

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
Meeting Date: February 14, 2023

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

Ms. Branagan conducted the meeting in the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Call to Order: 7:49 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Members in Attendance:

Andy Koultourides
Steve Tulowitzki
Brian Specht (On Zoom)
Rachel Branagan

Members Absent:

Roland Raffin
Bill Baker
Lee Ann Mellon

Staff Present:

Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director
David Wickland, Attorney

Election of Officers:

- a. **President**
- b. **Vice President**
- c. **Executive Secretary**

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to postpone the election of officers

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Approval of Minutes:

- a. **January 10, 2023, Regular Business Meeting**

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to approve the January 10, 2023, Regular Business Meeting minutes.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Preliminary Hearings:

- a. **PC 23-001 Community Foundation of NWI requesting a rezoning of the property at 800 MacArthur Boulevard to a Planned Unit Development to permit the addition of two stories of parking and a heliport deck to an existing 3-story parking garage.**

Mr. Vander Woude said the Community Foundation of NWI is requesting a rezoning of the property at 800 MacArthur Boulevard to a planned unit development in order to permit an additional two stories of parking and a heliport deck on their existing three-story parking garage. This property is owned by Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana. There is an existing parking garage directly south of the

hospital that is connected to the hospital via a skyway. The property is currently zoned CD-4.A which limits the height of principal and accessory structures to 50 feet or four stories. They are proposing to add two floors and a heliport deck to this existing garage. That would increase the height of the parking garage to 70 feet and five stories plus the raised helipad. In addition, the CD-4.A district permits only one principal structure on a single lot. There is a parking garage and a medical office building on the lot. He said the parking garage is accessed both from MacArthur Boulevard and a drive aisle along the south side. He said that in 1973 the area between Columbia Avenue and Calumet Avenue was zoned as a planned unit development. There were a series of amendments to that PUD as each of the lots were developed. That continued on through the year 2000, with the approval of the existing three-story parking garage. Between then and around 2015, the subject appeared in official zoning maps as a C2 district. When the Town adopted the zoning map in 2019, all the C2 zoning districts became CD-4.A. He said the property to the north, which is Community Hospital, is zoned as a PUD. He said from a staff perspective, the unique zoning history as well as the unique location directly adjacent to Community Hospital, lends this property to be rezoned as a PUD. He said the project was reviewed at a site plan review committee meeting with Mr. Otte and there were no comments from Engineering, Fire, Police, or Planning that would suggest any changes. The staff recommendation is for approval.

Mr. Tulowitzki asked Mr. Vander Woude if they are trying to incorporate the parking garage into the existing PUD. Mr. Vander Woude said it would be a separate planned unit development but is consistent with the hospital PUD. Mr. Tulowitzki asked about the height restriction, if there is an issue with the existing planned unit development. Mr. Vander Woude said he has not received any complaints about the hospital's height, and this would match the height of the hospital. He said the garage is set back approximately 425 feet from Columbia Avenue. The nearest residence would be another 100 feet beyond that.

Mr. Tulowitzki asked what is driving the demand for additional parking.

Dave Otte from the Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana said their business has increased immensely with other hospitals closing in the area. Their emergency room a year ago saw 55,000 visits. This year, it's almost 63,000 visits. In order to accommodate all these additional people coming in, they have to increase the parking garage for their staff and the additional people on campus. Ms. Branagan asked about the helicopter pad. Mr. Otte said it is currently on the top floor, so it is basically just going up in elevation. He said you probably won't even notice the addition when you see it. It is just a couple floors added; it picks up 343 parking spaces.

Motion: Mr. Specht moved to set PC Docket No. 23-001 to a Public Hearing.

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Public Hearings:

- a. **PC 22-025 Munster Properties LLC requesting approval of a development plan for a medical office building at 10350 Calumet Avenue.**

Mr. Vander Woude said this is a proposed redevelopment of the former Calumet Harley-Davidson at 10350 Calumet Avenue. The applicant intends to redevelop this property from a light industrial use to a

medical office. They are planning on a complete remodel of the interior of the facility, expanding the parking lot to the north to accommodate the additional parking needed for this use, install additional landscaping, new parking lot lighting, and a storm water retention area along the north side of the property. The applicant has received a variance from the parking standards. The footprint of the building stays the same. There are some modifications to the parking lot. The permitted building materials in this district are brick, natural stone, capped stone, wood, or metal. He said the garage doors on the front of the building will be replaced with storefront windows that meet our standards. There is some existing metal siding on the south, west, and north facades that is being cleaned up and painted. There is a section of metal siding on the southeast corner that will be replaced with the new metal panel. They are proposing a new dumpster enclosure. He said the landscaping plan will require an enhanced edge on the Calumet Avenue frontage, a hedge screen along the north edge of the property to screen the parking lot from the adjacent property to the north, and parkway trees on Calumet Avenue, planted 30 feet on center. He said the photometric plan appears to comply with our standard but will need to be modified to include ornamental fixtures.

Mr. Vander Woude said the staff recommendation is to approve, subject to the conditions described in the staff report. Mr. Koultourides asked whether the dumpster enclosure was adequate for the businesses that are going in there.

Laura Pastine of 8401 Somerset, Prairie Village, KS, of GastingerWalker architects, introduced herself as the applicant. She said the walls will be repaired and retained. The openings will stay to bring daylight into the interior space, and all the overhead doors are going to be replaced with clear vision glass storefront framing and all entry doors will be replaced. New materials will be dark bronze. She said they will replace metal panels at the main entrance, repair others, and repaint the back side. She said the only place on the building where they are changing the envelope material is on the south elevation. The angled entry corner is where they will be putting a new canopy that will cover the passenger side of a drop off at the height that would allow an emergency vehicle to clear underneath.

Ms. Pastine said the bulk of the building is an orthopedic clinic that has a physical therapy component. The third tenant will be the imaging center at the southwest corner. She said the trash enclosure is sized for three tenants. Mr. Tulowitzki said it is a nice-looking building, there was good planning to be considerate of the neighborhood.

Ms. Branagan opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, she closed the public hearing.

Motion: Mr. Koultourides moved to approve PC Docket No. 22-025 approving the development plan for a medical office at 10350 Calumet Avenue with the following conditions: the landscaping plan be revised to include an enhanced hedge along the Calumet Avenue frontage which includes a 3.5' ornamental fence, a continuous hedge, and trees planted 30' on center; a hedge screen along north edge of the property, screening the parking area from the adjacent property; parkway trees planted 30' on center along Calumet Avenue; and a lighting plan that includes acorn, coach, or colonial-style fixtures.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

b. PC 22-024 OKW Architects on behalf of Simborg Development requesting approval of an amendment to the Lake Business Center Planned Unit Development to include an additional 9,000 square feet of warehouse space at 9200 Calumet Avenue.

Mr. Vander Woude said the proposal is to construct a 9000 square foot cross connection between the existing south warehouse and the north warehouse at the Lake Business Center planned unit development (PUD). This is an increase in their overall building footprint, so it requires an amendment to the Lake Business Center PUD ordinance. The warehouse connection will allow vehicles to move from one side to the other. The warehouses are leased by Pepsi. He said they are proposing to reconfigure the parking area between the buildings and add new loading docks to the west side of the building. There is also an area between the warehouses that they propose to clean up and install a lawn. At the previous preliminary hearing, there was some discussion about what that clean up would include, whether something more elaborate as far as landscaping could be installed in that area. The staff met with the architect and the applicant after the meeting. He said they are proposing to install shade trees in addition to the lawn. He said they are changing the base of the warehouse connection on the east elevation that is facing Calumet Avenue from stone to brick which matches the buildings on either side. They've also added in proposed existing parking lot landscaping to comply with our landscape standards. They are identifying an area for a landscape buffer, to be installed if and when Maple Leaf Boulevard is constructed to the southwest.

Andy Koglin identified himself as the principal architect. He said he was involved in the early master planning and in the early phases of this some years ago. Tony Grabelle from Simborg is also in attendance. He said he has nothing to add.

Ms. Branagan opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, Ms. Branagan closed the public hearing.

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council on PC Docket No. 22-024 to amend the Lake Business Center Planned Unit Development to include 9000 square feet of warehouse space at 9200 Calumet Avenue with the condition that the final development plan would be approved by the Munster Plan Commission.

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

c. PC 23-002 Fadi Layous requesting approval of a development plan for a medical office building at 500 45th Street.

Mr. Vander Woude said the applicant is requesting approval of a development plan for a medical office building at 500 45th Street. The owner of the building is proposing to modify this existing light industrial building, formerly the home of Miner Electronics, into a medical office that he plans to use for his own practice. The property currently contains an 8000 square foot building, a 150 foot tall communications tower and a parking lot. He said the applicant has already successfully petitioned for the lot to be rezoned from industrial use to a CD-4B district. They've also obtained a parking variance in order to install some additional parking in the front of the building. They propose to relocate the curb cut from 45th Street to Kennedy Court, expand the parking lot to the east to allow for two rows of parking on the east side of the building, and construct new parking spaces on the south side in front of the building and

in the rear of the building. He said they have submitted new landscaping and lighting plans. They will install a new dumpster enclosure at the rear of the building. In addition to the site upgrades, they are proposing to replace the brown metal paneling along the top of the building with wood grain metal, paint the brick white, add some additional windows and doors, and close off the existing overhead doors. Mr. Vander Woude said the proposed improvements are compliant with the Munster zoning standards. He said staff recommends approval of the development plan. Ms. Branagan asked if the proposed light fixtures are required by our standard. Mr. Vander Woude said the ordinance requires coach, acorn, or colonial fixtures. Mr. Tulowitzki said the Smoothie King is a more modern style. It's something that meets the future image of the Town. It is something that the Town might want to consider including as a style in the code as well. Mr. Vander Woude said that would be permitted at this location.

Amer Sassila, Director of A/E Services at the HOH Group located in Schaumburg, IL, said that the proposed fixture was chosen to comply with the requirements. Ms. Branagan asked if there was a more modern fixture that would fit the bill. Mr. Sassila said yes, they could make that change. Mr. Tulowitzki said to coordinate with staff.

Ms. Branagan opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, Ms. Branagan closed the public hearing.

Mr. Sassila wanted to make a correction on the dumpster enclosure. It was planned as a fabricated material. Mr. Vander Woude said it is supposed to be brick. Mr. Sassila said they will make that change. Mr. Tulowitzki asked if the 150-foot-tall communications tower would be removed. Mr. Sassila said they want to remove it, but they don't own it, so that's something that has to be worked out by the new owner of the property and the owner of the tower. Mr. Tulowitzki asked if it is functional and operating. Mr. Vander Woude said he believes it is. Mr. Tulowitzki said he was under the false assumption that it was not functional. He asked if they are going to be repairing the parking lot, there is a huge pothole in the existing southernmost drive. Mr. Sassila said the parking lot will be paved. Mr. Specht said all of 45th needs to be repaved. Mr. Vander Woude said that is in progress.

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to approve PC Docket No. 23-002 granting approval of a development plan for medical office building at 500 45th Street on the condition that the landscaping plan be revised to include the required street trees along 45th Street and Kennedy Court and the applicant work with staff to find a suitable lighting application which may vary from the three required fixture types.

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Findings of Fact: None

Additional Business/Items for Discussion: None

Next Meeting: Ms. Branagan announced that the next regular business meeting will be March 14, 2023.

Adjournment:

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to adjourn.

Second: Ms. Koultourides

Vote: Yes – 4 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm

President Roland Raffin
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Thomas Vander Woude
Plan Commission

Date of Approval