

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OHIO
December 7, 2021
Held Virtually Via Zoom**

Chairman Lytkowski called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. December 7, 2021 and the following responded to Roll Call:

PRESENT: Chairman Dale Lytkowski
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Vice Mayor David Grendel
Cheryl Chase
William Gutermuth

OTHERS

PRESENT: Michael Gero, Building Official
Gregory J. O'Brien, Law Director
Jessica Hyser, Economic Development Director
Don Ramm, City Engineer
Jeff Markley, City Planner

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held on November 8, 2021.

New Business:

- 1. 7300 East Pleasant Valley Road, Involta Data Center, Phase II** – Proposed building expansion and additional generator yard to north of existing building.
- 2. 7165 East Pleasant Valley Road, Roe Dental Labs** – Proposed additions to existing building.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that everyone had received the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission meeting held on November 8, 2021. He asked if there were any additions or corrections to those Minutes. If not, he would entertain a motion.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Grendel, seconded by William Gutermuth, to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission meeting held on November 8, 2021.

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ROLL CALL: Yeas: Lytkowski, Grendel, Kurtz, Chase, Gutermuth
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

7300 East Pleasant Valley Road, Involta Data Center, Phase II – Tom Lang and Brad Lang were in attendance on behalf of Involta.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Mr. Tom Lang to go ahead and give a summary of what they were planning on doing.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that he also had their Architect Brad Lang on the call this afternoon.

Mr. Brad Lang of Solem Lang Architects stated that he was sure that everyone was familiar with Involta being a data center company that has a current facility on East Pleasant Valley. He stated that they had initially planned a second phase for the data center to expand in the future, and fortunately their business has grown and they were now looking to execute that future expansion plan.

Mr. Lang provided an image on the screen of the building with the existing footprint. He stated that dashed with the white dash lines would be the expansion of the second phase to the north of the existing data center. He stated that it was effectively an extension of what they had now. It would be the same materials and architectural detailing and treatments. He showed some graphics showing an intentional green buffer that existed and they intended to retain that.

He provided a view as you would approach coming into the driveway. He stated that driveway had a serpentine access to the parking area in the front of the building.

Mr. Lang stated that the blue element was an architectural metal panel system that would accent the office area that was out in front, and then behind it as a backdrop would be the data center itself which was architectural precast. He stated that supporting infrastructure for the data center would require generators for backup generation, and so to provide screening and architectural interest, they have a combination of opaque fencing, landscaping and transparent fencing. He stated that for function reasons the generators need to breathe and get air; so they would be doing that in a way that would be done with landscaping and chain link fence and change to an architectural metal panel. He stated that it would be identical to what was there now. He stated that proposed expansion would be identical in character and flavor to the existing building. He stated that if there were any questions, he would be happy to answer those. He stated that it would be a pretty simple project. They would be very nice buildings. He stated that Involta does invest nicely in their infrastructure. He stated that they were not trying to do anything different than what they have presently on site.

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Mayor Kurtz asked Mr. Lang how many new employees would they have.

Mr. Lang stated that he would defer to Mr. Tom Lang. He stated that oddly enough there are two Langs on the conversation. It was Brad Lange the Architect and Tom Lang was the owner's representative. He stated that there was no relation, but just a good last name. He stated that he would defer to Tom on the employee component.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that it would be a minimal headcount increase for them. They expect up to an additional 5 headcount over about a year's period of time once the facility is complete and available for occupancy.

Mayor Kurtz stated that they shouldn't have any parking constraints.

Mr. Lang replied no sir.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked what was the additional square footage of the new building.

Mr. Brad Lang stated that it would be same exact width of the existing building. He stated that it would be 96 feet by 146.

Mayor Kurtz stated it would be 15,000 square feet.

Mr. Lang stated it would be 14,000 roughly.

Chairman Lytkowski asked if there would be any infringement on the neighbors behind them.

Mr. Brad Lang replied no sir.

The Chairman asked if the neighbors were notified.

The Secretary stated that they had been notified.

Vice Mayor Grendel stated that the construction would be towards Pleasant Valley, but contingent property owners did get notified.

Mayor Kurtz asked how would they address the noise of the generators.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that the noise would be addressed through the enclosures that they encase the engines in. He stated that they will maintain a low decibel level which they were able to achieve for the initial build because that was to the south of the property, that would be closer to the residential neighbors on Brookside; so they do not anticipate that being an issue. They would duplicate that same specification for the generators they

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will place to the north. He stated that they would have more road noise that would probably mask the sound of the generators when they were operating.

Mayor Kurtz asked what size generators would they be individually.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that the units were rated at 800 kw capacity.

Mayor Kurtz asked if they would all run together or would some be for backup.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that they would run at the same time when they do normal testing regimens, as well as they will run in an emergency situation if there was a utility interruption to the site.

Mayor Kurtz asked on the normal load, how many would run.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that they would have two existing day one for this construction project. They will leave two spaces available for future adds. They do not need all four generators initially from the build. So, they will have a total of two day one that could operate in tandem.

Law Director O'Brien asked if they were backup generators.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that they were backup generator use only. There are strict EPA run time guidelines that they adhere to year over year; and they have to keep stringent records on that. They will not see the generators being run at will. They do have planned times that they do run them outside of any emergency use.

Mayor Kurtz stated that their normal power comes from the electrical company.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that they do get a feed from the utility to the site, but the generators are there to assure that they continue their operations unabated for the sake of their clientele.

Mayor Kurtz asked if they would be natural gas generators.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that they were diesel engines that they install. They have belly tanks. They would be double lined with leak protection. They go through certification at the factory as well as there was a pressure test requirement by the City and the Fire Department to insure that there would be no leakage potential when they land on the site.

Mayor Kurtz asked how long could they run before they would need to be filled.

Mr. Tom Lang stated it was a great question. He stated that they designed those to run

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for a minimum of 24 hours based on full power design load of the facility. He stated that they will not see that come to fruition in its first year. It will probably take about a year and a half to two years for the full capacity to be realized. He stated that they expect that they will get a little more in line with about 36 hours of run time day one with it normalizing down to the 24 hour expected run time as they get into the second year of operation and they continue to fill the facility up.

Mayor Kurtz asked what was the gallon capacity.

Mr. Tom Lang stated that the fuel capacity on those would be 1,900 gallons each.

Mayor Kurtz stated it would be 80 gallons an hour.

Mr. Gutermuth stated the space for the other two generators, do they expect that those would be needed on the current build out or would it be for the Phase III plans that were submitted. He asked if those would not be required until Phase III? He asked Mr. Lang what were his thoughts.

Mr. Lang stated that would be the latter phase. He stated that what they will do is set the first two generators as far into the generator yard on the display there, and they will leave the future two positions available nearest to the fence line. He stated that would help mitigate any risk to their operation when the time comes to set the two additional units so that they were not cranked over active units at the facility.

Mr. Gutermuth stated that it didn't appear that there would be any variances required, just site plan approval. He asked if that was right.

Mr. Lang stated that was his understanding.

Mayor Kurtz asked if there would be any additional fuel storage on site.

Mr. Lang stated there would not be. They do not do anything beyond the belly tanks that were attached to the enclosure that would house the engine; so they do not have any additional above ground or below ground tanks besides the ones that were part of the package system.

Mayor Kurtz asked how would the tanks be refueled.

Mr. Lang stated that they do have fuel access on the tank unit itself. It will be a secured gated space. They will schedule for fueling. They will permit the truck into the yard to go ahead and refuel the units when necessary.

Chairman Lytkowski asked City Engineer Ramm if the safety forces had looked at the

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project.

City Engineer Ramm stated that he was unaware of that. He asked Building Official Gero if he knew that.

Building Official Gero stated that he was not sure whether they have looked at the plans specifically, but he has discussed it with Lieutenant Reis as far as the fact that they are coming for their addition and expansion. He was a part of the original build out, and he was familiar with what they have now and what their intending to do at least and voiced no concerns.

Chairman Lytkowski asked what does Involta Data Center do?

Mr. Tom Lang stated that they were a co-location provider and a cloud service provider for businesses of all types across multiple industries. They have 12 locations across the United States today; so this would be a representation of the type of facility that they would typically see for publication and cloud service providers that serve businesses and/or consumers in some cases. He stated that their focus was really business-to-business. They do not get into the consumer realm like Amazon web services or Microsoft, but they were very similar in their approach to that.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Cheryl Chase if she had any questions.

Ms. Chase stated that she had no questions.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Mr. Gutermuth if he had any other comments.

Mr. Gutermuth stated that he was good.

Mayor Kurtz stated that he wanted to make sure the Architectural Board would review all the materials, and that the landscape plan would be managed by the City.

Building Official Gero stated that the matter will be on the Architectural Board of Review. He stated that the materials that were used in the original were approved by the Architectural Board of Review, and also the City will be looking at landscaping in addition to what is currently there towards Pleasant Valley.

Mayor Kurtz stated that was good. Those were his questions.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Vice Mayor Grendel if he had any comments.

Vice Mayor Grendel replied no, he was just happy that their business was to the point that they were doing well enough that they have gotten to Phase 2. He stated that he has

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no problem with what was being proposed.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that he had no other comments except one. He stated that they have 12 other locations.

Mr. Lang stated that this one would count as one of the 12 locations.

The Chairman asked if they were in the Ohio area or across the country.

Mr. Lang stated that from a footprint perspective, they have 4 locations in Ohio, actually in northeast Ohio specifically through build as well as acquisition. They were in Akron, Ohio, Canton, Ohio, Youngstown, Ohio and of course Independence, Ohio respectively. He stated that they were also in Pittsburgh, and then they start heading westward. They were in Minnesota, Iowa. They were in Idaho and in Arizona.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that it was a pretty nice company.

Mr. Lang stated that they were fortunate, and they were continuing to grow so they were excited about the addition.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that he had no other comments.

City Engineer Ramm stated that relative to the stormwater management, there was an existing detention basin on the property. He asked if they knew if it was sized to account for the expansion or will it need to be modified.

Mr. Brad Lang stated that their Civil Engineer was Atwell, and he would speak on their behalf. He stated that he believed that it was sized originally to handle the expansion so they shouldn't have to touch it.

City Engineer Ramm stated that they would probably want to coordinate with them in that regard to dot the 'i's on that.

Law Director O'Brien asked if Mr. Lang could have Atwell offer a letter to be sent to the Engineer confirming that.

Mr. Brad Lang stated that would be no problem.

Chairman Lytkowski asked if there were any other comments. There were none.

Chairman Lytkowski asked if they could add landscaping into the motion.

Economic Development Director Hyser asked if Anne Lynch could speak about that.

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They were out at the site a couple of weeks ago, and she had taken a look at the landscaping.

Anne Lynch stated that the Economic Development Director and herself had driven out to examine the existing landscaping and shielding on the generators, and overall she thinks that the landscape plan and the plant selections submitted was well done. She stated that based on what they currently have, and then the additional green buffer along East Pleasant Valley would suffice.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Grendel, seconded by William Gutermuth, to approve the building expansion and site plan, subject to submission of a letter from Atwell confirming that the detention/retention area had been sized originally to accommodate Phase 2.

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Grendel, Gutermuth, Lytkowski, Chase, Kurtz
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED**

7165 East Pleasant Valley Road, Roe Dental Labs – Architect Leon Sampat with LS Architects was in attendance.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Mr. Sampat if he wanted to explain the project a little bit.

Mr. Sampat stated that he was representing Roe Dental Labs. They were currently at 7165 East Pleasant Valley Road. He stated that the current structure was approximately 37,000 square feet. It was a one-story structure with a partial lower level. He stated that they were looking at adding two additions. The first addition would be on the northwest corner of the site. That would be approximately 3,200 square feet. He stated that they did have a second addition that would be a two-story structure with an additional lower level. The footprint of that structure would be approximately 7,200 square feet, for a total of about 21,600 square feet for the two and a half story addition; and the total amount of additional square footage would be right around 34,000 square feet.

Mr. Sampat stated that they were adding parking across the east and north of the structure towards the rear of the property. So, they would be adding 46 new parking spaces. They have a parking calculation requirement of 180 required parking spaces for the entire structure, and they will end up with 205 spaces. The structure to the northwest will be similar to what the existing building was which was (inaudible). He asked if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Gutermuth asked what the size of the parking spaces would be. He asked if they would match.

Mr. Sampat stated that they would match the existing. They would be 9' x 20' parking spaces.

Mr. Gutermuth asked if they would need a variance on that, or would that be sufficient?

Building Official Gero stated that 9' x 20' was the size per the code, 180 square feet.

Mr. Gutermuth replied okay.

Mr. Sampat stated that as far as the detention, they have not studied that; but they have an engineer looking at it. He stated that they were making the assumption that they would have to expand that. They will have engineered drawings for that.

Mr. Gutermuth stated that since he had the floor, he wanted to ask the drive that would connect the two parking lots. He stated that it appeared that it was only going to be a one lane road there connecting the existing parking to the new lot. He asked if that would be a two lane road? Was there a one-way there?

Mr. Sampat stated that it would be two lane. It would be 24 foot wide.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked what kind of lighting would there be for the parking lot farther north than the new addition, as well as on the east side of the building.

Mr. Sampat stated that they did submit a lighting plan. He stated that they would have some parking lights and building lights. He stated that they had a photometric that they submitted. He stated it would be zero at the lot line.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked if it would be fairly close to Braewood? He asked if the neighbors on Braewood were notified.

The Secretary stated that they were notified.

Mr. Gutermuth asked if they would be avoiding the steep slope area that would be north of where the parking lot would be.

Mr. Sampat stated that was correct.

Chairman Lytkowski asked if the residents were notified.

The Secretary stated that the residents of Braewood contingent to the property were notified.

Chairman Lytkowski asked if City Planner Markley was online for the meeting. He asked about the landscaping on the north part of the project.

Mr. Sampat stated that there was currently a dense wooded area.

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The Chairman asked if it would have any effect on the residents?

Mr. Sampat stated that they were planning on providing a 5 foot high mound so that way when cars do pull up, they would not shine into the residential area.

Chairman Lytkowski asked if the mound would have appropriate vegetation?

Mr. Sampat stated that they would provide evergreen plantings.

Building Official Gero stated that he would suggest that the City review the applicant's landscape plan with them, and they could coordinate the proper screening so as not to create any type of nuisance to any of the residents on Braewood. He stated that they had done something similar next door when there was an issue with Atlas Copco, and they could provide some dense vegetation. He stated that he thought that was already discussed internally as far as the landscape plan.

Mr. Sampat stated that they had no problem doing that.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked would there be new employees working for Roe Dental there.

Mr. Sampat stated that currently there were over 100 employees, and he thinks that once the building would be fully occupied, they have the potential to almost double that number.

Economic Development Director Hyser stated that there was going to be a significant growth to payroll for Roe Dental, and it would be something that they would have to discuss with City Council.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that was good. He asked Mr. Sampat what Roe Dental did.

Mr. Sampat stated that they provide services to local dentists. He stated that if you would ever get a mold taken of your mouth, and you would be getting a retainer built; they were the ones who build the retainers and crowns, anything that would have to do with the dental industry that dentists would require.

The Chairman asked if the crowns were imported from China?

Mr. Sampat replied no. He stated that they were actually built right on site.

Ms. Chase stated that her dentist actually sent her there years ago to have some crown work match color wise to her existing teeth. She stated that it was a beautiful facility.

The Chairman stated that it was his understanding that a number of these labs actually

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import the crown.

Mr. Sampat stated that they were made right there.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Mr. Sampat what their timing on the project would be.

Mr. Sampat stated that they would like to get going as soon as possible.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Mr. Gutermuth if he had any other questions or comments.

Mr. Gutermuth stated that he just wanted to thank Roe Dental for continuing to stay in Independence, expand their facility and bring more jobs here. He stated that he thought it looked like a good facility and good design.

Ms. Chase stated that she agreed with Bill. She was glad that they were growing. She stated that it was a great kind of company for that location.

Vice Mayor Grendel stated that he felt the same. He stated that he remembered when they moved here a few years back from Garfield Heights. He stated that they have been a great corporate resident and everything. He was excited that they were expanding their footprint and bringing more employees. He stated that he wished them nothing but the best of luck.

The Chairman asked if it was the ADP building at one time.

Vice Mayor Grendel stated that was farther east.

Chairman Lytkowski asked Mayor Kurtz if he had any comments.

Mayor Kurtz stated it was a great company, great growth. He stated that when you drive in the back there, as long as they do the landscape mound appropriately along the northern border, it would be complementary because there would not be a lot of thru traffic, it would be more the people who were working there and going home. He stated that they have done a really nice job upgrading that facility, and he expects nothing less from the addition. He stated that he was excited about the growth opportunity.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that he was very pleased with the project.

Law Director O'Brien stated that they would need to make the motion subject to the submission from Roe's Engineer to the City Engineer and approval by the City Engineer as to any expansion required to the detention area, and subject to submission and approval of a landscape plan by the City Planner.

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Chairman Lytkowski thanked the Law Director.

A motion was made by Mayor Kurtz, seconded by Vice Mayor Grendel, to approve the expansion, subject to the submittal of a letter by the applicant’s Engineer and approval by the City Engineer as to any expansion required to the detention area, and subject to the submission and approval of a landscape plan by the City Planner.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: Kurtz, Grendel, Chase, Gutermuth, Lytkowski
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

Chairman Lytkowski thanked the applicant and wished him good luck with the project.

The Chairman stated that there was one more comment that the Mayor wanted to make.

Mayor Kurtz stated that he would like to thank Chairman Dale Lytkowski for his 25 years, not 21 like they thought, he has served as a member of the Planning Commission and most recently as its Chairman. The Mayor stated that as a matter of fact, he replaced Cheryl Chase’s father on the Planning Commission.

Ms. Chase stated that was what she heard.

Mayor Kurtz stated after he did a phenomenal job. So, this will be Dale’s last meeting unless something spectacular comes up to call a Special meeting, this will be his last meeting. He stated that as a friend, he personally wanted to thank Dale for his service to the City, and as the Mayor he wanted to thank him for the service. The Mayor stated that as a friend he thanked Dale for his effort, his passion and his concern for the community and its well-being for the past two and a half decades. He thanked the Chairman for all his effort, his time, his sacrifice, his input and expertise. He stated that he has been a stellar member of this Commission, and he has helped to navigate and move the City forward. He has seen a lot of growth over the past 25 years, and he could say as the Mayor’s mother would say, he left it better than he found it. God Bless and thank you.

Chairman Lytkowski stated that he thoroughly enjoyed it and was glad to help the City of Independence.

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Everyone on the Planning Commission thanked the Chairman.

There being no further business, the Planning Commission meeting of December 7, 2021 was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Chairman Dale Lytkowski

Debi Beal, Planning Commission Clerk
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 12/10/21