

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
Meeting Date: August 9, 2022

The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall and could be accessed remotely via Zoom, a video conferencing application.

President Roland Raffin is absent. In his place is William Baker, Vice President.

Call to Order: 7:30 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Members in Attendance:

Lee Ann Mellon
Andy Koultourides
William Baker
Steve Tulowitzki (arriving late)
Rachel Branagan

Members Absent:

Roland Raffin
Brian Specht

Staff Present:

Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director
David Wickland, Attorney

Approval of Minutes:

a. June 14, 2022, Regular Business Meeting

Motion: Ms. Mellon moved to approve the June 14, 2022, Regular Business Meeting minutes

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

b. June 30, 2022, Special Business Meeting

Motion: Ms. Mellon moved to approve the June 30, 2022, Special Business Meeting minutes

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Preliminary Hearings:

a. PC 22-014 Image Resource Group on behalf of CA Health & Science Trust requesting approval of an amendment to the Lake Business Center Planned Unit Development to revise the site signage plan for the Lake Business Center PUD at 9200 Calumet Avenue

Mr. Vander Woude said this is an application that was submitted by CA Heath and Science Trust, the current owner of the eastern portion of the Lake Business Center Planned Unit Development. It is located at 9200 Calumet Avenue and zoned as a Planned Unit Development. He said the applicant is seeking approval of an amendment to the Planned Unit Development to replace their existing sign plan. In April 2014, there was an approval for a comprehensive signage plan that includes wayfinding signs, guidelines for signs on the building, as well as overall development branding signs. In the intervening years, some of those signs have been installed; others haven't. When CA Health and Science Trust

purchased the property, they approached the Town with the concept of rebranding the Lake Business Center as the medical office center. They are proposing a replacement for that sign plan. He said the zoning code requires that signs in a Planned Unit Development comply with the standards for the CD-5 district. He said that the majority of the wayfinding signs for the Lake Business Center were never installed so there will be no problem with continuity between the different areas of the property. The building signs have been held to the restrictions of the existing sign plan.

Ms. Loriann Duffy, Senior Vice President, Property Management, CA Health and Science Trust said they purchased 9200 Calumet Avenue, the Lake Business Center, in September of 2021. She said they are focused on medical office real estate. She said she has background with Northwestern Hospital so she understands how to manage medical properties. She said they want patients to be able to find their doctors easily and safely. She said the sign package is similar to a hospital campus. They are trying to make it comprehensive and user-friendly and would tie in any future developments or buildings, though they don't have immediate plans for new buildings. She said they may like to rebrand as Lake Medical Center.

Mr. Vander Woude described the signs. He said the proposed signage package includes six directional signs which are metal cabinet signs with acrylic changeable faces. Three of the signs identify the parking areas for each tenant and are approximately 10 feet high and 50 square feet in area. The remaining three signs designate the parking area and are 6'-9" high and approximately 35 square feet in area. He said directional signs are limited to 4 square feet. He said six proposed monument signs are sited at the building entrances to identify tenants. They are proposed to be metal cabinet signs with acrylic changeable faces and vinyl graphics. All six signs are to be 6'-10" in height and approximately 35 square feet in area. He said per the Munster zoning ordinance, the permitted sign area for monument style signs is 18 square feet and the permitted height is 6 feet, and a masonry base is required for all monument signs. He said there are seven total parking pole signs: within each parking lot, the applicant proposes parking lot ID signs to be affixed to the parking lot light poles. Each sign is to be 5 square feet. The Munster zoning ordinance restricts directional signs to 4 square feet. He said a 2' tall white aluminum numeral is proposed to be installed at each of the three entrances.

The Board members expressed their concerns over the size of the signs. They agreed that the parking lot is confusing, however, signage is needed to complement the building without overwhelming it. The Board suggested reducing the height and area of the signs and improving the sign materials.

Ms. Duffy said they can adjust the design. She said it is important to them to have clear direction to the parking areas, entrances, and specific tenants, because the tenants have told them that their patients find it difficult to find them. She said they will work on the sizing and materials.

Mr. Tulowitzki said he'd like to see signs that are functional and suggested a middle ground between some of the signs that are 10 feet tall and pretty far out of bounds from what the ordinances are.

Ms. Duffy said the signage is the biggest tenant complaint they have. They are at risk in their renewal conversations around signage. Mr. Baker suggested responding that the location is outstanding. Miss Duffy said she agrees but they also like to solve problems for their tenants. She said they will try to find a middle ground between what they're presenting and what is existing.

Motion: Ms. Mellon moved to set PC Docket 22-014 for a public hearing with the recommendation that that the petitioners rework their signage plan by reducing the size of the signs by height and area,

limiting the amount of advertising and branding, focusing on people finding their way, and to use materials that will better conform to the CD-5 district ordinances.

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

b. PC 22-015 CA Health & Science Trust and Poblocki Sign Company on behalf of Rush University Medical Group requesting approval of a development plan for Rush University Medical Group at Lake Business Center PUD at 9200 Calumet Ave

Mr. Vander Woude said this petition is for the approval of the of a development plan for the adapted office building portion of the Lake Business Center. A current tenant is South Suburban Surgical Suites. He said a development plan was approved in 2019 at which time the developer along with property owners and Suburban Surgical Suites appeared before the Planning Commission and requested permission to construct only 129 parking spaces of the required parking on the assumption that they would not need 181 spaces. He said the former owner of the property, Simborg Group, presented a letter committing to installing the remainder of the spaces at the time that the remainder of the building was built out. He said the Plan Commission approved the request. The requirement is still in place, but the Plan Commission waived it temporarily. Now that a new tenant is going in the east side of the building, Rush University Medical Center, there are two things that need to come before the Planning Commission as part of the development plan. One is the completion of the parking lot. The second, because the facade of the building has already been constructed, is the signage that needs to come to and be approved by the Plan Commission. He said the current owners are requesting that those additional spaces be postponed until the future office building is constructed to the south. He said they have discussed three options: First, waiting to construct the parking lot until the building to the south is built; second, constructing the 51 spaces within the north outlot directly adjacent to Calumet Avenue in the currently vacant space, in accordance with the Lake Business Center master plan, to benefit the tenants to the west; third, building the spaces as shown on the master plan for the adapted office building.

He said there is no detailed plan of the parking area because the applicant is requesting direction from the Plan Commission on the options prior the public hearing. He said the second aspect of this development plan is signage. He said there is a comprehensive sign plan for Lake Business Center, but it specifically does not include this building. Because there are no separate standards, the CD-5 sign standard should be applied to the building.

The Board discussed the parking options. Mr. Baker said at the time of the original plan they were concerned that the frontage would be developed and the property owner would not redevelop the back of the property. He said that their new rules would not permit parking along Calumet Avenue.

Mike Boyle, Vice President of Development with CA Health and Science Trust, 448 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, said previous to their ownership there was an agreement which made sense based on the engineering. He believes it provided 5.7 spaces for 1000 square feet within the adapted office space. This is why they don't believe they should build parking spaces to the south. They are confident that there is enough parking. When the site to the south is developed, they can adjust and plan accordingly to accommodate. He said that they are not proposing any development of the north outlot but suggested it as an alternative. He said their preference is to not add parking spaces. He said if they add

those additional spaces by Rush, they are increasing the parking to nearly 10 spaces per 1000 square feet, almost double what the code requires. He said they are not asking for any modifications to the Planned Unit Development, just a phasing and sequencing of it.

Mr. Vander Woude clarified that this is the master plan that was adopted by the Plan Commission and the Town Council and is the controlling document for this development. When each of these properties get developed there is a certain number of parking spaces associated with it. The adapted office building includes a 181-space parking lot, but the Plan Commission agreed to defer the construction of the spaces and is being asked to do so again.

Mr. Boyle said they would start the engineering for the option that the Plan Commission prefers.

Mr. Vander Woude said that the sense he is getting from the board is that the no-build option would be acceptable.

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to set PC 22-015 for a public hearing.

Second: Ms. Mellon

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Public Hearings:

- a. PC Docket No. 22-011 Time Equities, Inc. represented by Abonmarche requesting approval of a preliminary plat for the Resubdivision of Lot 1 in Ridgewood Development a two-lot commercial subdivision located at 300-332 Ridge Road.**

Mr. Vander Woude said the applicant did not advertise the public hearing so it must be deferred.

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to defer PC Docket No. 22-011.

Second: Ms. Mellon

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

- b. PC 22-010 Karma Cigar Bar LLC represented by Joseph Svetanoff requesting approval of a development plan for a restaurant and cigar lounge at 9450 Calumet Avenue in the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD**

Mr. Vander Woude said this was approved last month but there was a condition put on the approval for the Development Plan for the Karma Cigar Bar that final approval would be granted upon Plan Commission review of the screening of the mechanicals and the workings of the internal waterfall. He said the applicant has provided details on the screening and they have removed the internal water feature.

Joseph Svetanoff, 9801 Connecticut Drive, Crown Point, representing the petitioners, said there were issues that came up with the waterfall feature. They removed it and amended the plans. The mechanicals for the entire building, including kitchen exhaust and HVAC are all screened. There is no challenge with the ventilation system bringing air back into the building, this is all in the design set up. The mechanicals will not be seen, the louvers are shown to demonstrate the layout of the mechanicals. They are eliminating the water feature since it was for aesthetics.

Mr. Baker opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, Mr. Baker closed the public hearing.

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to approve the screening of the mechanicals and the removal of the 2nd floor water feature for the Karma Bistro & Cigar Lounge development plan in the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development at 9450 Calumet Avenue.

Second: Ms. Mellon

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

c. PC 22-013 Maple Leaf Crossing LLC requesting approval of an amendment to the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development to permit a restaurant and cigar lounge on Lot 7 in the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD at 9410-9470 Calumet Avenue

Mr. Vander Woude said that they approved the development plan. This petition is for the amendment to the Planned Unit Development. Lot 7 had originally been approved as a pub with a smaller 2700 square foot footprint. He said the proposal is to amend the Planned Unit Development to modify Lot 7 so it would now include a 6400 square foot cigar bar and restaurant. In addition to that change of use, there was a site plan that was approved which is being replaced with the Planned Unit Development with this new Lot 7 plan. This new building has a different footprint, has a different use, and has different parking requirements. In addition to submitting their plans, the applicant submitted a new parking and traffic study to show the shared parking arrangement. There are 358 parking spaces within the Planned Unit Development. The original parking spaces submitted calculated 350 total shared spaces would be required. That included 40 spaces for the pub. The study submitted last month indicated that 52, or 12 more than the pub, were required for the proposed cigar bar. The study also changed the required the number of required spaces for the hotel from 86 to 75 and the number of spaces for the restaurant from 56 to 32. They recalculated the number of required spaces to be 364. That exceeds the 356 spaces on site. They looked at peak hours and determined that they need 295 spaces at that time of day based on the studies submitted. They are well below using their parking to capacity. Mr. Vander Woude said since the development plan was approved, he recommends the Plan Commission vote for a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to adopt the proposed amendment to the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development.

Ms. Branagan asked if the restaurant is guaranteed to go where it is planned. Mr. Vander Woude said it is part of the Planned Unit Development so if they want to change that, they'd have to come back to the Plan Commission.

Mr. Tulowitzki asked about the parking, the bike path and bike parking.

David Beach of 1630 Cherry Blossom Drive said the bike path was relocated to the north side of the property. Because Maple Leaf Crossing will have a signal light, they moved the bike path to the north side of the property so it will link up with the signal. The bike parking has not changed at all. Site development for Lot 7 is the same size and in the same location. Everything else about the site development has stayed the same. He said the 2700 square-foot, one story pub is now 3 stories and 6400 square feet. He said the building footprint is about 3000 feet. He said the traffic study they had commissioned noted the 295 spaces is based on Karma being 100% full from noon until 2:00pm. The owners experience shows the peak hours are in the evening so that 295 may be skewed. The orientation of the building is facing to the east. There is parking on both the north and the south, they are equidistant from the entrance. This will encourage some use of southern parking for access to this

building. That was specifically laid out to make full use of the parking. The location where the water feature was eliminated will be a stair for the secondary fire exit to leave the building. It can also be used to access the rooftop.

Mr. Baker opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, Mr. Baker closed the public hearing.

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to approve PC Docket No. 22-013 amending the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development to permit a restaurant and cigar lounge on Lot 7 in the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD at 9410-9470 Calumet Avenue.

Second: Ms. Mellon

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Findings of Fact

a. None

Additional Business/Items for Discussion:

a. Update on Munster Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Vander Woude reported there was an official formal kickoff for the Munster Comprehensive Plan last week. The website is live.

b. Update on Site Plan Review Committee

Mr. Vander Woude reported that three items were discussed at the site plan review committee meeting last week: two buildouts in Building G of Centennial Village and a Crew Car Wash at the corner of Ridge Road and Forest Avenue.

Next Meeting: Mr. Baker announced that the next regular business meeting will be September 13, 2022 at 7:30 pm

Adjournment:

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to adjourn.

Second: Ms. Branagan.

Vote: Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm

President Roland Raffin
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Thomas Vander Woude
Plan Commission

Date of Approval