

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES - CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Wednesday; November 5, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Chambers - 8150 Barbara Avenue

Chair Hark called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Joan Robertson
 Paul Hark
 Pat Simon
 Tony Scales
 Dennis Wippermann
 Bill Klein

Commissioners Absent: Harold Gooch
 Armando Lissarrague (excused)
 Annette Maggi (excused)

Others Present: Tom Link, Community Development Director
 Heather Botten, Associate Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the October 7, 2014 Planning Commission meeting were approved as corrected.

The minutes from the October 21, 2014 Planning Commission meeting were approved as submitted.

MIKE THOMAS – CASE NO. 14-44C

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice to consider the request for a conditional use permit to operate an outdoor storage facility, and other variances related thereto, for the property located at 7537 Concord Boulevard. 36 notices were mailed.

Presentation of Request

Heather Botten, Associate Planner, explained the request as detailed in the report. She advised that the applicant is requesting to operate an outdoor storage facility by utilizing the vacant building and parking lot at 7537 Concord Boulevard. The existing building would be used as the office and the outdoor storage would be on the south and west side of the property. Outdoor storage is a conditional use in the B-3 zoning district. Only passenger automobiles, trailers, and personal recreational vehicles may be stored in the outdoor storage area.

Chair Hark asked if storage containers would be allowed.

Ms. Botten replied they would not. She advised that a conditional use permit for a car sales lot was previously approved for this site, but at this time the applicant has decided to open an outdoor storage facility instead. All parking and storage must be at least ten feet from the east, west, and north property lines and five feet from the south property line. One of the access points on Concord Boulevard will be removed. The property can also be accessed from the north through the Super America parking lot and off of 75th Street. Solid screening is required around the perimeter of the outdoor storage areas. There is an existing wood fence along the west property line and part of the south property line. The applicant is proposing to add additional solid fencing around the perimeter of the property to comply with code requirements. The applicant is proposing

to use the lighting plan that was approved with the sales lot. Staff recommends approval of the request with the nine conditions listed in the report. Ms. Botten advised that they received one letter of opposition and two calls with general inquiries.

Chair Hark asked what the status was of the conditional use permit for the car sales lot.

Ms. Botten replied that the conditional use permit is valid for two years so the applicant could still operate the property as a sales lot if he changed his mind within that timeframe.

Chair Hark asked how high the proposed fence was.

Ms. Botten replied six feet, but the applicant would be allowed to increase it to seven feet.

Commissioner Robertson asked if the existing building was proposed to be used as the office.

Ms. Botten replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Klein asked if there were any plans to improve the damaged asphalt near Super America.

Ms. Botten replied that the applicant could better answer that question.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if lighting was proposed behind the office building.

Mike Thomas, 26752 Denmark Avenue, Farmington, replied that lighting was not proposed behind the existing building. Mr. Thomas responded to Commissioner Klein's previous question, stating that he planned to patch the damaged asphalt near the shared access with the gas station.

Commissioner Klein suggested that staff contact Super America regarding repairing the potholes on their site.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if the approved conditional use permit specified restricted hours of lighting.

Mr. Botten replied it did not.

Commissioner Robertson asked if hours of operation had been determined.

Mr. Thomas stated he would likely staff the office from 9:00 to 5:00 p.m. and allow access via a keyless pad until 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. The site would be equipped with security cameras.

Commissioner Simon asked the applicant if he was aware of Condition 9 prohibiting the repair of stored items on the property.

Mr. Thomas replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Simon noted that there was a fence in disrepair at the time of the car sales lot approval.

Mr. Thomas replied that the fence had since been repaired. He advised that a chain link fence would be cheaper, but he was proposing to install a wood fence as it would look better and be consistent with the existing fence.

Opening of Public Hearing

Chair Hark asked the applicant if he read and understood the report.

Mr. Thomas replied in the affirmative.

Chair Hark closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Klein, second by Commissioner Scales, to approve the request for a conditional use permit to operate an outdoor storage facility for the property located at 7537 Concord Boulevard.

Commissioner Wippermann advised that he was concerned about approving a storage facility between the existing residential areas to the west and east, and would therefore be voting no.

Commissioner Klein stated he preferred an outdoor storage facility to the previously approved car sales lot.

Motion carried (5/1 - Wippermann). This item goes to the City Council on November 10, 2014.

CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Reading of Notice

There was no public hearing notice required.

Presentation of Request

Tom Link, Community Development Director, explained the request as detailed in the report. He advised that River Country Cooperative approached the City and expressed an interest in selling its 10 acre property along the west side of Dickman Trail. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) will be considering the acquisition at a special meeting on November 24. The Planning Commission is being asked to consider whether the acquisition would be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan states that economic development is an important function that should be supported by the City, and also includes language pertaining to the redevelopment of the Concord neighborhood. The City's redevelopment efforts in that neighborhood date back to 1998 when they adopted the Concord Neighborhood Plan. That plan was updated and revised in 2012. The revised plan identifies four specific areas for redevelopment. The property being discussed tonight is in one of those four areas. The EDA would acquire this property and sell it at some future time for redevelopment. Staff recommends approval of the request to find the acquisition of the ten acre property along the west side of Dickman Trail consistent with the City's comprehensive plan. He noted that a representative from River Country Cooperative was in the audience tonight and was available for questions.

Chair Hark clarified that this was not a taking, but rather a request from a willing seller.

Commissioner Wippermann asked for clarification that the Planning Commission was being asked to make a recommendation only on whether or not the request complies with the comprehensive plan and not on whether or not to purchase the property.

Mr. Link replied in the affirmative, stating the actual decision to acquire the property would be considered by the EDA on November 24.

Opening of Public Hearing

John Duchsherer, 14305 Azalea Court, Rosemount, advised he was available to answer any questions.

Chair Hark asked the applicant if he read and understood the report.

Mr. Duchsherer replied in the affirmative.

Chair Hark closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Scales, second by Commissioner Klein, to find the acquisition of the ten acre property along the west side of Dickman Trail consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Motion carried (6/0). This item goes to the Economic Development Authority on November 24, 2014.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Klein congratulated Chair Hark on being elected to the City Council.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Fox
Recording Secretary