what it would be used for. The applicant responded that they were proposing a stage and that they may use it for piano, karaoke or open mic night, among other possible things. Chair Rigoni noted that piano and karaoke engender different atmospheres and asked that the applicant decide exactly what they'd like to use the stage for, prior to the next meeting. She noted that live entertainment could increase the demand for parking.

Chair Rigoni recognized that there were several members in the audience and that although it was not a public hearing, she would permit comment. An unidentified male approached the podium and noted that the mezzanine appears to be an extension of the bar, giving the business more of a feeling of a bar than a restaurant. He noted that the menu proposed by

the applicant appeared to be nearly identical to the menu for Republic Gastropub in Oklahoma City.

An unidentified female approached the podium. She recommended that the applicant consider the commissioner's comments because in doing so, it would help his business. She also recommended adjusting the plans to create more parking spaces, perhaps by removing the outdoor seating area. She also recommended having the restaurant remain closed inside for breakfast and lunch, but only offering take-out through the drive-through only during those times to help alleviate the parking demand.

Mary Willcamp approached the podium. She said that people park on Johnson Avenue between Washington Parkway and Mulberry Road on the north side of the street. She noted that there's a school bus stop at Mulberry and Johnson and that if there is increased traffic and parking in the residential subdivision that it could be a safety concern. Chair Rigoni suggested to staff that this concern may merit a discussion with the Traffic Advisory Committee.

A second unidentified female approached the podium and noted that she lives on Johnson Avenue. She was concerned about the noise but was a little less concerned if the restaurant would close at 11 pm.

Commissioner Knieriem asked that when the applicant returns to the PC-ZBA, that he be prepared with a specific plan about his business model, including the use of the indoor stage. Mike Schwarz reminded the applicant that plans prepared by an architect are required prior to any future meeting.

D. Public Comments

There were none.

E. Village Board & Committee Updates

Mike Schwarz noted that the following matters that previously came before the PC/ZBA were reviewed by the Village Board at its meeting on October 3rd, 2022:

- Three of the four variances for the proposed new home at 240 Center Road were approved by the Board. The metal roof variance was denied.
- The Special Use Permit for indoor recreation for Pic & Plā pickleball at 21800 S. La Grange, Unit B, was approved unanimously by the Board.
- The Major PUD Change for the patio enclosure and new outdoor patio for Opa restaurant at 10235 W. Lincoln was tabled at the request of the applicant. The applicant may return to the Board in the spring of 2023.

Mr. Schwarz also noted that the sale of 2 Smith Street was discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 12th.

F. Other Business

1. Notification of a Minor Change

Drew Duffin noted that staff approved a Minor PUD Change to the apartments at Kaffel's Plank Trail PUD to allow for a new gazebo. Minor PUD changes can be approved by staff and no action was needed by the Plan Commission.

Dawn Shields, the HOA president of Kaffel's Plank Trail PUD, approached the podium. She asked why staff was able to approve new construction without the Plan Commission's approval. She noted that the property owner, Pete Bernal, is not maintaining what is currently on the property.

2. Approval of the 2023 PC-ZBA meeting dates.

The PC-ZBA expressed approval of the proposed meeting dates for 2023.

G. Attendance Confirmation (October 27th, 2022)

Chair Rigoni asked the Commissioners to notify staff if they will not be in attendance on October 27th, and to notify staff once they knew they could not attend.

Commissioner Knieriem asked if staff or the Village should explore the idea of limiting the amount of time members of the public can speak, in the spirit of making meetings more efficient. Mr. Schwarz noted that he believed that time limits could be imposed, but if done, they would need to be administered fairly. In other words, the specific time limit would apply to all members of the public. Chair Rigoni noted that she attends other public meetings in other communities and that Frankfort's meetings are not unusually lengthy. She thought it may be difficult to administer time limits fairly. Chair Rigoni thanked her fellow commissioners for the professionalism and respect they showed for one another during the meetings.

Motion (#14): Adjournment 8:56 P.M.

Unanimously approved by voice vote.

Approved October 27th, 2022

As Presented As Amended

Maura A Rigoni /s/ Maura Rigoni, Chair

Christopher Danks /s/ Secretary